



## Illinois PaCE Postsecondary and Career Expectations

At the middle school and early high school level, the Illinois Postsecondary and Career Expectations (PaCE) Framework is designed to provide students with guided exploration of postsecondary planning and options in a manner that is consistent with adolescent development. Meaningful participation in post-secondary preparation programs requires that students perceive college and/or career as possible and probable. Too often, programs are designed to serve only students who already have a college-going or career-oriented identity. The developmental work in the middle school framework is intended to prepare students to more fully engage with the PaCE Framework throughout the critical high school years.



### By the end of 6th grade

**A student should be exposed to:**

- information about and examples of a wide range of careers
- language that emphasizes individual skills, strengths, and assets
- practices that develop a growth mindset

**A student should be supported to:**

- explore their interests
- practice their strengths
- develop their confidence in their abilities

### By the end of 7th grade

**A student should be supported to:**

- engage in guided self-reflection
- articulate aspirations
- envision a positive future
- explore their habits
- create or change a habit
- record their progress
- explore career interests
- explore their strengths
- effectively ask for help
- understand a growth mind set

### By the end of 8th grade

**A student should be supported to:**

- explore barriers to aspirations
- articulate personal strengths
- identify sources of motivation
- explore career interests
- develop an educational plan for at least one career interest
- compare possible financial futures
- complete a career cluster survey
- attend a career exploration day
- demonstrate a growth mind set
- explore learning styles
- map a support network
- complete a unit on education planning

**A student should be exposed to:**

- the concept of career clusters of interest
- relationship between community service/extracurricular activities and postsecondary (PS)/career goals
- be exposed to a financial literacy unit in a course or workshop

