

RHODE ISLAND

★ State Highlight

Data Collection. The Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) collects district data detailing the milestones completed on the Individual Learning Plan (ILP) by grade level. The department publishes the data on a [dashboard](#) to make this data transparent, accessible, and understandable.



VISION



PrepareRI. An inter-agency task force operates an initiative to prepare all Rhode Island youth with the skills needed for high-wage jobs. [PrepareRI](#) works with businesses, schools, universities, and non-profits to ensure students are college and career-ready. They believe middle school students should have career exploration opportunities and individual learning plans based on their strengths and interests.

State Definition. PrepareRI [defines career exploration](#) as programming targeted toward elementary and middle school students that introduces them to various possible careers.

Rhode Island has yet to codify the definition of career exploration.



POLICY



Individual Learning Plans. Since 2005, students in grades 6-12 have been required to complete an [ILP](#) as part of Rhode Island’s Secondary School and Graduation Requirement Regulations. ILPs are a student-directed planning and monitoring tool that customizes learning opportunities throughout students’ secondary school experience, broadens their perspectives, and supports the attainment of goals. The ILP documents students’ interests, needs, supports, course selections, transition placements, and other learning experiences in and out of school.

Rhode Island has yet to formally include middle school career exploration in state or federal accountability systems or provide incentives for career exploration activities.



INFRASTRUCTURE



Professional Learning Group. RIDE provides district support with a [group](#) that offers a forum for school teams to come together to customize, design, implement, and evaluate their ILP process.

Perkins Funding. Middle schools can use up to 10% of their [Perkins V allocation](#) for career exploration activities and programs in grades 5-8. Additionally, districts may apply for [Career Exploration grants](#) to help middle school students understand possible careers.

Junior Achievement of Rhode Island. This organization offers [middle school programming](#) that helps students decide how to best prepare for their educational and professional future.



Full Report



RHODE ISLAND • 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	RI has an inter-agency task force called PrepareRI that includes RIDE, the Governor's Workforce Board (GWB), and the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner (OPC). These agencies partner to prepare all RI youth with the skills they need for well-paying jobs. The initiative is built on the belief that all students should be prepared for success in college and career. PrepareRI's Action Plan for 2022-2027 targets that 80% of students will create goals for high school through the ILP, explore a college in RI, and demonstrate growth in career knowledge. Prepare RI believes that the middle school focus should be on exploration.
Career Exploration Definition Does the state formally define career exploration for middle school students?	 Building Emerging Advanced	PrepareRI defines career exploration as programming that introduces younger students to various possible careers. They specify that these programs primarily focus on elementary and middle school students, while high school students will explore careers more deeply through work-based learning.
Advocacy Are there organizations within the state that are advocating for middle school career exploration?	 Building Emerging Advanced	The PrepareRI Work-Based Learning Navigator , developed and launched with Fidelity Investments and the Partnership for RI and managed by Skills for RI's Future, is a free online portal to connect classroom learning to career exploration and work-based learning opportunities. Through this platform, employers post work-based learning opportunities, and educators can search and request classroom resources.









RHODE ISLAND • POLICY

Category	Status	Description
Standards Does the state have policies that establish standard practices for career exploration in middle schools?	 Building Emerging Advanced	RI state regulations require that districts <u>establish protocols</u> for the development, implementation, and student-based monitoring of Individual Learning Plans; these plans are aligned to students' high school experience and reviewed at least twice each school year and at key student transition periods. RI statutes also require that districts <u>identify and recruit businesses</u> to provide career exploration activities for students.
Accountability Does the state integrate career exploration into their accountability systems?	 Building Emerging Advanced	RI's indicators used for ESSA accountability do not include career exploration. However, RI does leverage its <u>Perkins V Plan</u> to expand career exploration programming in middle school through grants, partnerships with quality curriculum providers, and career fairs.
Student Requirements Does the state have policies that require middle school students to complete career exploration activities?	 Building Emerging Advanced	Beginning in 6th grade, students must begin using a planning and monitoring tool called an <u>Individual Learning Plan</u> . These are required to graduate from high school.
Incentives Does the state have policies that incentivize career exploration in middle schools?	 Building Emerging Advanced	RI's GWB established the <u>Career Exploration Equity Grant Program</u> to support equitable access to high-quality career exploration opportunities for youth and young adults. The program provides a 100% reimbursement for eligible activities and costs up to \$5,000 per calendar year.



RHODE ISLAND • 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>RI's ESSA Plan specifies that Title I schools can use those dollars to support the development of ILPs. Additionally, their Perkins V State Plan allows recipients to use up to 10% of their Perkins V allocation for career exploration activities and programs in grades 5-8.</p>
<p>Professional Development</p> <p>Does the state support the training of school counselors (and other school staff) in career exploration?</p>		<p>RIDE hosts a professional learning group to support districts implementing revised ILP programs. School teams combine to customize, design, implement, and evaluate their ILP process. Schools can discuss and learn from each other's successes and get feedback on addressing any obstacles.</p>
<p>Material Supports</p> <p>Does the state provide material supports on the implementation of middle school career exploration?</p>		<p>RI provides multiple supports to guide quality implementation of middle school career exploration, including an ILP Framework & Toolkit, a Career Exploration Menu, a list of resources for students & families, and guidance on data collection.</p>
<p>Data Collection</p> <p>Does the state collect data on middle school career exploration opportunities in the state?</p>		<p>RIDE collects data from districts on a quarterly basis that details the milestones completed on the ILPs by grade level. ILP milestones are published on a dashboard on the department's website.</p>
<p>CTSOs</p> <p>Does the state support participation in career and technical student organizations?</p>		<p>RI supports ten CTSO opportunities, three of which have middle school chapters: FBLA, HOSA, and SkillsUSA, by providing lists of information and resources on best practices for implementation.</p>
<p>Organizations</p> <p>Are there organizations within the state that support career exploration in middle schools?</p>		<p>Junior Achievement of Rhode Island offers middle-grade programs to help students decide how to best prepare for their educational and professional future. The programs supplement standard social studies curricula and develop communication skills.</p>