

MASSACHUSETTS



State Highlight

MyCap Training for Middle Schools. A three-workshop [training program](#) is available to any middle school counselor, teacher, or administrator to implement the My Career and Academic Plan (MyCAP) planning tool. This workshop focuses on the three domains of college, career, and civic readiness.



VISION



Career Connected Learning Initiative. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education's (DESE) Career Connected Learning Initiative created a [grant program](#) to fund middle schools' implementation of a learning experience model that provides students the opportunity to explore their career-related interests.

Massachusetts has yet to codify its definition of career exploration.



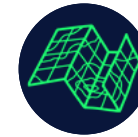
POLICY



Middle School Career Connected Learning Partnership Grant. Massachusetts DESE's Middle School Career Connected Learning Partnership Grant offers a financial incentive to support middle schools' implementation of career exploration programming.

Career Development Education (CDE) Benchmarks. The [Massachusetts Career Development Education \(CDE\) benchmarks](#) serve as guidelines for establishing career development programs that purposely link career development interventions to learner outcomes that will contribute to helping all students become future ready.

Massachusetts has yet to require career exploration in middle school and formally include middle school career exploration in state and federal accountability systems.



INFRASTRUCTURE



MassHire Workforce Development Boards. Massachusetts provides annual funding to the state's [16 workforce development boards](#) to sustain the state's [Connecting Activities](#) initiative, a statewide network charged with supporting career development education activities for students. The local workforce development boards serve as intermediaries that facilitate connections between public school districts, employers, and community-based organizations.

Massachusetts has yet to establish data collection systems that capture middle school career exploration.










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	As part of MA DESE's Career Connected Learning Initiative, the department created a grant program to fund middle schools' implementation of a learning experience model that provides students the opportunity to explore their career-related interests.
Career Exploration Definition Does the state formally define career exploration for middle school students?	 Building Emerging Advanced	MA does not officially define career exploration. The state does define college, career, and civic readiness as "a set of learning competencies, intellectual capacities, and experiences essential for all students to become lifelong learners; positive contributors to their families, workplaces, and communities; and successfully engaged citizens of a global 21st century."
Advocacy Are there organizations within the state that are advocating for middle school career exploration?	 Building Emerging Advanced	The Massachusetts Education Equity Partnership (MEEP) is a collective effort of civil rights, social justice, and education advocates from across the Commonwealth working together to promote educational equity for historically underserved students in the state's schools. MEEP works across K-12 and higher ed to implement a comprehensive, statewide approach to postsecondary planning, including a series of career exploration and postsecondary planning courses required for all middle school and high school students. The partnership includes organizations across the state.



Category	Status	Description
Standards Does the state have policies that establish standard practices for career exploration in middle schools?	 Building Emerging Advanced	The MA CDE benchmarks are offered as guidelines for establishing career development programs that purposely link career development interventions to learner outcomes that will contribute to helping all students become future ready. They establish a common language and direction for CDE data collection, evaluation, and documentation of best practices. DESE explicitly defines and connects Middle School Events with career awareness and planning/high school choices.
Accountability Does the state integrate career exploration into their accountability systems?	 Building Emerging Advanced	MA does not integrate career exploration into its ESSA state plan. However, career exploration is included in MA's Perkins V Plan as a key activity beginning in middle school.
Student Requirements Does the state have policies that require middle school students to complete career exploration activities?	 Building Emerging Advanced	Although the state encourages MyCAP development to start as early as grade 6, middle school students are not required to participate in career exploration activities.
Incentives Does the state have policies that incentivize career exploration in middle schools?	 Building Emerging Advanced	MA DESE's Middle School Career Connected Learning Partnership Grant offers a financial incentive to support middle schools' implementation of career exploration programming.



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>MA provides annual funding to its Connecting Activities initiative, a statewide network of 16 workforce boards charged with supporting career development education activities for students.</p>
<p>Professional Development</p> <p>Does the state support the training of school counselors (and other school staff) in career exploration?</p>		<p>A three-workshop training program is available to any middle school in MA to implement MyCAP. This workshop focuses on the three domains of college, career, and civic readiness. The participants are school counselors, as well as teachers and administrators.</p>
<p>Material Supports</p> <p>Does the state provide material supports on the implementation of middle school career exploration?</p>		<p>The MA Model for Comprehensive School Counseling Programs provides middle school-level examples of tiered school counseling services, including individual planning to support post-middle school options by enhancing career portfolios. The Department of Education provides a MyCAP Implementation Guide and CCR/MyCAP Middle School Scope and Sequence to ensure quality experiences.</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 participation in career and technical student organizations?</p>		<p>MA has middle school chapters in FBLA and FFA.</p>
<p>Organizations</p> <p>Are there organizations within the state that support career exploration in middle schools?</p>		<p>MassbioEd is a nonprofit that hosts a Career Ambassador Program to build a bridge between classroom and careers. 3Point Foundation provides a variety of free programs during the school year and summer that develop the skills that lead to success in education, employment, and life. Project Lead the Way partnered with Miscoe Hill Middle School to launch a new PTLW Design and Modeling Course to foster hands-on, problem-oriented learning through proto-typing. Apprentice Learning partners with schools and employers to offer real-world work experiences to middle school students.</p>