

IOWA

★ State Highlight

State guidance on ICAP implementation. The Iowa Department of Education provides a wealth of [resources](#) to help districts implement the Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) requirement. The state provides an [ICAP overview and guidance](#), as well as an [evaluation tool](#) to help districts assess their implementation of this requirement.



VISION



Middle School CTE Programming. The Iowa Department of Education (IDOE) outlines a vision for middle school CTE programming in their [Perkins V Plan](#). The plan states that quality middle school CTE offerings should include broad exposure to courses and activities that focus on career exploration and career awareness, including the development of ICAPs, career counseling, and employability skills.

Iowa has yet to define career exploration or coordinate across state agencies on career exploration.



POLICY



Career Exploration and Planning. Iowa requires career exploration and development instruction starting in the 7th and 8th grades. The Iowa Administrative Code also [requires](#) school districts to have an Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP) for each student in grades 8-12, which must include a plan for career exploration that is developed with the student's parents and teachers.

School Counseling Standards. The Iowa School Counselors Association (ISCA) has developed a set of [standards](#) for school counseling programs in Iowa, which includes a focus on career exploration and development.

Iowa has yet to formally include middle school career exploration in state or federal accountability systems.



INFRASTRUCTURE






State Funding for Career Exploration. Iowa uses [Perkins V](#) funding to provide additional financial support to districts seeking to provide a more holistic, integrated approach to the delivery of career exploration and career development in the middle grades (5-8). Districts that meet the minimum standards and CTE licensure requirements will have access to Perkins V funding to plan, develop, and deliver quality middle school career exploration and development programming that is rooted in meaningful student activities and experiences. The state also provides professional development for school counselors and other educators on career exploration.





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Category	Status	Description
<p>Leadership</p> <p>Does the state leadership include career exploration as a valued or prioritized component of students' middle school experience?</p>	 <p>Building Emerging Advanced</p>	<p>The state's Perkins V Plan states that quality middle school CTE offerings should include exposure to courses and activities that focus on career exploration and career awareness, including the development of ICAPs, career counseling, and employability skills.</p>
<p>Career Exploration Definition</p> <p>Does the state formally define career exploration for middle school students?</p>	 <p>Building Emerging Advanced</p>	<p>IA defines career-related concepts, such as work-based learning, but does not have a specific definition for middle school career exploration.</p>
<p>Advocacy</p> <p>Are there organizations within the state that are advocating for middle school career exploration?</p>	 <p>Building Emerging Advanced</p>	<p>IA does not have any organizations advocating for middle school career exploration that rose to recognition within the landscape.</p>



Category	Status	Description
Standards Does the state have policies that establish standard practices for career exploration in middle schools?	 Building Emerging Advanced	IA requires career exploration and development instruction starting in the 7th and 8th grades. Twenty-first-century skills, including but not limited to financial literacy, family life and consumer sciences, and employability skills are addressed through a variety of curricular needs in K-12, and there is a focus on career and academic planning, as well as a holistic planning process. The Iowa School Counselor Association has developed a set of <u>standards</u> for school counseling programs in IA. The standards include a focus on career exploration and development. The IA Administrative Code <u>requires</u> school districts to have an ICAP for each student in grades 8-12. The ICAP must include a plan for career exploration, which should be developed in collaboration with the student's parents and teachers.
Accountability Does the state integrate career exploration into their accountability systems?	 Building Emerging Advanced	The IA ESSA state plan does not include specific metrics or data points that school districts are held accountable for related to career exploration in middle school. However, the <u>plan</u> does state that career exploration is an important part of helping students develop their academic and career goals. The plan also states that school districts should provide students with opportunities to explore different careers and develop the skills they need to be successful.
Student Requirements Does the state have policies that require middle school students to complete career exploration activities?	 Building Emerging Advanced	Students in grades 8-12 are <u>required</u> to have an ICAP. The ICAP must include a plan for career exploration that is developed in collaboration with the student's parents and teachers.
Incentives Does the state have policies that incentivize career exploration in middle schools?	 Building Emerging Advanced	IA does not have any incentives directly related to middle school career exploration.



Category	Status	Description
Funding Does the state use state or federal funding sources to support career exploration for middle school students?	 Building Emerging Advanced	IA CTE <u>provided</u> additional financial support to districts seeking to provide a more holistic, integrated approach to the delivery of career exploration and career development in the middle grades (5-8). Districts that meet the minimum standards and CTE licensure requirements will have access to Perkins V funding to plan, develop, and deliver quality middle school career exploration and development programming that is rooted in meaningful student activities and experiences.
Professional Development Does the state support the training of school counselors (and other school staff) in career exploration?	 Building Emerging Advanced	IA <u>supports</u> career exploration in middle school by providing professional development for school counselors and other educators on career exploration. The state provides counselors and other school staff with <u>Meaningful Career Conversations training</u> opportunities.
Material Supports Does the state provide material supports on the implementation of middle school career exploration?	 Building Emerging Advanced	The IA Department of Education has developed a College and Career Readiness Framework for K-12 schools. The framework includes a focus on career exploration and development. The state provides an <u>ICAP overview</u> and <u>guidance</u> , as well as an <u>evaluation tool</u> to help districts assess their implementation of this requirement. As districts must select one of the state-approved career information systems (CIS), the state provides a list of pre-approved vendors and CIS Career Resources for ICAP and professional organizations are linked on the department's website.
Data Collection Does the state collect data on middle school career exploration opportunities in the state?	 Building Emerging Advanced	The department displays ICAP data reported by districts. Data can be filtered by year, district, and regional area. Districts must submit ICAP data to the state as a component of the school's comprehensive school improvement plan. The required data includes student completion of ICAP requirements as well as student use of the district-selected, state-approved CIS.
CTSOs Does the state support student participation in career and technical student organizations?	 Building Emerging Advanced	IA has middle school chapters in FFA and FCCLA.
Organizations Are there organizations within the state that support career exploration in middle schools?	 Building Emerging Advanced	<u>Workplace Learning Connection</u> , with Kirkwood Community College, provides career exploration opportunities for middle school and high school students interested in exploring career options, including speaker events and career fairs, job shadowing, and internship opportunities.