

Middle School Pathway Exploration Policy

Policy Overview

The Ayer Shirley Regional School District is committed to ensuring that all middle school students and their families are well-informed about the wide range of educational options available to them for high school, including Career and Technical Education (CTE) and vocational programs. In compliance with Massachusetts state regulations (603 CMR 4.00) and guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), this policy outlines how our district provides students with awareness and exposure to CTE and vocational opportunities at local, regional, and agricultural public high schools.

High School Pathway Options

The following CTE schools are available to students of Ayer and Shirley:

- **For residents of Ayer and Shirley:**
Nashoba Valley Technical High School, 100 Littleton Road, Westford, MA
In accordance with **Chapter 74 Approved Programs**.

Middle School Career Exploration

The District's implementation of career and academic tools directly connects the exploration of CTE schools and programs to a student's broader academic and career goals. Our tools help students explore their interests, skills, and values starting in middle school. This self-discovery process guides students as they research high school pathways and make informed decisions about which school environment, whether a traditional high school or a specialized CTE program or vocational program, that best aligns with their emerging goals.

Collaboration with Member Vocational Schools

All middle schools in the district will actively collaborate with member CTE/vocational schools to inform students about the CTE/vocational opportunities available to them.

This collaboration includes:

- **Information Sharing:** Annually middle schools will provide member CTE/vocational schools with the names, addresses, and email addresses of all enrolled sixth, seventh, and eighth-grade students.
- **On-Campus Assemblies:** Each fall, all eighth-grade students will have the opportunity to attend assemblies on-campus at the middle school and hosted by the CTE/vocational school. These assemblies will provide students with information about CTE programs and the application process.

- **School Tours:** Each fall, interested eighth-grade students will have the opportunity to tour their regional vocational school. Transportation expenses will be covered by the vocational school.
- **Promotion of Events:** We will share information about vocational school Open House and informational events on the district website and through regular communication channels, such as principal newsletters.
- **Application Interviews:** We will provide opportunities at the middle school during the school day for vocational schools to schedule in-person interviews, if applicable, with students who have applied.
- **Online Resources:** By October 15th each year, the district website will publish pertinent information about vocational school options, including links to admission applications, admissions policies, and open house/informational event schedules.
- **Providing Admissions Records to CTE Schools:** Middle schools will provide relevant information to member vocational schools for students who have applied. This may include documentation of student interest, attendance records, and discipline records in accordance with the vocational school's approved admissions policy and DESE guidance.

Maintenance of Records

Our district middle school Principal will maintain a record of all on-site presentations, assemblies, and student tours to CTE schools, along with other relevant information about collaboration between the district and member CTE/vocational schools. These records will be made available to DESE upon request.

School Committee Approved: November 19, 2025

Third Read - November 19, 2025

Second Read: October 22, 2025

First Read: October 7, 2025