

KENTUCKY



★ State Highlight

ILP Evaluation Process. Districts throughout Kentucky are required to develop an evaluation method to assess the effectiveness of their Individual Learning Plan (ILP) process and ensure it meets state regulations. This includes collecting data and input from students, parents/guardians, and school staff. Data is collected on ILP implementation with the state's digital readiness survey to inform ILP strategies.



VISION



Legislative Action. The Kentucky General Assembly has prioritized middle school exploration by establishing statutes that incorporate activities designed to help students explore career options and learn career-related skills. This includes the requirement for academic standards for career studies starting in the middle grades. The statutes also clarify district requirements to implement an advising and guidance process throughout middle and high school, including the development of an individual learning plan for each student beginning in the 6th grade.

KY has yet to codify its definition of career exploration and coordinate the vision for career exploration across agencies.



POLICY



Career Studies Academic Standards. The Kentucky Department of Education (KDE) outlines Kentucky Academic Standards for Career Studies for grades K-12, including essential skills, careers, and financial literacy. For grades 6-8, they outline the minimal content standards Kentucky students should learn and allow districts to determine how the learning experiences are designed and what resources are used.

Individual Learning Plan. Starting in grade 6, students are required to complete an individual learning plan that includes career development and awareness with a focus on career exploration and related postsecondary education and training needs.



INFRASTRUCTURE



State Resources. Kentucky uses Perkins V funds to support Kentucky's Area Technology Centers, which offer summer camps to introduce middle school students to non-traditional career opportunities. State dollars support the KYSTATS Career Explorer Tool, which includes career and interest assessments and labor market information.




Individual Learning Plan Implementation. Kentucky provides several resources to support the implementation of ILPs and middle school career studies, such as a guidance document, the Kentucky ILP Playbook, and a middle school career studies planning and implementation toolkit.



Full Report



KENTUCKY • VISION

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 Kentucky General Assembly has passed several pieces of legislation prioritizing career exploration, especially for middle school students. Recent statutes establish requirements to deliver <u>essential workplace ethics instruction</u>, <u>academic standards for career studies</u>, and requirements for <u>student individual learning plans</u>. Additionally, KDE's Office of Career and Technical Education has a Middle School Career Studies Consultant and a Career Advising Consultant that works with middle schools and elementary schools across KY.</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>KDE <u>defines</u> career exploration as “a process of building self-awareness, learning about potential careers, and developing a plan for future goals.”</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>KY does not have any organizations advocating for middle school career exploration that rose to recognition within the landscape scan.</p>



KENTUCKY • POLICY

Category	Status	Description
Standards Does the state have policies that establish standard practices for career exploration in middle schools?	 Building Emerging Advanced	KDE Career Studies academic <u>standards</u> for grades 6-8 outline the minimal content standards KY students should learn but don't prescribe how the learning experiences are to be designed or what resources should be used. The KY Standards of Practice for School Counselors <u>defines</u> a school counselor as a certified mental health professional supporting all K-12 students in their social/emotional, academic, and career development. School districts are <u>required</u> to implement an advising and guidance process throughout middle and high schools to support the development and implementation of an ILP. The ILP shall include career development and awareness and address the content provided through the academic standards for career studies. The school shall use the information in the ILPs about student needs for academic and elective courses to plan academic and elective offerings. ILP development shall begin at the end of the 6th grade year and focus on career exploration and related postsecondary education and training needs.
Accountability Does the state integrate career exploration into their accountability systems?	 Building Emerging Advanced	The KY ESSA state plan does not include specific metrics or data points that school districts are held accountable to relating to career exploration in middle school. However, the state's <u>Perkins V Plan</u> does include student participation in CTSOs as a program quality indicator for districts.
Student Requirements Does the state have policies that require middle school students to complete career exploration activities?	 Building Emerging Advanced	Starting in grade 6, students are <u>required</u> to complete an individual learning plan, including career development and awareness with a focus on career exploration and related postsecondary education and training needs. By grade 8, students' ILPs must set their learning goals based on academic and career interests and identify required academic courses, electives, and extracurricular opportunities. The plan follows the student to and through high school.
Incentives Does the state have policies that incentivize career exploration in middle schools?	 Building Emerging Advanced	KY does not have any incentives directly related to middle school career exploration.



KENTUCKY • 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>KY Perkins V funds support KY's Area Technology Centers, which offer summer camps to introduce middle school students to non-traditional career opportunities. State funds support the KYSTATS Career Explorer Tool, which includes career and interest assessments and labor market information, and KnowHow2GoKY, a website that provides resources for students to help them plan for college and a middle school section that includes career exploration activities.</p>
<p>Professional Development</p> <p>Does the state support the training of school counselors (and other school staff) in career exploration?</p>		<p>KY offers school counselors professional learning through statewide counseling cadres. These cadres explore the three domains of school counseling, which include social/emotional support, academic support, and career support. The state also has New School Counselor Academies in every region of the state, where during each school year new school counselors learn innovative ways of approaching career exploration.</p>
<p>Material Supports</p> <p>Does the state provide material supports on the implementation of middle school career exploration?</p>		<p>KY provides several resources to support the implementation of ILPs and middle school career studies, such as an ILP Self-Implementation Rubric, an ILP Data Center, ILP Stakeholder Talking Points, an ILP Guidance Document, an ILP Resource Guide and a Middle School ILP Playbook, along with a middle school career studies planning and implementation toolkit. Additional resources provided by the state include Exploratory Tasks for middle school students to explore the national career clusters and career pathways offered in KY.</p>
<p>Data Collection</p> <p>Does the state collect data on middle school career exploration opportunities in the state?</p>		<p>Districts evaluate the effectiveness of their ILP process, including collecting data on indicators and input from students, parents/guardians, and school staff. KDE collects information on ILP implementation within the state's digital readiness survey, which is used to inform current and future ILP strategies. Additionally, districts annually provide information on their implementation of the essential workplace ethics instruction to the Commissioner of Education.</p>
<p>CTSOs</p> <p>Does the state support participation in career and technical student organizations?</p>		<p>KY has middle school chapters in HOSA, FFA, and TSA.</p>
<p>Organizations</p> <p>Are there organizations within the state that support career exploration in middle schools?</p>		<p>YMCA Black Achievers provides academic support, career exploration, mentoring, and social/emotional well-being programs. The EDGE Program is a PreK-12 initiative at Beechwood Independent Schools that offers experiential learning and develops students' workplace skills. SCK LAUNCH is an annual hands-on career expo for 8th graders where they can explore careers available in South Central KY. Junior Achievement provides career exploration programming to middle school students.</p>