



MAINE

 **State Highlight**

Guidance for Course Standards. Maine provides [presentation slides](#) to guide the implementation of their Life and Career Ready course standards. The Maine Department of Education (MDOE) also has a middle school Career and Technical Education (CTE) specialist who works with schools to provide technical assistance and guidance.



VISION



Strategic Plan. The [Maine State Board of Education \(MSBE\) 5-Year Strategic Plan from 2022-26](#) places the expansion of career exploration and career awareness with a focus on middle school that continues through postsecondary study as a goal within their CTE priority area.

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



POLICY



Early Introduction to Career and Technical Education. Middle schools are required [by law](#) to provide their students access to “developmentally appropriate” career and technical education and require students to complete career-oriented courses of study. Under Maine's [course standards](#), the MDOE established Life and Career Ready Standards for grades 6-8, where students learn about career awareness, adaptability, and career planning.

Maine has yet to connect career exploration requirements to high school and formally include middle school career exploration in state and federal accountability systems.



INFRASTRUCTURE



Labor Market Information for Students. The Maine Department of Labor, [Center for Workforce Research and Information \(CWRI\)](#) hosts a student career discovery dashboard that provides regional and statewide employment projections. The portal guides students through selecting their region of the state, a career cluster, and related CTE programs. Additionally, the state funds support the [Maine Career Explorer](#), an online platform used for career exploration.

Maine has yet to provide resources that emphasize best practice.



Full Report



MAINE • 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 | Within their state Perkins V Plan , a stakeholder group comprised of MDOE, MSBE, and other entities identified middle school career exploration as a statewide need. MSBE's 5-Year Strategic Plan from 2022-26 places the expansion of career exploration and career awareness with a focus on middle school that continues through postsecondary study as a goal within their CTE priority area. |
| Career Exploration Definition Does the state formally define career exploration for middle school students? | Building Emerging Advanced | Although ME does not officially define "career exploration," MDOE informs individuals about career opportunities, helps them identify their talent, become aware of how their talent transfers into a wide range of occupational opportunities, and enables them to make effective decisions on the academic and post-high school pathways that will enable them to pursue their career and life goals. |
| Advocacy Are there organizations within the state that are advocating for middle school career exploration? | Building Emerging Advanced | ME does not have any organizations advocating for middle school career exploration that rose to recognition within the landscape scan. |



MAINE • POLICY

| Category | Status | Description |
|--|--------------------------------|---|
| Standards Does the state have policies that establish standard practices for career exploration in middle schools? | Building Emerging Advanced | Under ME's course standards, MDOE established <u>Life and Career Ready Standards</u> for grades 6-8 where students learn about career awareness, adaptability, and career planning. Middle schools are <u>required</u> by law to provide their students access to “developmentally-appropriate” career and technical education. |
| Accountability Does the state integrate career exploration into their accountability systems? | Building Emerging Advanced | ME does not integrate career exploration into its ESSA state plan. However, middle school career exploration is included in <u>ME's Perkins V Plan</u> as a lever to expand CTE programming. |
| Student Requirements Does the state have policies that require middle school students to complete career exploration activities? | Building Emerging Advanced | ME middle school students must complete a <u>career-oriented course of study</u> . |
| Incentives Does the state have policies that incentivize career exploration in middle schools? | Building Emerging Advanced | The state initially developed three pilot grant opportunities for CTE schools to incentivize career exploration in middle school. Schools can apply for a MS-CTE grant to further their middle school CTE programming. |



MAINE • INFRASTRUCTURE

| Category | Status | Description |
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| Funding Does the state use state or federal funding sources to support career exploration for middle school students? | Building Emerging Advanced | ME uses state and Perkins V funds to develop middle school career and technical education exploration programs. State funds support the Maine Career Explorer , an online platform used for career exploration, and CWRI Student Dashboard , a student career discovery dashboard that provides regional and statewide employment projections. |
| Professional Development Does the state support the training of school counselors (and other school staff) in career exploration? | Building Emerging Advanced | ME provides presentation slides to guide the implementation of the Life and Career Ready course standards. MDOE has a middle school CTE specialist who works with the schools to provide technical assistance and guidance. |
| Material Supports Does the state provide material supports on the implementation of middle school career exploration? | Building Emerging Advanced | MDOE provides a list of CTE resources with links to career exploration websites for students and a presentation on middle school CTE guidance. |
| 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 participation in career and technical student organizations? | Building Emerging Advanced | ME has middle school chapters in SkillsUSA and FFA. |
| Organizations Are there organizations within the state that support career exploration in middle schools? | Building Emerging Advanced | No organizations in Maine rose to recognition for the results of this landscape scan. |