

TENNESSEE

★ State Highlight

Best For All. Tennessee Department of Education's (TDOE) strategic plan, Best For All, ensures every student has career exploration in middle school and a high school pathway that aligns with their interests and strengths. Governor Lee and the General Assembly supported these efforts through grants to increase opportunities for career readiness and student success in middle and high schools.



VISION



Articulated Pathways Model. TN's Perkins V Plan outlines an Articulated Pathway Model, which is a framework that specifies that education leaders should strengthen industry and community partners in the middle grades to provide stronger career exploration experiences.

State Definition. Tennessee's Perkins V State Plan defines career exploration as gaining hands-on access to the day-to-day work of the career through, for example, a job shadow or virtual industry tour experience.

Tennessee has yet to codify the definition of career exploration.



POLICY



Career Aptitude Assessments. Tennessee code requires districts to administer a career aptitude assessment to grade 7 or 8 students. After administering the assessment, the district must provide students with information about career and technical education opportunities in which the student is eligible to participate.

Perkins V Priority. Tennessee's Perkins V plan highlights expanding equitable access to comprehensive career exploration in middle school as a priority. Two quality indicators include career counseling and advisement and demonstrating college and career readiness through work-based learning and career and technical student organization participation.



INFRASTRUCTURE






Online Career Planning Tools. Tennessee supports two online platforms that offer career planning tools for students: CollegeforTN is a free online resource for schools and districts to use for college and career advising, and Defined Careers is an online tool that helps students in grades K-12 explore careers. It includes a career assessment, curriculum, lesson plans, reports, etc. Defined Learning, an expansion of Defined Careers, is a comprehensive career experience platform that provides students in grades 6-12 the opportunity to experience hundreds of careers via project-based learning.

Tennessee has yet to provide dynamic training opportunities to staff related to middle school career exploration or incorporate career exploration into their data collection processes.





TENNESSEE • 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>TN's Perkins V Plan outlines an <u>Articulated Pathway Model</u>, a framework that ensures an individual experiences a pathway relevant to a career at every stage of their education. The framework specifies that education leaders should strengthen industry and community partners in the middle grades to provide stronger career exploration experiences, like job shadowing, and incorporate guest speakers from local businesses aligned to relevant employment opportunities and targeted industry clusters. TN's WIOA State Plan reiterates this concept, stating that TN's workforce development areas promote career exploration through <u>TN pathways</u> so young people can acquire educational, technical, and social skills that enhance career development. TDOE's <u>Strategic Plan</u> ensures that every student has career exploration in middle school and a high school pathway that aligns with their interests and strengths. Governor Lee and the General Assembly supported these efforts through the <u>distribution of grants</u> to increase opportunities for career readiness and student success in both middle schools and high schools.</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>TN's <u>Perkins V State Plan</u> defines career exploration as gaining hands-on access to the day-to-day work of the career through, for example, a job shadow or virtual industry tour experience.</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><u>TN Score</u> advocates for advancing student outcomes by focusing on supporting students to be ready for careers. They believe K-12 and higher education systems must provide students with coursework and other learning opportunities aligned to the workforce.</p>



TENNESSEE • POLICY

Category	Status	Description
Standards Does the state have policies that establish standard practices for career exploration in middle schools?	 Building Emerging Advanced	TN code requires LEAs to administer a career aptitude assessment to students in grades 7-8 to assist students in determining their interests and in making career decisions. TN also offers three career exploration courses : career awareness, career exploration, and career advising and planning. Finally, the state board of education policy outlines requirements for the Tennessee Comprehensive School Counseling Model of Practice, which includes college and career readiness standards to help students understand the connection between school and the world of work and to plan for and make a successful transition from school to postsecondary education and the workforce.
Accountability Does the state integrate career exploration into their accountability systems?	 Building Emerging Advanced	TN does not integrate career exploration into its ESSA state plan. However, TN's Perkins V Plan does highlight expanding equitable access to comprehensive career exploration in middle school as a priority. Two of the quality indicators include career counseling and advisement, and the demonstration of college and career readiness through WBL and CTSO participation.
Student Requirements Does the state have policies that require middle school students to complete career exploration activities?	 Building Emerging Advanced	TN State Board of Education policy requires all 8th-grade students to begin developing a high school and beyond plan that is reviewed at least annually and updated as needed for student use. As part of the development of the plan, all students must take a career aptitude assessment in grades 7 or 8 to assist with understanding how a variety of skills and attributes impact potential success and satisfaction with different career options and work environments and use the results to inform the plan. The development of this plan continues through high school.
Incentives Does the state have policies that incentivize career exploration in middle schools?	 Building Emerging Advanced	TN invested \$500M in state funds in the Innovative School Models to empower schools to transform the traditional high school and middle school environment to foster a culture of college and career awareness and readiness. Schools can apply these funds for the resources, flexibility, and technical support to successfully reimagine time, space, partnerships, and learning modes, engaging all learners in grades 6-12. Middle schools can apply to receive between \$200,000 and \$500,000, depending on the number of students served.



TENNESSEE • 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>TN financially supports CollegeforTN and Defined Careers, online platforms that offer career-planning tools for students. TN also increased state expenditures to support expanding CTE programs to middle school students. The state also allows middle schools to receive between \$200,000 and \$500,000 to support the Innovative School Models initiative to foster a culture of college and career awareness and readiness in middle and high schools.</p>
<p>Professional Development</p> <p>Does the state support the training of school counselors (and other school staff) in career exploration?</p>		<p>TN's STEM Innovation Network offers Defined Careers, a career experience platform designed to engage students in career awareness through project- and problem-based performance tasks. Every teacher of a 5th-8th grade student has access to free professional development in the form of self-paced Online PD Modules, which offer a planning process to guide curriculum.</p>
<p>Material Supports</p> <p>Does the state provide material supports on the implementation of middle school career exploration?</p>		<p>TN's Comprehensive School Counseling Model provides step-by-step guidance for developing and implementing the revised school counseling model and standards. TDOE has additional career development resources for school counselors. The state also has an implementation guide for CTE. TN maintains an online platform, Defined Learning, a comprehensive career experience platform that provides students in grades 6-12 the opportunity to experience hundreds of careers via project-based learning. Best for All Central Hub provides additional curricular resources to help facilitate career-connected learning.</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>TN supports CTSOs, 3 of which have middle school chapters: FBLA, HOSA, and TSA.</p>
<p>Organizations</p> <p>Are there organizations within the state that support career exploration in middle schools?</p>		<p>Junior Achievement of Middle Tennessee provides career exploration experiences, such as career fairs. Defined Learning provides a career exploration platform to learn about STEM careers.</p>