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What is Operation Preparation?

Operation Preparation is a month set aside to focus on the importance of planning for college and/or career through a community-based volunteer advising program for 8th- and 10th-grade students (9th-grade students may also be included if a school has the capacity to do so). It is a joint initiative of the Kentucky Department of Education and Department of Workforce Development in collaboration with various education and business partners. ([back to questions](#))

When will Operation Preparation take place?

Advising sessions will be scheduled during the month of March. It will be up to each middle and high school to determine whether to participate in Operation Preparation and how it wishes to structure the program to meet the needs of its students and the local community. All advising sessions will take place on school property in a public setting. ([back to questions](#))

Why are just 8th and 10th-grade students targeted?

These are pivotal years in the college/career planning process.

In 8th grade, all Kentucky students take the EXPLORE high school readiness exam which is designed to help eighth graders explore a broad range of options for their future. The exam assesses four subjects (English, mathematics, reading and science) and provides needs assessments and other components to help students plan for high school and beyond.

The PLAN assessment helps 10th graders build a solid foundation for future academic and career success and provides information needed to address school districts' high-priority issues. The exam assesses the same subjects as EXPLORE (English, mathematics, reading and science) and is a predictor of success on the ACT which all students take in spring of their junior year in high school. ([back to questions](#))

My student has unique needs. Will appropriate supports be in place to ensure that all students receive advising?

Parents can be assured that sufficient supports are provided to schools needing assistance or contacts to address the differentiated needs of all students. [\(back to questions\)](#)

Isn't advising the job of the school counselor?

Yes, but with a statewide student-to-counselor ratio of about 450:1, many school counselors are overloaded with the number of students to whom they must provide services. As one component of the college and career advising strategy, Operation Preparation will engage parents and the community in a partnership with the school in support of Kentucky's college/career-readiness agenda; help students see the connection between education and financial security in adulthood; and help districts increase college/career-readiness of students. [\(back to questions\)](#)

What role do parents play in Operation Preparation?

Parents play a critical role in advising and in ensuring that their student graduates from high school college/career ready.

Parents, we hope you will support the middle and high schools in your district and their students by volunteering to be a community advisor. Your participation could make the difference in the life of a child.

If you are the parent of an 8th- or 10th-grade student, we hope you will support your child's participation in Operation Preparation. One-on-one advising can be a powerful tool and a valuable experience for the student and should help them maximize their education and preparation for the future.

Finally, parents of every 6th through 12th grader can and should login to their student's ILP, look it over and spend some time discussing it with their child. This is especially important for 8th- and 10th-grade parents as a follow-up to Operation Preparation. Parents may obtain login information for their student's ILP from the student's school. [\(back to questions\)](#)

Who will the volunteer community advisors be?

It will be up to each school/partner to recruit the volunteer community advisors. KDE is providing support materials and statewide publicity to help in this effort. Each volunteer is encouraged to advise more than one child, but each session should be conducted one-on-one in a school setting.



Though this list is not all inclusive, volunteers may be:

- School/district personnel
- School-based Decision Making Council (SBDM) members
- PTA members
- College/university employees
- Local business people
- Elected officials and government employees
- Retirees
- Parents
- Community members concerned about Kentucky's and our children's future ([back to questions](#))

How do I volunteer for Operation Preparation?

Operation Preparation will be administered at the school level, so contact your local middle and/or high school to let them know you are interested in helping and find out what is required for you to volunteer in the district. ([back to questions](#))

If I volunteer, what are my responsibilities?

Volunteers have several simple requirements to complete:

- Prior to the advising session, volunteers will be required to complete training. This online training will take about 30-minutes and familiarize them with the components of the student Individual Learning Plan, EXPLORE (8th-grade) or PLAN (10th-grade) results, what they mean in relation to college/career readiness, and whether the student is on target to meet their current postsecondary education/job goals.
- After completing training, community advisors will be assigned a mutually agreed upon time to meet with a student one-on-one at school for about 20 minutes to offer guidance to help the student prepare for a successful future in high school and beyond. On the scheduled day, volunteer advisors will check in at the school office, be given their student's data, and shown where the advising session will take place. Once the advising session is over, the volunteer will return any student data to the office before signing out.
- Volunteer advisors will need to sign a non-disclosure form, in accordance with the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), agreeing not to disclose student-specific information. Volunteers may be subject to a background check and may need to sign an Acceptable Use Policy, agreeing to the proper and appropriate use of any school/district technology. In many districts these requirements are standard operating procedure for school volunteers, based on local board of education policy. ([back to questions](#))



As a parent, do I have to give permission for my student's information to be used?

According to FERPA, prior consent to disclose student information is not required as long as the volunteer:

- performs a service for which the institution would otherwise use employees
- is under the direct control of the institution in the use and maintenance of records
- agrees not to disclose personally identifiable information from student records

--34 CFR § 99.31

Volunteers will be required to sign a non-disclosure form promising not to release any student information to which they may have access as part of the volunteer advising process. It will be the responsibility of the school to collect any printed student-specific information used during the advising session from the volunteer before he/she leaves the building. Parents who still do not want this information shared should contact their child's school to opt out of the program. ([back to questions](#))

What are the goals of Operation Preparation?

Operation Preparation has several goals:

- Engage parents, students, schools and the community in the college/career-readiness agenda
- Raise awareness of the ILP and increase both student and parent engagement with the online tool
- Provide students with the opportunity to hear about the importance of college/career planning and readiness from an unbiased adult – someone other than a parent or teacher
- Help keep students on target for college/career-readiness
- Provide schools with a strategy with the potential to raise college/career readiness rates ([back to questions](#))

