

Career Exploration in Middle School

Grades Six - Grade Eight

This document serves as a resource guide to support schools serving middle school students as they prepare to successfully complete [Graduation Pathways](#) in high school. There are three overarching themes that need to be incorporated into student learning and experiences during grades six through eight.



Career Exploration

Career Exploration skills consist of learning how to identify and analyze various career options in terms of what education, training, experience, and competencies are required for success. Exploration includes learning in workplace environments or directly in workplaces to discover and experience what it may be like to work in different occupations. It also involves learning to evaluate how well a career matches or fits one's own interests, skills, strengths, and work values.



Career and Academic Planning

Career and Academic Planning equips students and their families with the tools necessary to make more informed choices about secondary and postsecondary career education and training. Students develop a Graduation Plan as both a learning process and a planning document for academic, career and technical education, dual credit coursework, workplace learning, and activities aligned to career goals.



Employability Skills

Indiana's **Employability Skills** standards allow for students to be prepared for the ever-changing needs of today's workforce. The expectation is for students to work through the standards in multi-subject areas. The standards are based on the National Employability Skill Standards from the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE), the Indiana Department of Workforce Development's Employability Skill Benchmarks, the Indiana Department of Education's (IDOE) Social and Emotional Competencies, and the Governor's Work Ethic Certificate.

Student Success Tips

Which of the following items are in place for students at your school?

- Students** are given time and specific activities allowing them to research careers they might be interested in
- Students** use an online career development tool such as Indiana Career Explorer or an approved alternative (Indiana state law (IC 20-30-5-14))
- Students** take career exploration assessments (interest inventory, values, aptitude, skills, etc.)
- School** integrates career exploration in every course
- School** integrates financial literacy standards
- Students** participate in one or more experiences with local community and employer partners each year in different career sectors
- Students** participate in afterschool career exploration
- Students** take *Exploring College and Careers* and/or *Preparing for College and Careers*
- Students** take Middle School Career and Technical Education (CTE) course(s)
- Students** learn about which CTE courses are available at their local high school or career center
- School** aligns CTE Middle School course offerings to local area career center CTE pathways or area High School CTE pathways
- Students** create a personalized academic and career plan ([Graduation Plan](#))
- School** clarifies path to graduation (Graduation Pathways) to students and parents/guardians
- Students** register for the 21st Century Scholar program
- Students** demonstrate employability skills standards each year



Resources and Tools

Check out these resources aligned to the student success tips!

Key Component	Resources and Tools
<p>Students are given time and specific activities allowing them to research careers they might be interested in</p>	<p>General Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bureau of Labor Statistics Career Exploration - Indiana Career Ready - My Next Move - Bureau of Labor Statistics Posters
<p>Students use an online career development tool such as Indiana Career Explorer or an approved alternative</p>	<p>General Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IDOE College and Career Navigation Webpage <p>Approved Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Indiana Career Explorer - Indiana Career Explorer Lesson Plans - Naviance - Indiana Career Information System - Xello
<p>Students take career exploration assessments (interest inventory, values, aptitude, skills, etc.)</p>	<p>Miscellaneous</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CareerOneStop Assessments - Holland Code Career Test - Personality Style - Myers-Briggs - Career Clusters Assessment - Education Planner Self-Assessments - Princeton Review Career Quiz - Indiana Career Explorer Interest Inventory - Indiana Career Explorer Skills Confidence Assessment - Indiana Career Explorer Work Values Assessment - SchCounselor.com
<p>School integrates career exploration in every course</p>	<p>Computer Science</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IDOE Computer Science 6-8 Standards - IDOE Computer Science Professional Development - IDOE Computer Science Curriculum Resource Guide - IDOE Computer Science Implementation Toolkit - Nextech Computer Science Professional Development <p>Project-Based Learning (PBL)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Project-Based Learning - Defining High Quality - Resources and Sample Projects - Project-Based Learning in MATH <p>Curriculum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integrated Curriculum

<p>School integrates career exploration in every course (Continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IDOE Evidence-Based STEM Curriculum - Project Lead the Way - Gateway - SREB – Middle Grades STEM Curriculum
<p>School integrates financial literacy standards</p>	<p>Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IDOE Financial Literacy
<p>Students participate in one or more experiences with local community and employer partners each year in different career sectors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Job shadowing - Jobsite/Workplace tour - Career Exploration Fair - Volunteer at a community organization (career-based service learning) - Visit a college, university, or apprenticeship program - Career-specific guest speakers - Career research projects - Career mentoring - Workplace challenge 	<p>General Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Indiana K-12 Work-Based Learning Manual <p>Job Shadowing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Job Shadowing PTECH (pgs. 23-30) - Setting up a Job Shadowing Program - Learn More Indiana - Greater Clark - Indiana Department of Corrections Registration (SAMPLE FORM) - Training Agreement (SAMPLE FORM) - Questions to Ask (SAMPLE FORM) - Observation Sheet (SAMPLE FORM) - Presentation Evaluation Form (SAMPLE FORM) <p>Jobsite/Workplace Tour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How to Guide for Workplace Tours - Workplace Tour PTECH (pgs. 17-21) <p>Career Exploration Fair</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - JAJobSpark <p>Career-Specific Guest Speakers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nepris - virtual guest speakers and job shadowing <p>Career Mentoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Career Mentoring PTECH (pgs. 53-60) <p>Workplace Challenge</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workplace Challenge PTECH (pgs. 43-50)
<p>Students participate in afterschool career exploration</p>	<p>General Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Indiana Afterschool Network – Program Search - Exploring - STEM-Rich Afterschool Making Activities <p>Robotics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vex Robotics - Vex Robotics Competitions - TechPoint Foundation For Youth Robotics Grant - FIRST LEGO League - FIRST Tech Challenge <p>Coding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Girls Who Code - CoderDojo Indiana - CS First - Code.org
<p>Students take <i>Exploring College and Careers</i> and/or <i>Preparing for College and Careers</i></p>	<p>IDOE Courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exploring College and Careers - Preparing for College and Careers

<p>Students take Middle School Career and Technical Education (CTE) course(s)</p>	<p>Courses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exploring Agriculture Science and Business ED - Business and Information Technology - Digital Citizenship - Engineering and Technology - Family and Consumer Sciences - Computer Science
<p>Students learn about which CTE courses are available at their local high school or career center</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What's different about high school lesson plan PT 1 - What's different about high school lesson plan PT 2 - CTE Introduction - CTE Hands On
<p>School aligns CTE Middle School course offerings to local area career center CTE pathways or area High School CTE pathways</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Career Center Directors by Region
<p>Students create a personalized academic and career plan (Graduation Plan) including, but not limited to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Four-year high school course plan - Top three career choices - Career exploration assessment results (interest inventory, aptitude, values, etc.) - Career goals - List of potential high school experiences aligned to career goals and Graduation Pathway requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Forming your Graduation Plan - Class of 2023 and beyond - Lesson Plan
<p>School clarifies path to graduation (Graduation Pathways) to students and parents/guardians</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Graduation Pathways
<p>Students register for the 21st Century Scholar program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is ScholarTrack? - ScholarTrack Account - 21st Century Scholars Lesson Plan
<p>Students demonstrate employability skills standards each year</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - IDOE Employability Skills Standards - IDOE Employability Skills 6-8 Standards - Employability Skills Implementation Guide - Employability Skills Poster