



ILLINOIS

★ State Highlight

PaCE Implementation Support. To support the implementation of Illinois's Postsecondary and Career Expectations (PaCE) Framework, the Illinois Student Assistance Corporation (ISAC) offers several [resources and training options](#) for districts, including in-person presentations and workshops to develop an aligned framework.



VISION



State Definition. The [Illinois Career Pathways Dictionary](#) and the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act defines career exploration as an activity such as a job shadow, attendance at a career exposition, or employer site visit that provides an individual with the ability to engage directly with employers for the purpose of gaining knowledge of one or more industry sectors or occupations.

Illinois has yet to state career exploration as an official priority.



POLICY



Career Exploration Legislation. Governor Pritzker signed Public Act 102-0917 (HB3296) in 2022, which [requires](#) districts to adopt and commence implementation of career exploration and career development activities for each of grades 6-12, as aligned to the [Illinois Postsecondary and Career Expectations \(PaCE\) Framework](#).

Career Exploration Competencies. [Illinois Career Development K-12 Competencies and Indicators](#) outlines middle school competencies for career exploration.

Illinois has yet to establish career exploration requirements for students or formally include middle school career exploration in state or federal accountability systems.



INFRASTRUCTURE



Implementation Guide. To support the implementation of the Illinois Postsecondary and Careers Expectations (PaCE) Framework, the [Illinois Student Assistance Commission](#) created the [PaCE Implementation Guide](#). The resource includes sections that guide districts, schools, and leaders to identify their "why" and their teams, to build their teams and stakeholder plans, and to develop and implement a plan.

Illinois has yet to include middle school career exploration into data collection processes.





ILLINOIS • VISION

Category	Status	Description
Leadership Does the state leadership include career exploration as a valued or prioritized component of students' middle school experience?	 Building Emerging Advanced	Although IL has a <u>commitment</u> to expanding career and technical education, the state's leadership does not have any clear priorities for middle school career exploration.
Career Exploration Definition Does the state formally define career exploration for middle school students?	 Building Emerging Advanced	Defined in the <u>IL Career Pathways Dictionary</u> (and cited in the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act) as an activity such as a job shadow, attendance at a career exposition, or employer site visit that provides an individual with the ability to engage directly with employers to gain knowledge of one or more industry sectors or occupations. One of the stated goals of the Career Pathways Dictionary is to align terminology and definitions for programming throughout the education and workforce pipeline to promote consistency and quality for students and participants,
Advocacy Are there organizations within the state that are advocating for middle school career exploration?	 Building Emerging Advanced	IL does not have any organizations advocating for middle school career exploration that rose to recognition within the landscape.



ILLINOIS • POLICY

Category	Status	Description
Standards Does the state have policies that establish standard practices for career exploration in middle schools?	 Building Emerging Advanced	At the middle school and early high school level, the IL PaCE Framework was designed to provide students with guided exploration of postsecondary planning and options in a manner that is consistent with adolescent development. The developmental work in the middle school framework is intended to prepare students to engage more fully with the PaCE Framework throughout the critical high school years. IL Career Development K-12 Competencies and Indicators covers middle school competencies for career exploration.
Accountability Does the state integrate career exploration into their accountability systems?	 Building Emerging Advanced	The state does not integrate career exploration into its ESSA state plan. However, middle school career exploration activities are formally included in IL's Perkins V Plan .
Student Requirements Does the state have policies that require middle school students to complete career exploration activities?	 Building Emerging Advanced	Governor Pritzker signed Public Act 102-0917 (HB3296) into law on May 27, 2022, which <u>requires</u> districts enrolling students in any of grades 6-12 to adopt and commence implementation of career exploration and career development activities that substantially align with the PaCE Framework. Districts may elect to opt out by school board action as directed in the Act. According to the <u>framework</u> , a student should be supported to complete a career cluster survey, attend a career exploration day, complete a unit on education planning, and be exposed to a financial literacy unit in a course or workshop. A student should know the concept of career clusters of interest and the relationship between community service/extracurricular activities and postsecondary career goals.
Incentives Does the state have policies that incentivize career exploration in middle schools?	 Building Emerging Advanced	IL does not have any incentives directly related to middle school career exploration.



ILLINOIS • INFRASTRUCTURE

Category	Status	Description
Funding Does the state use state or federal funding sources to support career exploration for middle school students?	 Building Emerging Advanced	In SY21-22, the IL State Board of Education provided a grant opportunity for schools across IL to pilot Career Exploration and Career Development Experiences.
Professional Development Does the state support the training of school counselors (and other school staff) in career exploration?	 Building Emerging Advanced	Illinois Student Assistance Commission (ISAC) offers several options to train and assist schools in understanding and adopting the IL PaCE Framework, developing a customized framework to fit their needs, and implementing a framework.
Material Supports Does the state provide material supports on the implementation of middle school career exploration?	 Building Emerging Advanced	The PaCE Implementation Guide is to help foster the continued implementation of the IL PaCE Framework. Curriculum resources, including K-8 career exploration, were created to provide additional support for the CTE teacher. These resources are broken out into modules, and each module has e-units, lesson plans, and presentations. The IL State Board of Education provides resources for elementary and middle school career exploration and development to inform students about future CTE and career opportunities.
Data Collection Does the state collect data on middle school career exploration opportunities in the state?	 Building Emerging Advanced	There are no formal state-level data collection practices related to middle school career exploration.
CTSOs Does the state support student participation in career and technical student organizations?	 Building Emerging Advanced	IL supports several nationally recognized and state-recognized CTSOs, three of which (BPA, FBLA, and SkillsUSA) have middle school chapters.
Organizations Are there organizations within the state that support career exploration in middle schools?	 Building Emerging Advanced	Within the Peoria Public Schools Foundation, the Horizons Club partners with community members to speak with Peoria Public Schools students about their career paths during lunchtime. A district-wide program was developed to assist K-5 students with career education and exploration programs.