


EPSO Week 2022

Planning Guide

Tennessee Department of Education | November 2022

# A Note from the Program Manager

Thank you for your interest in Early Postsecondary Opportunities (EPSOs) Week 2022! The Tennessee Department of Education is thrilled to celebrate the many ways schools are supporting students as they access and obtain EPSOs. The goal of EPSO Week is to increase awareness of, and enrollment in, EPSOs for students across the state. EPSO Week will serve as a platform for schools and districts to highlight opportunities for students to earn college credit and/or certificates while in high school. Research has shown that students who participate in early postsecondary courses are more likely to enroll and remain in postsecondary.

## Early postsecondary opportunities allow students to:

* earn postsecondary credits while in high school;
* become familiar with postsecondary expectations;
* develop confidence and skills for success in postsecondary education;
* make informed postsecondary education and career decisions; and
* decrease the time and cost of completing a certificate or degree.

EPSO Week can serve as a time to reflect on the preceding year, a time to celebrate your current EPSOs, and a time to reflect on how to expand and promote early postsecondary opportunities to all ready students in your school. While the focus of EPSO Week is particularly on high school students, we encourage middle and elementary schools to include activities throughout the week that highlight the importance of EPSOs.

If you have any questions or concerns about planning and implementing EPSO Week at your school, please reach out to Early.Postsecondary@tn.gov. We will keep you updated regarding any changes or additional information you may find useful. Thank you in advance for your dedication and commitment to Tennessee students!

Sincerely,

Liza Ambrose
Program Manager, College and Career Readiness
Tennessee Department of Education

# EPSO Quick Guide

There are many ways and options for students to earn postsecondary credit across the state. Below is a list of current EPSO options in Tennessee.

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| Advanced Placement |
| Description | Provides an opportunity for high school students to experience postsecondary-level coursework across multiple subjects. Each course is aligned to a subject-specific AP exam, which provides students the potential to earn credit for postsecondary coursework in that subject. |
| Structure | Course and exam |
| Provider | The College Board |
| **Cambridge International Examinations (CIE)** |
| Description | Provides internationally recognized academic programs for students ages 5 to 19. The high school A and AS Level courses, available only through approved Cambridge International Schools, provide students the opportunity to earn postsecondary credit that is accepted by colleges in the U.S. and abroad. |
| Structure | Course and exam |
| Provider | Cambridge International Examinations |
| **College Level Exam Program (CLEP)** |
| Description | Exams are used to assess mastery of postsecondary-level material acquired in a variety of ways – through general academic instructions, significant independent study or extracurricular work. Students can earn credit for postsecondary coursework in a specific subject.  |
| Structure | Exam |
| Provider | The College Board |
| **Dual Enrollment (DE)** |
| Description | Postsecondary course taught by postsecondary faculty or credentialed adjunct faculty. Students are enrolled at the postsecondary institution and earn postsecondary credit upon completion of the course.  |
| Structure | Course |
| Provider | Individual Tennessee postsecondary institutions |
| **Local Dual Credit (LDC)** |
| Description | High school course aligned to a local postsecondary institution’s course and exam. Students who pass the exam earn credits that are accepted and/or recognized by the local postsecondary institution.  |
| Structure | Course and exam |
| Provider | Individual Tennessee postsecondary institutions |

| Statewide Dual Credit |
| --- |
| Description | High school course aligned to Tennessee postsecondary standards and challenge exam, developed by Tennessee secondary and postsecondary faculty. Students who pass the exam earn credits that are accepted by all Tennessee public postsecondary institutions.  |
| Structure | Course and exam |
| Provider | Tennessee Department of Education |
| **Industry Certifications (IC)** |
| Description | Earned through secondary and postsecondary career and technical education programs and courses. High school students are encouraged to focus their elective credits on robust, career-aligned learning pathways. Robust learning pathways should culminate with the achievement of nationally recognized industry certifications; meaningful work-based learning experiences, and/or attainment of postsecondary credit hours through early postsecondary opportunities.  |
| Structure | Exam |
| Provider | Industry |

# EPSO Week Resources

Use these resources to support the planning, promotion, and execution of your EPSO Week. Be creative! These are meant to serve as a starting point for schools and districts and should be customized to fit the needs of your unique context.

## Online Resources

**Early Postsecondary Opportunities in Tennessee**
Visit the [Early Postsecondary](https://www.tn.gov/education/early-postsecondary.html) Opportunities [webpage](https://www.tn.gov/education/early-postsecondary.html) to learn about the eight different early postsecondary opportunities promoted and recognized in the state of Tennessee.

**CollegeforTN.org**
[CollegeforTN.org](https://www.collegefortn.org/) is a free online web portal that provides Tennessee students and families with resources to research and organize the college and career search process. The portal offers lots of information on college applications.

**StudentAid.gov**
[StudentAid.gov](http://www.studentaid.gov) is the official site at which students file the FAFSA. Filing the FAFSA is always free. Any website that asks students to pay to file the FAFSA is not the official Federal Student Aid site. Students can file the FAFSA beginning October 1, 2022. During EPSO Week, students can register for a FAFSA ID, which they will need to file the FAFSA at [studentaid.gov](http://www.studentaid.gov).

**ACT.org**
Students can register for the ACT on [ACT.org](https://www.act.org/) or they can visit the website to retrieve their scores and have those scores sent to schools.

**CollegeBoard.org**
Students can register for the SAT on [collegeboard.org](https://www.collegeboard.org/) or they can visit the website to retrieve their scores and have those scores sent to schools.

**Student Milestones for College and Career Readiness**
Visit the department’s [school counseling resource page](https://www.tn.gov/education/student-support/school-counseling.html) to download the elementary, middle, and high school milestones for college and career readiness. Use the teacher or counselor actions to promote a culture of college awareness during EPSO Week.

## Social Media Resources

Follow the Tennessee Department of Education (@TNedu) to join the EPSO Week conversation. Use the following for sample tweets for districts and schools:

* EPSO Week begins November 14! Is your school celebrating? Tell us how! #EPSOWeek2022
* Early postsecondary opportunities are for all students. Ask your counselor or teachers what opportunities might fit within your coursework. #EPSOWeek2022
* Elementary and middle school teachers: use EPSO Week as a way to engage students in conversations about postsecondary and career! #EPSOWeek2022
* Did you know EPSOs also fit into CTE programs of study? All students should take advantage of an EPSO. #EPSOWeek2022
* What EPSOs are you taking? Tell us what you have learned from those EPSOs using #EPSOWeek2022
* Our students may be in elementary school, but we know preparation for postsecondary can start now. Happy EPSO Week! #EPSOWeek2022
* We believe ALL students should take advantage of an EPSO. Talk to a counselor or teacher to see what we offer! #EPSOWeek2022
* From AP to Dual Enrollment to Statewide Dual Credit, just taking one EPSO makes you more prepared for postsecondary

# In-School Promotion Ideas

Promoting your school’s EPSO Week is crucial – a successful event has the entire school community actively engaged to celebrate all the positive contributions EPSOs make to your students.

## Morning Announcement Script

Use daily public announcements to generate awareness of EPSO week. Try this sample message: *“This is Early Postsecondary Opportunities Week! If you haven’t heard about EPSOs, this is the week to learn more. Visit your school counselor to learn more about early postsecondary opportunities or ask a teacher about the benefits of taking a college-level course while in high school.”*

## Friendly Competition

Sponsor a class contest between the different grades to inspire all students to start thinking about taking rigorous college-level courses while in high school. Classes compete against each other to have the most students taking action. Taking action could include scheduling an appointment to speak with their counselor, asking their teachers questions about EPSOs, signing up to take a rigorous college-course, inviting their parents and/or guardian to an EPSO Week parent night.

## Host a Pep Rally

Talk with your school administrators about holding a kick-off pep rally to get everyone in the EPSO frame of mind. Introduce students already taking advantage of EPSO in your school or invite an alumnus back to talk about how taking EPSOs better prepared them for postsecondary. Ask students to wear college gear from their favorite schools.

## Daily EPSO Trivia Announcements

During EPSO Week, make daily announcements with EPSO trivia or facts. If you ask a trivia question, offer a small prize for the first student to turn in the correct answer.

## College Tour

Reach out to your local Tennessee College of Applied Technology, Community College, or 4-year postsecondary institution in your area to request a tour of the campus for your students. Please have the assigned tour guide talk about general information related to their campus including the majors offered, admission requirements, application process, and cost.

## Invite Guest Speakers

Invite admissions staff from local colleges and universities to provide general information related to their campus, including the majors offered, admission requirements, application process, and cost of attendance. Have them talk about the benefits of taking EPSOs while in high school and how EPSOs transfer over to their postsecondary institution.

## Student and Alumni Presentations

Allow students currently enrolled in EPSOs to speak to other classes of students about their experiences. This can take the form of class visits, an alumni night, or visiting feeder schools to encourage middle school students to start thinking about postsecondary education.

## Give Away College Swag

Hold drawings during EPSO Week. Ask colleges and universities to donate promotional items (banners, hats, t-shirts, sweatshirts, etc.) to use as giveaways. Ask local businesses for items for your drawing.

## Dress the School

Create an “EPSO wall.” Use the EPSO Week theme as the title of your wall and enlist the help of your students to create a wall that lists the names and definitions of each EPSO.

## Family Night

Host an EPSO Family Night at your school. Invite admission staff from local colleges and universities to provide general information related to their campus. Have them talk to students and families about the benefits of taking EPSOs while in high school and how EPSOs transfer over to their postsecondary institution. Ask your school counselors and volunteers to be on hand to talk to families/students individually about each opportunity to find out which offering is right for them.

# EPSO Week in Elementary and Middle Schools

It is never too early to promote early postsecondary opportunities in your schools! Elementary school students will love the chance to learn about EPSOs and potentially interact with students and the middle or high school. Remember, the goal of EPSO Week is to expand access to and enrollment in early postsecondary opportunities across the state. EPSO Week serves as a platform for schools, students, and parents to start thinking about early postsecondary opportunities, college, and begin planning their future. Below are examples of how you can engage students in an age-appropriate way.

## Dress the Part

Encourage teachers and staff to wear a t-shirt, sweatshirt, or hat from the college they attended, or have them bring in their college yearbook or other items with their college mascot to share with students. During morning or advisory meetings, have teachers spend a few minutes talking about college and available early postsecondary opportunities in Tennessee. Be sure to have teachers highlight those EPSOs such as Cambridge, International Baccalaureate, and Advanced Placement which students can take advantage of as early as middle school.

## Imagine Your Dream College

Bring together art, writing, and imagination with college knowledge by asking students to imagine their dream college. Ask them to think about where that college would be, what kinds of classes they’d want to take, what the dorms would be like, and even what the cafeteria is serving up for dinner! Students can write a short paragraph or even a brochure advertising their school, and can finish their project by creating a school pennant with colors, symbols, and a motto that symbolize their school

## College Day

Encourage teachers and staff to wear apparel from their alma mater. Students can wear apparel from their favorite postsecondary institution. This is a great way for teachers to start a conversation about their college experience, as well as how early postsecondary opportunities can decrease the time and cost of obtaining a degree.

## Door Decorating Contest

Create college buzz with some friendly competition. Which homeroom can design the most creative EPSO-themed door decoration?

## Guest Speakers

Work with your local high school to recruit a high school student or school counselor to talk to students about early postsecondary opportunities, college, and career

## Teacher Involvement

Encourage teachers to take some time and share their experience with postsecondary and early postsecondary opportunities (if applicable).

## Bring College to Middle School

Invite representatives from local colleges to talk to students about their institutions. Invite local alumni who are attending college or recently graduated to share their experiences with college. Take students on virtual college tours through the college websites.