Malden Public Schools
Middle School Pathway Exploration Policy
December 2025

Overview
In accordance with Massachusetts state regulations (603 CMR 4.00), Malden Public Schools maintains this Middle School Pathway Exploration Policy to ensure that all middle school students are informed of, and gain exposure to, career technical education (CTE) programs available to them at local, regional, agricultural, and other public high schools.

This policy supports Malden's commitment to equitable access to information and experiences that prepare students for thoughtful decisions about their high school, postsecondary, and career pathways.

Malden Public Schools will submit this policy to DESE and update it as required. The district will also submit an annual attestation that the policy is being implemented. The policy will be publicly available on the district's website and in written form upon request.

District Goals for Career Exploration
Early exposure to a variety of secondary school and career pathways encourages students to make informed decisions about their academic and career goals, ensures equitable access to CTE and other specialized programs, and connects middle school exploration with MyCAP (My Career and Academic Plan) as a tool for lifelong career planning.

High School Pathway Options Available to Students
The following High School Pathway Options are available to students who are residents of Malden:

- Malden High School programs, including career-themed pathways and electives.
- Northeast Metropolitan Regional Vocational High School (Wakefield), offering comprehensive CTE programs across multiple career clusters.
- Essex North Shore Agricultural and Technical School, providing specialized agricultural, environmental, and technical programs.
- Other Massachusetts public CTE schools as permitted through the state's application process.

These options align with students' secondary and postsecondary planning by building both academic knowledge and hands-on skills.

Middle School Career Exploration
MyCAP[1] is a student-centered, multi-year planning process, established jointly by The Boards of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Department of Higher Education (DHE) Massachusetts, designed to provide students with ongoing opportunities to plan for their academic, personal/social, and career success. With guidance from at least one identified caring adult in the school setting and in consultation with parents/guardians, students are empowered to seek out learning opportunities that align with their individual career interests and self-defined goals.

Malden Public Schools implements the MyCAP platform and processes, established by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to ensure that students have the opportunity to:

- Explore interests, skills, and career clusters.
- Connect coursework to future pathways.

[1] For more information on MyCAP, please see the Malden Public Schools' Program of Studies and the MyCAP resources from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

• Use Naviance as a platform to explore career options, reflect on interests, and build readiness for high school pathway decisions.

• Learn about CTE and specialized programs as part of annual guidance lessons.

Malden middle schools will collaborate with CTE schools to:

• Host presentations and information sessions for students and families by October 15 each year.

• Provide materials by email, our web-based communication system, and through the district's website by October 15 of each year. Materials will be available via postal mail upon request.

• Share CTE school information with families through:

- A district letter distributed by school counselors, which will also be posted on Malden Public Schools' public-facing website.
- Guidance Google Classrooms, where digital copies of resources and announcements will be posted.
- Guidance classroom & small group lessons led by school counselors.
- Caregiver Back to School Night, where information regarding high school options will be available.

• Offer school-based career exploration activities such as guest speakers, career fairs, and integrated classroom lessons.

Middle School CTE Tour Policy

• All middle school students will have at least one opportunity during regular school hours to tour a CTE school or program site, upon invitation by the CTE school.

• Hosting CTE schools will assume transportation costs.

• Students will not be penalized with unexcused absences when participation is verified by the CTE school or program.

Providing Records to CTE Schools and Programs

Malden Public Schools will release the names and addresses of all enrolled 7th and 8th grade students to CTE schools and programs by October 15 of each year. The district will provide CTE schools with requested records relevant to the application policy for the CTE school (i.e. attendance, discipline, and student interest), in accordance with admission timelines and applicable laws, as well as any other requested records, in compliance with FERPA and state law. Middle schools will not release transcript information until after a student is enrolled in the CTE school.

Maintenance of Records

Malden Public Schools will maintain documentation of student participation in CTE tours, distribution of information materials, MyCAP activity completion, and student & family engagement in CTE-related activities.

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

• Grade 6: Self-exploration – interests, strengths, introduction to MyCAP and Naviance.

• Grade 7: Career exploration – exposure to career clusters, local labor market information, high school options, and expanded use of Naviance.

• Grade 8: Pathway planning – detailed information on CTE and other high school options, preparation for high school course selection, development of postsecondary goals, and completion of career exploration activities in Naviance.

Connections to this policy: MyCAP and Naviance activities directly prepare students to understand and engage with high school pathway options, including CTE schools and programs.

Malden Middle School MyCAP Framework.docx