



VIRGINIA



★ State Highlight

Academic and Career Plan. Virginia requires middle schools to begin the development of a personal Academic and Career Plan (ACP) for each 7th-grade student. Each ACP must include the student's program of study for high school graduation and a postsecondary career pathway based on the student's academic and career interests.



VISION



State Definition. Virginia's [CTE High Quality WBL Guide](#) defines career exploration as experiences that encourage students to develop personal career interests, better understand pathways to a chosen career, and the workplace readiness skills needed to make informed decisions regarding secondary and postsecondary education and training.

Virginia has yet to codify the definition of career exploration.



POLICY



Career and Technical Exploration Courses. As issued by [code](#), middle schools in Virginia must make career and technical education courses an option as an elective.

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



INFRASTRUCTURE



Virginia Education Wizard. The [Virginia Education Wizard](#) website is a comprehensive career and college planning tool that allows students to assess their skills and explore associated career clusters and contains a digital version of a student's Academic and Career Plan.

Virginia has yet to set aside funding for middle school career exploration efforts or incorporate these activities into their data collection processes.





VIRGINIA • 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 state's leadership has does not have any public statements about middle school career exploration as a priority for the state.
Career Exploration Definition Does the state formally define career exploration for middle school students?	 Building Emerging Advanced	VA's CTE High-Quality WBL Guide defines career exploration as experiences that encourage students to develop personal career interests, a better understanding of pathways to a chosen career, and the workplace readiness skills needed to make informed decisions regarding secondary and postsecondary education and training. These experiences are typically curricular experiences.
Advocacy Are there organizations within the state that are advocating for middle school career exploration?	 Building Emerging Advanced	ChamberVA advocates for education and training programs that develop a workforce possessing the skills and business-recognized credentials aligned with industry's current and future business needs. The organization hosts career exploration events that encourage students to explore career interests and in-demand jobs from 100+ businesses in the region.



VIRGINIA • POLICY

Category	Status	Description
Standards Does the state have policies that establish standard practices for career exploration in middle schools?	 Building Emerging Advanced	VA administrative code requires all schools to begin development of a personal <u>ACP</u> for each 7th grade student with completion by the fall of the student's 8th grade year. The components of the ACP must include the student's program of study for high school graduation and a postsecondary career pathway based on the student's academic and career interests. In high school, a career-related learning experience shall be chosen by the student and documented in the ACP. Middle school students must also complete a locally selected career interest inventory, select a career pathway, and complete a career investigations course. In addition, middle schools must make <u>career and technical exploration courses</u> an elective option.
Accountability Does the state integrate career exploration into their accountability systems?	 Building Emerging Advanced	VA does not integrate career exploration into its ESSA state plan. However, middle school career exploration activities, such as career assessments and the completion of the ACP, are formally included in <u>VA's Perkins V Plan</u> .
Student Requirements Does the state have policies that require middle school students to complete career exploration activities?	 Building Emerging Advanced	VA's Standards for Accrediting Public Schools (SOA) includes provisions for each middle and high school student to develop an <u>Academic and Career Plan</u> (ACP), which must include a program of study for high school graduation and a postsecondary career pathway based on the student's academic and career interests. In middle school, students complete a locally selected career interest inventory and select a career pathway. To support development of the ACP, students must also complete a career investigations course selected from the career and technical education state-approved list. The ACP is maintained and reviewed through the student's high school experience.
Incentives Does the state have policies that incentivize career exploration in middle schools?	 Building Emerging Advanced	While VA has some recognition and awards programs in place, none specifically address middle school career exploration.



VIRGINIA • 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>According to VA's Perkins V State Plan, the state allocates federal dollars in support of professional development for educators to build their understanding of middle school career exploration and CTE.</p>
<p>Professional Development</p> <p>Does the state support the training of school counselors (and other school staff) in career exploration?</p>		<p>VDOE's Combined State Plan and Perkins V State Plan outline how federal dollars are allocated to professional development opportunities for educators, including a professional development institute that aims to build participants' awareness of career pathways and how they can benefit middle school students participating in CTE.</p>
<p>Material Supports</p> <p>Does the state provide material supports on the implementation of middle school career exploration?</p>		<p>VA provides resources on their Academic and Career Plan website to assist with the implementation of a personal learning plan and course of study that aligns with the student's academic and career goals. This includes the VA Education Wizard, a comprehensive career and college planning website that provides students with the ability to assess their skills and explore associated career clusters and contains a digital version of a student's ACP.</p>
<p>Data Collection</p> <p>Does the state collect data on middle school career exploration opportunities in the state?</p>		<p>VDOE collects CTE Career Cluster Codes and Finisher Codes that identify if a student has finished a required CTE sequence of courses or taken at least one state-approved CTE course at anytime in grades 7-12.</p>
<p>CTSOs</p> <p>Does the state support participation in career and technical student organizations?</p>		<p>VA supports CTSOs, five of which have middle school chapters: FBLA, FFA, HOSA, SkillsUSA, and TSA.</p>
<p>Organizations</p> <p>Are there organizations within the state that support career exploration in middle schools?</p>		<p>The ChamberRVA hosts Mission Tomorrow, which provides 8th graders an opportunity to participate in career exploration events and programming. They hold events that allow middle school and high school students and their families to explore career opportunities and learn about work-based learning opportunities, such as job shadowing and internships.</p>