

## **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.