



INDIANA

★ State Highlight

Indiana Career Explorer. The Indiana Department of Workforce Development (IN DWD) provides, [Indiana Career Explorer](#), a free online career exploration and graduation planning tool. Although the tool is meant for a wide range of users, middle school students can create their account through their counselor and begin taking career interest assessments and exploring careers in in-demand fields.



VISION



The Explore, Engage, and Experience (3E) Grant Program. The Indiana Department of Education (IDOE) established the 3E [grant program](#) to expand career exploration and engagement opportunities for middle school students. In 2022, the department [awarded](#) \$57 million to 97 schools and community partners. These partners were encouraged to collaborate on plans to implement locally driven, strategic career pathways for their students.



POLICY



Career Standards. Indiana Code [requires](#) schools to include state-developed career standards in the school's curriculum in 8th grade using either the Indiana Career Explorer program and standards or an alternate system. The IDOE's [standards](#) include employability skills for grades 6 through 8.

Graduation Plan. Indiana [requires](#) students to complete a graduation plan by the end of grade 8, which includes postsecondary goals aligned with graduation pathway requirements.



INFRASTRUCTURE



User Friendly Resources. [Learn More Indiana](#) (LMI) helps students of all ages explore post-high school education options and how to pay for them. LMI provides resources, tools, and real-life guidance for students, families, and educators to make accessing post-high school education manageable and attainable.

Implementation Guidance. The IDOE provides several support resources, including the [Employability Skills Standards Implementation Guide](#), [Employability Skills Playbook](#), and a [Framework](#) for coaches to help schools serving middle school students successfully complete Graduation Pathways in high school.





INDIANA • 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	The Indiana Department of Education established a grant program to expand effective career pathways for K-12 students. The Explore, Engage, and Experience (3E) grant funding totaled more than \$57 million, and was awarded to 97 schools and community partners in 2022. This funding is intended to help recipients provide middle school students opportunities to explore and engage in various careers. The Department encouraged schools, nonprofit organizations, education service centers, higher education institutions, and employers to collaborate on plans to implement locally-driven, strategic career pathways for students. In addition, the state board of education's strategic plan sets a vision of being the leader in college and career readiness.
Career Exploration Definition Does the state formally define career exploration for middle school students?	 Building Emerging Advanced	The IDOE defines career exploration as skills consisting of learning how to identify and analyze various career options in terms of what education, training, experience, and competencies are required for success. Exploration includes learning in workplace environments or workplaces to discover and experience what it may be like to work in different occupations. It also involves evaluating how well a career matches or fits one's interests, skills, strengths, and work values. The Interagency Learning Task Force defines career exploration as learning about work, exploring career options, and postsecondary for the purpose of motivating students and informing their decision-making in high school and post-secondary education.
Advocacy Are there organizations within the state that are advocating for middle school career exploration?	 Building Emerging Advanced	The Indiana Department of Workforce Development has partnered with The DeBruce Foundation as they relaunch the Indiana Career Explorer, a free career and education planning tool, to empower the Indiana economy. Through partnership amongst the IN DWD, Department of Education, Commission for Higher Education (IN CHE), Ivy Tech Community College, Vincennes University, and The Governor's Workforce Cabinet, the INCE is being rolled out this year for use by clients of IN's WorkOne locations, students throughout higher education, and youth in IN elementary, middle, and high schools. This "one tool for all" is designed to empower and equip Hoosiers across the lifespan of their education and working life.



INDIANA • POLICY

Category	Status	Description
Standards Does the state have policies that establish standard practices for career exploration in middle schools?	 Building Emerging Advanced	IN Code <u>requires</u> schools to support students completing their graduation plan at the end of grade 8, including postsecondary goals aligned with graduation pathway requirements and an annual review. IN Code also <u>requires</u> schools to include state-developed career standards in the school's curriculum in 8th grade using either the Indiana Career Explorer program and standards or an alternate system. The IDOE's <u>standards</u> include employability skills for grades 6-8.
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 <u>IN's Perkins V Plan</u> . IDOE is in the process of redesigning its accountability system, with recommendations due to the General Assembly at the end of 2024.
Student Requirements Does the state have policies that require middle school students to complete career exploration activities?	 Building Emerging Advanced	IN <u>requires</u> students to complete a graduation plan by the end of grade 8 that will follow them through grade 12.
Incentives Does the state have policies that incentivize career exploration in middle schools?	 Building Emerging Advanced	The Explore, Engage, and Experience (3E) <u>grant program</u> provided dollars to schools and community partners to strengthen, expand and create effective career pathways throughout students' K-12 learning. Middle schools were eligible for the grant to expand access to career exploration and engagement opportunities. Districts can access <u>Local Career Coach Grants</u> to support career coach implementation.



INDIANA • INFRASTRUCTURE

Category	Status	Description
<p>Funding</p> <p>Does the state use state or federal funding sources to support career exploration for middle school students?</p>		<p>Indiana Career Explorer is a free online career exploration and graduation planning tool provided by the IN DWD. Supported by the IN CHE, Learn More Indiana (LMI) helps students of all ages explore post-high school education options and the ways to pay for them. Perkins V state leadership funds are allocated to support CTSOs and expand and improve middle school CTE programs. IDOE allocated \$5 million to districts to expand counseling resources.</p>
<p>Professional Development</p> <p>Does the state support the training of school counselors (and other school staff) in career exploration?</p>		<p>IN provides training to schools and districts interested in using Indiana Career Explorer as a career exploration tool for their students. Department of Workforce Development provides professional development resources, including training partnerships with Rework America Alliance.</p>
<p>Material Supports</p> <p>Does the state provide material supports on the implementation of middle school career exploration?</p>		<p>The IDOE provides several support resources, including the Employability Skills Standards Implementation Guide and Employability Skills Playbook, College and Career Navigation webpage, a Quick User Guide and Framework for coaches, a slide deck that guides K-8 students on the Career Exploration platform, and a resource guide to support schools serving middle school students to complete Graduation Pathways in high school successfully. An interagency work-based learning task force provides a K-12 work-based learning manual that includes career exploration activities and definitions.</p>
<p>Data Collection</p> <p>Does the state collect data on middle school career exploration opportunities in the state?</p>		<p>There are no formal state-level data collection practices related to middle school career exploration.</p>
<p>CTSOs</p> <p>Does the state support student participation in career and technical student organizations?</p>		<p>Business Professionals of America has middle school chapters for students enrolled in CTE or career-related education programs. Indiana uses Perkins V state leadership funds to support CTSOs.</p>
<p>Organizations</p> <p>Are there organizations within the state that support career exploration in middle schools?</p>		<p>Junior Achievement of Central Indiana hosts JobSpark, an initiative that includes in-class or remote curriculum and activities before and after attending the event. JobSpark is meant to “spark” an interest in students and get them excited for their future.</p>