



Career Education - PaCE Framework

The Illinois Postsecondary and Career Expectations (PaCE) Framework provides students with guided exploration of postsecondary planning and options in a developmentally appropriate manner.

Meaningful participation in postsecondary preparation requires students to perceive college and career pathways as both possible and probable. Traditional programs often serve only students who already possess a college-going or career-oriented identity. The middle school framework addresses this gap by preparing all students to engage fully with the PaCE Framework throughout their critical high school years.

By the End of 6th Grade:

- Students engage in Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) lessons throughout the year to foster character development.
- Students learn to develop short-term and long-term goals that support personal and academic growth.
- Students identify challenges they may face during the transition to middle school and recognize available support resources.
- Students explore how their brains respond to new experiences and develop through practice, building a foundation for a growth mindset.
- Students complete a career-interest assessment to identify career paths aligned with their interests and values.
- Students participate in career exploration lessons designed to expose them to potential interests and careers.

By the End of 7th Grade:

- Students engage in Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) lessons throughout the year to foster character development.
- Students establish short-term and long-term goals that support personal and academic growth.
- Students identify challenges they may face and recognize available support resources.
- Students understand growth-mindset principles and distinguish between fixed and growth-mindset perspectives.
- Students explore career clusters and interest assessments to discover career paths aligned with their interests and values.
- Students participate in exploratory classes that expose them to potential interests and careers.
- Students have the opportunity to take a financial literacy class covering essential money management skills, including investing, consumer skills, budgeting, credit, and planning for life after high school.

By the End of 8th Grade:

- Students engage in Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) lessons throughout the year to foster character development.
- Students establish short-term and long-term goals that support personal and academic growth.
- Students identify challenges they may face and recognize available support resources.
- Students implement growth mindset strategies as they prepare for high school.
- Students complete a career-interest assessment to identify career paths aligned with their interests and values.
- Students participate in exploratory classes that expose them to potential interests and careers.
- Students have the opportunity to take a financial literacy class covering essential money management skills, including investing, consumer skills, budgeting, credit, and planning for life after high school.
- Students participate in a career exploration unit aligned with potential career paths.
- Students attend freshman orientation at their feeder high school to facilitate a smooth transition.