



NEBRASKA

★ State Highlight

Recognizing outstanding CTE programs. The Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) awards an Outstanding Career and Technical Education Program Award yearly to recognize the outstanding achievement of CTE programs in junior high, middle, and high schools. One criterion used to assess quality is the effective implementation of career guidance and work-based learning.



VISION



Strategic Plan. The State Board of Education's Strategic Plan sets a goal of 100% of Nebraska schools providing all students with a program for career awareness, exploration, and preparation by 2026, which will be included in their accountability system.

Nebraska Workplace Experiences Continuum. The Nebraska Workplace Experiences Continuum defines experiences under a new initiative by the NDE and Departments of Labor and Economic Development to provide students with experiences in business and industry that help students identify career opportunities through career exploration.

NE has yet to codify its definition of career exploration.



POLICY



Perkins V Priority. Middle school career exploration is formally included in NE's Perkins V Plan as an area of emphasis for program improvement and increased student achievement. NE also included middle school CTE as a strategic priority in its Perkins V plan to expand its high-quality CTE system and to respond to workforce needs.

NE has yet to establish career exploration requirements connected to high school. NE has yet to formally include middle school career exploration in state and federal accountability systems but plans to include this by 2026.



INFRASTRUCTURE



Nebraska Career Connections. Nebraska Department of Education hosts Nebraska Career Connections, an online platform with career exploration and planning activities for students, adults, parents, and educators.

Introduction to Career Development. Nebraska offers an online course, Nebraska Career Development: An Introduction, for educators to learn how to integrate career development effectively into education and the career development process.



Full Report



NEBRASKA • 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 NE State Board of Education's Strategic Plan guides the vision and direction of education in Nebraska for the next ten years. One of the goals outlined in the plan is to have 100% of NE schools provide all students with a program for career awareness, exploration, and preparation by 2026. NDE plans to include this goal in its accountability system with specific indicators in the future. In addition, NDE, with the Departments of Labor and Economic Development, introduced a new initiative to provide students with experiences in business and industry that deliver learning opportunities outside the traditional classroom and campus. These experiences are defined in a new Nebraska Workplace Experiences Continuum and designed to engage local businesses and industries with schools to help students identify career opportunities in NE and develop workplace skills using an essential set of strategies, which include career exploration .
Career Exploration Definition Does the state formally define career exploration for middle school students?	 Building Emerging Advanced	The NE Career Development Model defines career exploration skills as learning how to identify and analyze various career options regarding what education, training, experience, and competencies are required for success. Exploration includes learning directly in workplaces to discover what it may be like to work in different occupations. It also involves learning how to evaluate how well a career matches or fits one's interests, skills, strengths, and work values.
Advocacy Are there organizations within the state that are advocating for middle school career exploration?	 Building Emerging Advanced	NE does not have any organizations advocating for middle school career exploration that rose to recognition within the landscape scan.



NEBRASKA • POLICY

Category	Status	Description
Standards Does the state have policies that establish standard practices for career exploration in middle schools?	 Building Emerging Advanced	NE's Career Readiness Standards has middle school indicators for career development. One of the standards is managing personal career development, which includes college and career exploration and developing a personal learning plan. Additional career exploration opportunities are incorporated into middle-level career field area standards . NE also has a middle school career development course with standards that outline career exploration activities. Within the state's Regulations and Procedures for the Accreditation of Schools , schools are required to have career education in middle school.
Accountability Does the state integrate career exploration into their accountability systems?	 Building Emerging Advanced	NE does not integrate career exploration into its ESSA state plan. However, middle school career exploration is formally included in NE's Perkins V Plan as an area of emphasis for program improvement and increased student achievement.
Student Requirements Does the state have policies that require middle school students to complete career exploration activities?	 Building Emerging Advanced	While NE has indicators to guide career development for middle school students, there are no associated requirements for middle school students.
Incentives Does the state have policies that incentivize career exploration in middle schools?	 Building Emerging Advanced	NDE awards an Outstanding Career and Technical Education Program Award every year to recognize the outstanding achievement of CTE programs in junior high/middle schools, high schools, and postsecondary institutions. One criterion used to assess quality is the effective implementation of career guidance and work-based learning.



NEBRASKA • INFRASTRUCTURE

Category	Status	Description
Funding Does the state use state or federal funding sources to support career exploration for middle school students?		NE financially supports Nebraska Career Connections , a platform with career exploration and planning activities. The state also requires Perkins V recipients to use federal dollars to improve career guidance and academic counseling programs that assist students in making informed academic and CTE decisions.
Professional Development Does the state support the training of school counselors (and other school staff) in career exploration?		NE offers an Introduction to Career Development course for educators. The course has three parts: creating a culture to integrate career development into education, career development is a process, and a video summary of career development. The state also hosts annual CTE conferences and a NE School Counselor Academy.
Material Supports Does the state provide material supports on the implementation of middle school career exploration?		NE's Career Development Model webpage includes lesson plans and resources to help guide career development. As additional support, NDE has PreK-12 Career Development Program Planning resources to help districts plan and develop their career development model programs, including district assessments and school counseling standards alignment crosswalks. NE also maintains a list of career exploration resources and curriculum, including Engage: Middle School Career Development Curriculum and Habitudes for NE career-ready students.
Data Collection Does the state collect data on middle school career exploration opportunities in the state?		NE's State Board of Education Strategic Plan aims to increase the number of Nebraskans ready to succeed in postsecondary education, career, and civic life. One of the outcome measures to assess progress toward this goal is to have 100% of NE schools provide all students with a program for career awareness, exploration, and preparation by 2026. NDE collects data to demonstrate how far the state has progressed in this measure.
CTSOs Does the state support participation in career and technical student organizations?		NE supports CTSOs , including several that have middle school chapters: FBLA, FCCLA, SkillsUSA, and HOSA.
Organizations Are there organizations within the state that support career exploration in middle schools?		The Nebraska Public Power District's outreach program educates middle and high school students about career opportunities in the electric utility industry. Nebraska 4-H operates Career Chat Live, which offers live, online career exploration opportunities for middle-school-aged youth. During each session, students meet workforce professionals and can ask questions and engage in small group conversations with guest speakers.