



Middle School Pathway Exploration Guidelines

I. Overview and Purpose

In accordance with 603 CMR 4.00, Easthampton Public Schools (EPS) is committed to ensuring that all middle school students are made aware of, and gain exposure to, career technical education (CTE) programs available to them through district, regional, agricultural, and other public high school options. This policy outlines how EPS collaborates with CTE schools, provides opportunities for exploration, and integrates these pathways into each student's My Career and Academic Plan (MyCAP) development.

II. District Goals for Career Exploration and Career-Connected Learning

EPS believes that all students should graduate ready for college, career, and community life, with exposure to a wide range of pathways that reflect their interests and strengths.

Our goals are to:

1. Ensure all students understand the range of high school pathways, including CTE, college preparatory, early college, and dual enrollment options.
2. Provide students with structured opportunities in grades 6–8 to explore career interests, technical fields, and postsecondary connections.
3. Integrate MyCAP activities into academic and advisory settings to help students align their skills, interests, and values with potential career paths.

III. High School Pathway Options Available to Students

Easthampton Public Schools partners with two primary CTE affiliates:

CTE School	Location	Key Program Areas	Notes
Lower Pioneer Valley Career and Technical Education Center (CTEC)	West Springfield, MA	Automotive Technology, Carpentry, Cosmetology, Culinary Arts, Criminal Justice, Graphic Communications, Health Assisting, Horticulture, Machine Tool Technology, and others	Primary CTE affiliate since 2004. All Easthampton students may apply.
Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School	Northampton, MA	Agricultural Mechanics, Animal Science, Horticulture, Natural Resources, and related programs	Students may apply for agricultural or natural resource programs not offered at CTEC.

Students apply through the guidance office and complete the Chapter 74 form in coordination with the EPS School Counseling Department and Mrs. Baj, who oversees the application process.

Application deadlines are:

- Smith Vocational: February 15, 2026 (applications open November 1, 2025)
- CTEC: March 1, 2026

IV. Middle School Career Exploration and MyCAP Integration

Career awareness and MyCAP are embedded in the Mountain View School Grades 6–8 curriculum as part of advisory, counseling, and academic courses.

Key MyCAP activities include:

- Grade 6: Introduction to career clusters and personal interests through the Massachusetts Career Information System (MassCIS).
- Grade 7: Exploration of CTE pathways, completion of a skills inventory, and development of early academic and career goals.
- Grade 8: Connection of interests to high school program options, preparation for vocational applications, and scheduling of tours.

All students receive annual information about high school and CTE options via in-person presentations by CTEC and Smith Vocational representatives, digital and mailed communications by October 15 each school year, and updates posted on the EPS website's "Transition to High School" page.

V. Middle School CTE Tour Policy

All EPS Grade 8 students will have the opportunity to tour CTE schools during the school day as part of the district's pathway exploration programming.

- Transportation will be provided by Easthampton Public Schools
- Students attending approved tours will be marked present for school purposes once participation is confirmed by the CTE site.
- EPS maintains a rotation schedule to ensure all interested students have equitable access to CTE visits.

VI. Collaboration and Communication

Mountain View School counselors and administration will coordinate with CTEC and Smith Vocational staff to schedule annual presentations and tours, share information on application timelines, program availability, and Chapter 74 requirements, host family

information nights in partnership with CTE representatives, and distribute written materials electronically and in hard copy upon request.

VII. Providing Records to CTE Schools and Programs

During the admissions process, EPS provides each CTE school with required student records, including transcript and attendance data, conduct and recommendation forms, and Chapter 74 documentation as verified by the guidance office. All information is transmitted securely and in compliance with FERPA regulations.

VIII. Maintenance of Records and Implementation Documentation

The district will maintain annual records that document student participation in tours and MyCAP activities, CTE informational mailings and event attendance, lists of applicants to each CTE program, and confirmation of annual attestation to DESE regarding policy implementation. Documentation is retained by the School Counseling Department and Superintendent's Office.

IX. Appendix: MyCAP Scope and Sequence (Grades 6–8)

Grade	Focus	Key Activities	Connections to Pathway Policy
6	Self-Discovery	Interest inventory, reflection activities	Establishes foundation for career exploration
7	Exploration	MassCIS career clusters, guest speakers, initial MyCAP goal-setting	Introduces CTE and high school options
8	Planning	CTE and high school visits, portfolio updates, high school course planning	Aligns postsecondary pathways with CTE opportunities