

Individual Plans of Study: An Overview for Families

As students navigate through high school and into career and college, it is important that they set educational goals and create a roadmap for success. This roadmap, or Individual Plan of Study, includes the development of a flexible career focus and an education plan to assure a successful transition to further education after high school (postsecondary education, i.e. technical, 2 yr. or 4 yr. colleges and universities) and/or the workforce. **The Kansas State Board of Education expects all school districts to implement Individual Plans of Study for all students beginning in the middle grades.**

What is an Individualized Plan of Study (IPS)?

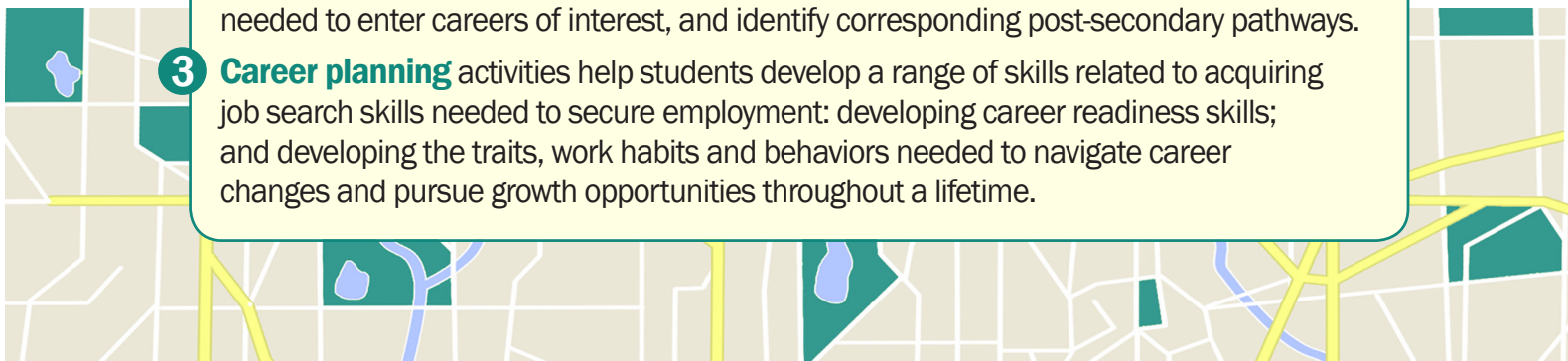
- An Individual Plan of Study (IPS) is both a product and a process that students may use with support from school counselors, teachers, and families to help them define their career goals and postsecondary plans and make informed decisions about their courses and activities throughout high school.
- The process of examining self-interest and aptitudes, setting goals, and laying out a plan that will lead toward those goals will serve students long after they have left high school.

How and when is the Individual Plan of Study (IPS) used?

The IPS is not a one-time activity, but an ongoing process by which students define, explore, and then refine their interests and goals throughout high school. Students usually begin using an IPS in middle school to guide their decisions about high school courses and start a process of career and college exploration.

The IPS is more effective when it is regularly reviewed and updated beginning in middle school and continuing through and beyond high school. Quality IPS activities provide opportunities for students to engage in three phases of skill development: 1) self-exploration, 2) career exploration, and 3) career planning.

- 1 Self-exploration** activities develop a student's ability to identify career interest, skills, and work values.
- 2 Career exploration** activities develop a student's ability to connect their interests, skills, and values to a range of career options, identify the school courses and employability skills needed to enter careers of interest, and identify corresponding post-secondary pathways.
- 3 Career planning** activities help students develop a range of skills related to acquiring job search skills needed to secure employment: developing career readiness skills; and developing the traits, work habits and behaviors needed to navigate career changes and pursue growth opportunities throughout a lifetime.



What information is included in an Individualized Plan of Study (IPS)?

The IPS includes information specific to each student that families, students, and school personnel can use to guide decision making and monitor students' progress toward goals. The IPS may include the following information: skills, abilities, hobbies, and accomplishments; graduation requirements; current and past classes and activities; grades and test scores; examples of student work; results from career, college, and interest inventories; personal goal statements; work based learning experiences and, college and financial planning activities.

How can families participate in the development of the Individualized Plan of Study (IPS)?

It is important for families to show an active interest and support for their student's interests and abilities, as well as the IPS process. One way family members help influence their student's perspectives of work and postsecondary education is by providing a variety of life experiences. By communicating perceptions of work, parents help contribute to their student's personal, career, and academic development.

Although the school is responsible for the development of an IPS, it is important for families to contribute and participate in their student's IPS process. Families should attend any and all of the Parent/Teacher Conferences or school meetings in which the IPS may be discussed, developed, or updated.

In order to provide input into the IPS process families could consider:

- Their student's strengths and challenges
- How he/she learns best
- What he/she enjoys doing
- His/her special talents
- Their main hopes for their student this year
- The long term goals for their student
- Other services supporting their student
- Questions they may have about their student's future

Families may also be asked to provide their signature on the IPS. This ensures that the families have participated in the discussion and the development of the IPS.

It is important to understand that the IPS is a flexible product that is built on the student's interests and skills. It is understood that a student's interests may change at any time in the IPS process and the IPS can be adjusted accordingly.

How can families find out if their student's school has an Individualized Plan of Study (IPS)?

If families are unaware if their student has an IPS or are unsure if their middle school or high school develops an IPS for each student, they may ask a school counselor, teacher, or principal about the IPS process in their school.

Do students with an Individual Education Program (IEP) also need an Individual Plan of Study (IPS)?

The IEP is a legal document required for any student receiving special education services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The IPS is a product and a process for ALL students including those students with an IEP. The IPS can be an excellent resource in the development of the transition planning requirements of an IEP.

Find more information on the
Kansas Individual Plan of Study (IPS) at:

[http://www.ksde.org/Agency/Division-of-Learning-Services/
Career-Standards-and-Assessment-Services/CSAS-Home/
Individual-Plans-of-Study-IPS-Student](http://www.ksde.org/Agency/Division-of-Learning-Services/Career-Standards-and-Assessment-Services/CSAS-Home/Individual-Plans-of-Study-IPS-Student)

