



Department of  
**Education**

# Early Postsecondary Opportunity Week

## EPSO Week Planning Guide

Tennessee Department of Education | Office of Postsecondary Coordination and Alignment | October 2018

# A Note from the Director

On behalf of the Tennessee Department of Education, thank you for hosting an Early Postsecondary Opportunity Week (EPSO) event during the week of October 22-26! 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/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;
- make informed postsecondary and career decisions; and
- decrease the time and cost of completing a certificate or degree.

This year, we challenge you to begin thinking about how you can incorporate early postsecondary opportunities into your high schools. Specifically, how can you offer a portfolio of options that does not limit itself to certain groups of students, but is available to all students? 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 contact Sarah Cook, program manager for the office of early postsecondary, at [Early.Postsecondary@tn.gov](mailto: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,



Tandra Martin  
Director of the Office of Postsecondary Coordination and Alignment, Tennessee Department of Education

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# Section 1: Planning Your EPSO Week

EPSO Week has the potential to be one of the most exciting and motivating weeks of the academic year, and the possibilities are endless! We hope to support you in your efforts to expand and promote early postsecondary opportunities for your students. With proper planning, event promotion, and out-of-the box ideas, your EPSO Week will properly prepare students for postsecondary, career, and beyond.

As you begin to plan EPSO Week at your school, think about the needs and goals of your school. Then begin working with your administrators and teachers to plan an event that works best for your school and students. Regardless of what format your EPSO Week takes, the following pages will provide you with a checklist that can be geared to your specific event, a page of helpful reminders for the day of your event, and tools to use throughout the week.

*Students who participate in early postsecondary courses are more likely to enroll and persist in college.*

## **In This Section**

- Event Coordinator Checklist
- Event Day Reminders
- Event Sign-in Sheet
- Reporting Procedures
- Data Reporting Requirements

# EPSO Week Coordinator

## Getting Started

- Review this Planning Guide and contact [Early.Postsecondary@tn.gov](mailto:Early.Postsecondary@tn.gov) if you have questions.
- Follow TN Pathways on Twitter (@TN\_Pathways). Tweets for districts:
  - EPSO Week begins October 22! Is your school celebrating? Here are some ideas:
  - Early postsecondary opportunities are for all students. Ask your counselor or teachers what opportunities might fit within your coursework. **#EPSOWeek2018**
  - Elementary and middle school teachers: use EPSO Week as a way to engage students in conversations about postsecondary and career!
  - Did you know EPSOs also fit into CTE programs of study? All students should take advantage of an EPSO.
- Tweets for schools:
  - What EPSOs are you taking? Tell us what you have learned using **#EPSOWeek2018**.
  - Our students may be in elementary school, but we know preparation for postsecondary can start now. Happy EPSO Week!
  - We believe ALL students should take advantage of an EPSO. Talk to a counselor or teacher to see what we offer! **#EPSOWeek2018**
  - From AP to Dual Enrollment and Statewide Dual Credit, just taking one EPSO makes you more prepared for postsecondary. **#EPSOWeek2018**
- If applicable, start reserving space for your event(s).
- Notify teachers, counselors, and other school administrators (principal, athletic director, etc.) of your plans.

## Recruiting Support

- Recruit volunteers. Reach out to school staff and teachers to volunteer.
- Contact local colleges to invite admissions staff and faculty to volunteer during EPSO Week.
- Reach out to local community organizations and parents to volunteer.
- Encourage all teachers to plan EPSO Week-related activities.
- Solicit door prizes from community supporters.
- Confirm attendance of all volunteers. Remind them of the time and place of your event and any other important information.
- Remind teachers, counselors and administrators of the day's schedule and planned activities. Ask them to wear college-related clothing on event day and decorate their classrooms with "college- and career-going culture" materials.

## Promoting Your Event

- Send a press release to local newspapers and TV stations announcing the event. This is a good way to ensure volunteer and community support.

- Reach out to parents about the event to help them prepare students.

# Reminders for During Your Event(s)

- Reserve the appropriate space(s) where you plan to host events for the week.
- Post/place the following information in your school's counseling office or classrooms.
  - Early Postsecondary Opportunity Brochures/Posters
  - Myths and Facts for each EPSO
  - EPSO Posters/Fliers
- Have parents sign in as they arrive to the school-sponsored Parent Night. Refer to the sample sign-in sheet that is included in this guide on page 8.
- Encourage students to share events/stories about EPSOs on Twitter with the hashtag **#EPSOWeek2018**. Create your own school-specific EPSO Week hashtag to add to the excitement.
- Distribute the EPSO poster for students to reference during and after the EPSO Week.
- Distribute "EPSO swag" to students who are currently taking advantage of EPSOs and those students who are interested in learning more about EPSOs.
- Make sure you fill out the Data Reporting Requirement form (see pages 10-11).



# Sign-in Sheet

Name

Date

Event Name

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School \_\_\_\_\_

EPSO Week Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_

# Reporting Procedures

It is our goal to ensure that Early Postsecondary Opportunity Week improves and expands each year. Collecting feedback and result data is an important part of accomplishing this goal. Please review the Data Reporting Requirements found on the following page.

As you plan your event, ensure that you track the information listed. You will need to keep track of the number of students who participate in each event. EPSO Week coordinators will receive a link to an online reporting form via email. Reporting forms should be completed no later than Nov. 5, 2018.

If you are unable to complete the online reporting form, you may email the form on the following page to [Early.Postsecondary@tn.gov](mailto:Early.Postsecondary@tn.gov).



# Data Reporting Requirements

Thank you for participating in the 2018 EPSO Week. Please track the following data items to help us improve this initiative and better serve you in the future. During EPSO Week, the **EPSO Week coordinator will receive a link to an online version of this form**, or they can email this form to [Early.Postsecondary@tn.gov](mailto:Early.Postsecondary@tn.gov). The deadline to submit the reporting form is November 5, 2018.

Your Name:

Your School:

District Name:

School Name:

## Early Postsecondary Opportunities Week

How many students attend your school?

How many students at your school participated in EPSO Week?

How many students are interested in taking early postsecondary courses next year?

Do you plan on hosting an EPSO Week at your school next year? **(Please circle one answer below.)**

**Yes No**

How helpful was EPSO Week in increasing awareness of and enrollment in early postsecondary opportunities for your school?

**(Please circle one answer below. 1 = Not At All Helpful; 5= Very Helpful.)**

1      2      3      4      5

If you have any further comments about this initiative or suggestions of how to improve EPSO Week, please write them below.

Please share any best practices from successful events or activities that your site held during EPSO Week.

## Section 2: Getting Support for Your EPSO Week Events

As you may know, the success of your EPSO Week depends not only on your school, but community support and buy-in as well. Engaging your community in the planning and implementation process will create the excitement needed to make your EPSO Week event(s) successful.

The following pages will provide you with ideas for engaging students, school faculty, and members of the community, including a volunteer resource guide that will help you to prepare your volunteers for event day.

### **In This Section**

- Who to Involve
- Volunteer Resource Guide
- Volunteer Quick Guide to EPSO Week
- Sample Volunteer Recruitment Email/Letter
- Sample Sponsorship Request Letter

*Students can earn postsecondary credit while in high school, and decrease the time and cost of completing a certificate or degree.*

# Who to Involve

## ***Student Ambassadors***

- Recruit students who would love to bring their own ideas to the table to assist with implementing EPSO Week. Identify student ambassadors who are representative of your student body's interest and pathway (General Education and CTE), postsecondary aspirations, as well as different knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- Select "student ambassadors" and educate them on the purpose of EPSO Week. Ask them to share implementation ideas and distribute materials to their peers.
- Ask students to promote EPSO Week through their social media accounts. They can use the hashtag **#EPSOWeek2018** to share events and stories about EPSOs on Twitter.

## ***Teachers***

- Teachers are key to motivating students to pursue postsecondary. We recommend enlisting their help to make your school's EPSO Week a huge success.
- Ask teachers to take time during EPSO Week to talk to each of their classes about the available EPSOs in your school, why EPSOs are so important, and how students can take advantage of these opportunities.
- Provide teachers with the EPSO Descriptions on pages 25-26 to assist them with the conversation around EPSOs.
- Have teachers work with the identified "student ambassadors" to decorate the school, distribute EPSO Week materials, and encourage their friends to participate in EPSO Week.
- Ask teachers to dedicate at least one class during EPSO Week to have students write about the importance of taking college-preparatory classes in high school. How will this benefit the student (financially, academically, etc.)? Students' reflections can aid in guiding the conversation for this activity. Teachers can also incorporate the stories of students who have taken advantage of early postsecondary opportunities and have them speak about their experience/benefits.

## ***Volunteers and Community Representatives***

Volunteer and community involvement is crucial to the success of your event. Identify contacts in your community who may be interested in helping make your EPSO Week a success by donating time and/or resources. Some examples may include:

- School alumni
- Students' families, PTA, School Improvement Council
- Your school's athletic department and coaches
- Retired educators
- Volunteer, senior, or church groups
- Community college, technical college, and university representatives and faculty
- Business, community, and political leaders
- Youth programs (e.g., YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, 4H, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts)
- College access organizations in your school or community
- Career and Technical Education Student Organizations (DECA, FBLA, FCCLA, FFA, HOSA, SkillsUSA, and TSA)

Provide teachers with the information sheet on (pages 25-26) so they can review prior to EPSO Week. Send all potential volunteers and/or groups an EPSO Week recruitment letter with an event explanation and details. Encourage them to share events/stories about EPSOs on Twitter with the hashtag ***#EPSOWeek2018***.

# Volunteer Resource Guide

The success of your Early Postsecondary Opportunity Week is dependent upon the strength of your volunteer recruits. Therefore, it is essential to recruit volunteers to ensure the success of your program. Below is a guide you can follow to ensure you have a well-informed and efficient volunteer support.

## ***Inform Your Volunteers***

Once you have recruited and finalized your volunteer roster for EPSO Week, you will need to inform them of the event details. You can use the template on the next page as a guide.

## ***Provide Options***

Volunteer opportunities can range from greeting students to educating them on available early postsecondary opportunities. Below is a list of possible opportunities. Add in your event specific needs and use this as a tool to help volunteers choose a task.

- Greet students
- Sign in students
- Sign in parents
- Assist students with understanding available early postsecondary opportunities
- Distribute information about EPSOs to parents and students
- Assist students with understanding how to sign up for early postsecondary opportunities at your school
- Talk to parents about the benefit of EPSOs for students

## ***Identify Your Volunteers***

Help identify your volunteers as a source of help for students by providing name badges for volunteers on the day of the event.

## ***Train Your Volunteers***

On the morning of the event, conduct a quick orientation to familiarize volunteers with details of your event. Consider walking them through the definition of each early postsecondary opportunity, as well as the EPSOs available in your school. Be sure to print a copy of the "Quick Guide" form on pages 25-26.

## ***Thank Your Volunteers***

Send a thank-you letter to all volunteers for their dedication to EPSO Week. Handwrite a note to each volunteer. You may also want to give students the opportunity to thank the volunteers as well.

# Volunteer Quick Guide

Welcome to Early Postsecondary Opportunity (EPSO) Week! We appreciate your hard work and dedication to increasing awareness of early postsecondary opportunities for students and parents. Use this reference guide to familiarize yourself with the details of our EPSO Week initiatives.

## ***What is an EPSO?***

An Early Postsecondary Opportunity (or EPSO) is a course and/or exam that gives students a chance to obtain postsecondary credit while still in high school. Courses (whether stand-alone or in conjunction with an exam for postsecondary credit) must be aligned to postsecondary standards.

## ***What is EPSO Week?***

EPSO Week is a statewide event sponsored by the Tennessee Department of Education. EPSOs provide students with the opportunity to earn college credit while in high school, develop the confidence and skills necessary for success in postsecondary, make informed postsecondary and career decisions, and decrease the time and cost of completing a certificate of degree. Opportunities that help to support this culture of college and career readiness for all Tennessee students include the following: Advanced Placement, Cambridge, College Level Examination Programs, Dual Enrollment, Industry Certification, International Baccalaureate, Local Dual Credit, and Statewide Dual Credit.

## ***What is the goal of EPSO Week?***

Early Postsecondary Opportunity (EPSO) Week will consist of a suite of events designed 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 postsecondary credit and certificates while in high school. We challenge all districts in Tennessee to continue thinking about how to incorporate and grow a portfolio of early postsecondary opportunities that are available to all students.

## ***How do I address questions about available Early Postsecondary Opportunities (EPSOs) in Tennessee?***

The EPSO Week coordinator will provide you with a poster that highlights all available EPSOs across the state. He/she will also inform you of the EPSOs available at the high school, as offerings may vary across districts/schools. Your goal is to make students/parents aware of what is available at their school and how these opportunities can better prepare them for college and career.

## ***What are the next steps for students?***

In an effort to increase awareness of EPSOs for all students, use the "Quick Guide" on pages 25-26 to



discuss available opportunities across the state and at the local high school. Work with students to identify what opportunity they are interested in learning more about. Once an EPSO(s) is identified, have them sign the form (see page 35) that will be provided at each event. A teacher or counselor will reach out to the student directly to discuss any next steps and determine if the selected EPSO or an additional opportunity is right for them. Student placement decisions should be based on, but not limited to, the following:

- student interest and pathway
- student postsecondary aspirations
- student knowledge, skills, and abilities
- student support needs (financial, access, transportation, etc.)

## Sample Volunteer Recruitment Letter

**Update the bracketed portions with your school's information and relevant event details.**

[SCHOOL LOGO]

[SCHOOL ADDRESS]

Dear [CONTACT AT ORGANIZATION],

[SCHOOL] is excited to announce its participation in the statewide Early Postsecondary Opportunity (EPSO) Week, Oct. 22-26. Along with schools across the state that week, we will strive to increase awareness and enrollment in EPSO's for our students. Research shows that students who participate in EPSO's not only earn college credit and industry certifications while in high school, but are also more likely to enroll and persist in postsecondary programs. Given [ORGANIZATION]'s position within our community, we hope you will be able to volunteer and participate in our **EPSO Family Night** on **[DATE]**, from **[TIME RANGE]**.

Counselors, teachers, and administrators will be on hand at the Family Night to present on each of our opportunities and answer any questions. However, with your help, we can make this a true community-wide endeavor. Together with local employers and organizations such as [ORGANIZATION], we can show our students and families how EPSOs help our community thrive.

## ***How can you help?***

Volunteers can greet and sign in students, distribute materials, and connect families with the various resources present. In addition to the Family Night, our EPSO Week activities will include [LIST OF OTHER ACTIVITIES]. If you are interested in helping with any of these, or would like to learn more about how your employer or community group can participate, please contact **[NAME, TITLE]** at **[PHONE, or EMAIL]**.

Even if you are not able to attend, we encourage you to follow the activities and join the conversations at [SCHOOL] and across the state with the hashtag **#EPSOWeek2018**.

Thank you in advance for supporting our students and this exciting initiative to encourage EPSO awareness and enrollment for all of Tennessee's students!

Sincerely,

[COUNSELOR/PRINCIPAL/EVENT COORDINATOR]

## **Resources**

EPSOs provide students with the opportunity to earn college credit while in high school, develop the confidence and skills necessary for success in postsecondary, make informed postsecondary and career decisions, and decrease the time and cost of completing a certificate of degree. Opportunities that help to support this culture of college and career readiness for all Tennessee students include the following: Advanced Placement (AP), Cambridge, College Level Examination Program (CLEP), Dual Enrollment, Industry Certification, International Baccalaureate (IB), Local Dual Credit, and Statewide Dual Credit.

EPSOs are just one piece of the postsecondary preparation process. The following information can help you learn more about K-12 milestones for EPSO readiness, the college application process and assist seniors, specifically, with their college preparation journey. Use the resources below in combination with your EPSO Week events.

## ***K-12 Milestones for EPSO Readiness***

While most EPSOs are only offered at the high school level, students can prepare for their success in EPSOs as early as elementary school. Students can use the milestones below to help prepare for the academic rigor of EPSOs as well as plan for their postsecondary paths. Schools may also use these milestones to guide what college and career preparation opportunities they offer.

### **Grades K-6**

- Participate in a career exposure experience (e.g., a field trip to a local postsecondary institution)
- Develop extracurricular interests through participation in school-based clubs, sports, or similar after-school activities

### **Grades 7-8**

- Meet with a school counselor to develop a postsecondary plan (i.e., explore pathways for potential careers and discuss the costs associated with postsecondary education)
- Meet with a school counselor to discuss what early postsecondary opportunities are offered at your high school and would be a good fit with your postsecondary goals
- Have a conversation with parents/guardians about the costs of postsecondary and how you will plan for those costs (e.g., creating a savings account)
- Attend an information session and/or shadow a student at local high school option(s)
- Take a career exploration course (online if not offered in school)
- Participate in college and career awareness experiences (e.g., campus visits, hands-on events, or job shadowing)
- Participate in school and student organizations (e.g., clubs, athletics, school newspaper, yearbook, etc.)
- Participate in summer activities related to an interest, talent, or curiosity (e.g., academic, athletic, artistic, etc.)
- Take academically rigorous classes and maintain good grades

### **Grade 9**

- Begin taking aligned courses to a personalized education and career plan (e.g., a focus area or CTE course of study)
- Meet with a school counselor to discuss what early postsecondary opportunities are offered and would be a good fit with your postsecondary goals
- Experiment with different organizational and study methods to see what works best for you
- Try something new to expand personal skills or interests (e.g., sport, club, course)

- Schedule an annual meeting with a school counselor to update your postsecondary plan
- Have conversations with teachers, family members, and other adult mentors to talk through your college and career interests
- Become involved with school student organizations, clubs, or teams
- Learn about eligibility criteria for honor societies, special diplomas, certifications, or other merit-awards
- Start a resume to document extracurricular activities and accomplishments, work experience, and skills
- Participate in college and career exploration experiences (e.g., campus visits, hands-on events, college and career fairs, school-based enterprise, industry specific exposure)
- Volunteer in your community and/or in a professional field related to your academic, personal, or career interests
- Take academically rigorous classes and maintain good grades

### **Grade 10**

- Participate in college and career exploration experiences (e.g., campus visits, hands-on events, college and career fairs, school-based enterprise, industry-specific exposure)
- Participate in a meaningful summer experience such as a job, internship, or early postsecondary preparation (e.g., pre-college summer camp, computer coding camp, apprenticeship related to CTE concentration)
- Complete and pass early postsecondary opportunities (dual credit, dual enrollment, AP, IB, Cambridge)
- Continue involvement with school and student organizations
- Volunteer in your community or school
- Update your resume to include your work, volunteer experiences, honors, or skills that you've acquired since last school year
- Do a practice job interview with a school counselor or other adult mentor
- Update your postsecondary plan with your counselor and have a conversation about your potential eligibility/competitiveness for admission
- Have conversations with a teacher, family member, or other adult mentor to talk about your college and career interests
- Have a conversation with a counselor and family members about tuition, fees, and other costs of postsecondary, as well as your potential eligibility for need- and merit-based aid
- Research course offerings for your junior year, including early postsecondary opportunities such as Advanced Placement, dual enrollment and dual credit, or work-based learning

- Take academically rigorous classes and maintain good grades

### **Grade 11 (Fall)**

- Continue to visit college and career-related campuses or events
- Volunteer in your community or school regularly
- Complete and pass early postsecondary opportunities (Dual Credit, Dual Enrollment, AP, IB, Cambridge)
- Attend THEC “Path to College” College Planning Nights
- Prepare to take the ACT or SAT (e.g., take a preparation course, take a practice test, use free resources online, etc.)
- Do a practice job interview with a family member, adult mentor, or a professional in your field of interest
- Continue to participate in school and student organizations and take on leadership roles and/or increased responsibility
- Organize and lead volunteer activities
- Update your resume to include your work, volunteer experiences, honors, or skills that you’ve acquired since last school year
- Schedule a meeting with your school counselor to discuss details of the postsecondary application process, how to choose a program of study, and how to identify postsecondary institutions that could be a “fit”
- Continue to have conversations with trusted teachers, family members, or other adult mentors to talk through your college and career interests
- Cultivate relationships with teachers who may write letters of recommendation for postsecondary, sharing with them your aspirations and asking them for feedback on how to ensure that you are best prepared for postsecondary
- Take academically rigorous classes and maintain good grades

### **Grade 11 (Spring)**

- Complete and pass early postsecondary opportunities (Dual Credit, Dual Enrollment, AP, IB, Cambridge)
- Research and apply for postsecondary scholarship opportunities
- Develop a list of postsecondary opportunities according to your academic and career interests
- Take the ACT or SAT

- Participate in a meaningful summer experience such as employment, an internship, or postsecondary preparation (e.g., pre-college summer camp, computer coding camp, job related to your CTE concentration)
- Write a draft of a college essay, personal statement, or cover letter, and get feedback from a teacher, counselor, or college access professional
- Identify two or three teachers who you think would write you a letter of recommendation for postsecondary and talk to them before the end of the school year
- Take academically rigorous classes and maintain good grades

### **Grade 12 (Fall)**

- Continue to research and apply for postsecondary scholarship opportunities
- Complete and pass early postsecondary opportunities (Dual Credit, Dual Enrollment, AP, IB, Cambridge)
- Finalize a postsecondary application list with the support of a school counselor, teacher, or college access professional
- Participate in the ACT senior retake if you would like to improve your score
- Take rigorous academic coursework that aligns with your college and career plan (exceeding minimum requirements)
- Participate in senior traditions (e.g., honor society inductions, school recognitions, signing ceremony)
- Ask a trusted counselor, teacher, or college access professional to provide feedback on your application documents before submitting
- Complete a Tennessee Promise application: Nov. 1, 2018
- Track and celebrate college application submissions and results, industry certification completion(s), scholarship applications, and results
- Complete FAFSA by the Tennessee Promise deadline: Feb. 1, 2019
- Update your resume to include your work, volunteer experiences, honors, or skills that you've acquired since last school year
- Take academically rigorous classes and maintain good grades

### **Grade 12 (Spring)**

- Complete a capstone project or work-based learning practicum
- Attend Tennessee Promise meetings
- Meet with admission officers from the postsecondary institutions to which you applied or have been admitted

- With a counselor or college access professional, review the financial aid options and academic outcome data of the postsecondary institutions to which you were admitted
- Make a financial deposit at your chosen postsecondary institution and attend orientation
- Identify and participate in volunteer opportunities of interest to ensure that you maintain Tennessee Promise eligibility
- Take academically rigorous classes and maintain good grades

### ***Important Dates for High School Seniors***

- TN Promise Application Deadline: Nov. 1, 2018
- FAFSA Application Opens: Oct. 1, 2018
- *A FAFSA form must be submitted by to meet TN Promise eligibility requirements. The deadline to complete the FAFSA is Feb. 1, 2019.*

### ***Items for Students to Prepare for Postsecondary Admissions and Scholarship Applications***

- Personal and educational data (e.g., name, address, high schools attended, college credits earned, parental information, high school plan of study, standardized test scores)
- Honors and awards
- Extracurricular, personal, and volunteer activities
- Employment, internships, and summer activities

## ***Online Resources***

### **Early Postsecondary Opportunities in Tennessee**

Visit the [Early Postsecondary webpage](#) to learn about the eight different early postsecondary opportunities promoted and recognized in the state of Tennessee.

### **CollegeforTN.org**

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.

### **FAFSA.ed.gov**

FAFSA.ed.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 Oct. 1, 2018. During Early Postsecondary Week, they can register for a FAFSA ID, which they will need to file the FAFSA at [www.fsaaid.ed.gov](http://www.fsaaid.ed.gov).

### **ACT.org**

Students can register for the ACT on 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, or they can visit the [website](#) to retrieve their scores and have those scores sent to schools.



# Quick Guide: Early Postsecondary Opportunities

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Advanced Placement (AP)</b>                    |   |
| 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   |
| <b>Cambridge International Examinations (CIE)</b> |   |
| Description                                       | Provides internationally recognized academic programs for students age 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  |
| <b>College Level Exam Program (CLEP)</b>          |   |
| 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   |
| <b>Dual Enrollment (DE)</b>                       |   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| 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   |
| <b>International Baccalaureate (IB)</b> |   |
| Description                             | The International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme, available only through an approved IB World School, provides high school students the opportunity to take a rigorous, pre-university course of studies. IB courses are aligned to internationally-benchmarked exams which provide opportunities for students to earn postsecondary credit while still in high school. |
| Structure                               | Course and Exam   |
| Provider                                | International Baccalaureate Organization  |
| <b>Local Dual Credit (LDC)</b>          |   |
| 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   |
| <b>Statewide Dual Credit (SDC)</b>      |   |
| Description                             | High school course aligned to Tennessee postsecondary standards and challenge exam, developed by Tennessee secondary and postsecondary faculty. Student who pass the exam earn credits that are accepted by all Tennessee public postsecondary.   |

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Structure                           | Course and Exam  |
| Provider                            | Tennessee Department of Education  |
| <b>Industry Certifications (IC)</b> |  |
| 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   |

## Section 3: Promoting Your Event

Promoting your school's EPSO Week is crucial. A truly successful event has the entire school community actively engaged. In the following pages, you'll find ideas and sample activities you can use to promote the event to all those involved both within your school community and outside the walls of your school.

### In This Section

- In-School Promotion Ideas
- Promoting EPSO Week to the Media
- Sample Press Release
- Sample Student/Family Letter
- Got Credit? Sign-Up Form

*All high schools in Tennessee should provide a portfolio of early postsecondary opportunities for students, addressing a diversity of student interest, academic performance, and need.*



# In-School Promotion Ideas

## ***Morning Announcement Script***

Use daily public announcements to generate awareness of EPSO Week. Try this sample message!

*"This is Early Postsecondary Opportunity Week! If you haven't heard about early postsecondary opportunities, 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 the EPSO Week "Parent Night." Keep a record on your school website or Facebook page.

## ***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 do a trivia question, offer a small prize for the first student to turn in the correct answer. Use pages 25-26 as a start for your facts.

## ***College Tour***

Reach out to your local Tennessee College of Applied Technology, Community College, or a 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 to students 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.

## ***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 during your event. Also, 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(s). Enlist the help of your student ambassadors or art students to create a wall that list the names and definitions of each EPSO. You may also want to collect the essay responses from students and post them on the “EPSO Wall” as well (see page 13).

## ***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, including the majors offered, admission requirements, application process, and cost of attendance. 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 their interest and postsecondary aspiration. Also, have them walk families/students through each opportunity to find out which offering is right for them.

## ***Communicate***

Send letters or email reminders to all families, students, and school staff. Also, include information in the school newsletter and post fliers around the school and community about your EPSO Week event. You can use the Sample Student/Family Letter at the end of this section as a guide.

# **Promoting EPSO Week to the Media**

Inviting local media to your EPSO Week is a great way to increase public awareness of your school’s activities and promotion of early postsecondary opportunities. Here are some tips for contacting the media:

**Write a press release:** Write a brief press release with information about your EPSO Week events and activities.

**Distribute the press release:** Send out the press release to your local media outlets before, during, or just after your EPSO Week event.

If you email a copy of the press release, send the release directly in the body of your email. This will help your email avoid spam filters. If you can, send the email from an address linked to a person's name (rather than a general organizational mailbox). An email from [Sarah.Cook@tn.gov](mailto:Sarah.Cook@tn.gov) is more likely to be read than an email from [Early.Postsecondary@tn.gov](mailto:Early.Postsecondary@tn.gov).

***Tip:** If you or someone on staff at your school has a relationship with the media or a specific reporter, have that person reach out and/or follow up with the media. Also try reaching out to reporters who have covered your school(s) previously.*

**Follow up once you send the press release:** Once you have sent the press release, follow up by phone to make sure the newsroom received the press release. Prepare a small script ahead of time with the most important information. Prepare to be brief on the phone as newsrooms and reporters are usually busy, and being prepared when you speak to them will help you keep their attention.

**Designate a media point of contact:** Choose someone involved with EPSO Week to be the point person for any members of the media who may attend. The media point of contact should be prepared to greet anyone from the media who attends any EPSO Week events and direct them to students, faculty, or anyone else willing to be interviewed for a news piece.

**Follow up the day before any big events:** The day before any big EPSO Week events (or the Friday before), follow up with your media targets by phone or email to remind them of the event and confirm their attendance, and give them contact information for your designated media point of contact.

**During EPSO Week Events:** Make sure parking is available for any media and that your school's front office is aware that media may be arriving.

Ensure that your media point of contact is prepared to answer basic questions about your EPSO Week events, including the events and activities your school is hosting, the number of juniors and seniors at your school, and your most recent college-going rates.

Try to get contact information from any media that attend so you have their contact information for future events/announcements and to send a follow-up thank you.

**Send a thank you:** Send thank you notes to members of the media who attend your event. This will help to maintain a good relationship with your local media outlets.

## Sample Press Release

Send this sample press release to local news organizations. Update the bold pieces with your school's event information and add any other relevant event details.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information, please contact:

Name:

Phone:

Email Address:

### **School Name** Hosts Early Postsecondary Opportunity (EPSO) Week

**CITY, TN (DATE)** - In an effort to increase awareness of and enrollment in Early Postsecondary Opportunities (EPSOs), **Name of Your High School** will participate in EPSO Week. EPSO week serves as a platform for schools and districts to highlight opportunities for students to earn college credit and industry certificates while in high school. Research has shown that students who participate in early postsecondary opportunities are more likely to enroll and persist in postsecondary.

**Name of Your High School** will offer college-focused activities for freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. While the focus of EPSO Week is particularly on high school students, we are also encouraging middle and elementary schools to include activities throughout the week that highlight the importance of EPSOs.

**Name of Event Coordinator**, EPSO Week Coordinator for **Name of Your High School**, is expecting more than **Insert Number** students to participate with the help of **Insert Number** volunteers from **Insert names of School Faculty/Administration/College/Community Resources that will help.**

For more information about the **Name of Your High School** EPSO Week event, please contact **Name of Event Coordinator and contact information.**



# Sample Family Night Letter

**Update the bracketed portions with your school's information and relevant event details**

[SCHOOL LOGO]

[SCHOOL ADDRESS]

Dear Students and Families,

The Tennessee Department of Education has designated Oct. 22-26 as Early Postsecondary Opportunity (EPSO) Week, and as part of our effort at [SCHOOL] to increase awareness and enrollment in EPSO's, we invite you to attend our **EPSO Family Night** on [DATE], from [TIME RANGE].

Research shows that students who participate in EPSOs not only earn college credit and industry certifications while in high school, but are also more likely to enroll and persist in postsecondary programs. Your student can access a number of these opportunities at [SCHOOL], including:

[LIST EPSO'S CURRENTLY OFFERED]

## **Want to Learn More?**


We encourage you to come by on [DATE], where counselors, teachers, and administrators will be on hand to present on each of our opportunities and answer any questions. We look to also have employers and community organizations present to share their perspective on how increased postsecondary attainment can shape our community. In addition to the Family Night, our activities that week will include [LIST OF OTHER ACTIVITIES]. If you are interested in volunteering or would like to learn more about how your employer or community group can participate, please contact [NAME, TITLE] at [PHONE, or EMAIL]. Even if you are not able to attend, follow the activities at [SCHOOL] and across the state with the hashtag **#EPSOWeek2018**.

Thank you in advance for supporting your student and this exciting initiative to encourage EPSO awareness and enrollment for all of Tennessee's students!

Sincerely,

[COUNSELOR/PRINCIPAL/EVENT COORDINATOR]

# Social Media Campaign

| Follow and tag:   | Use hashtags  |
|---|---------------|
|  @TN_Pathways on Twitter | #EPSOWeek2018 |

# Got Credit?

| First Name | Last Name | Grade Level | Are you currently enrolled in an EPSO class this semester? If yes, which one? | What EPSO(s) are you interested in learning more about? |
|------------|-----------|-------------|---|---|
|            |           |             | Yes or No   |   |
|            |           |             | Yes or No   |   |
|            |           |             | Yes or No   |   |
|            |           |             | Yes or No   |   |
|            |           |             | Yes or No   |   |
|            |           |             | Yes or No   |   |
|            |           |             | Yes or No   |   |
|            |           |             | Yes or No   |   |
|            |           |             | Yes or No   |   |
|            |           |             | Yes or No   |   |
|            |           |             | Yes or No   |   |
|            |           |             | Yes or No   |   |
|            |           |             | Yes or No   |   |
|            |           |             | Yes or No   |   |
|            |           |             | Yes or No   |   |
|            |           |             | Yes or No   |   |

## Section 4: Hosting Your EPSO Week

This section guides you through activities that your school can host during EPSO Week. Whether you work in a high school, middle school, or an elementary school, EPSO Week has something to offer for each student, not just high school students interested in taking rigorous college-level courses.

Key information in this section includes activity ideas for students from elementary school through high school, including taking part in our EPSO Week Challenge.

### In This Section

- EPSO Week at Elementary Schools
- EPSO Week at Middle Schools
- EPSO Week Challenge List
- EPSO Week Sample Timeline
- EPSO Week Catchphrases:
  - decrease the time and cost of earning a degree or certificate.
  - earn postsecondary credit in high school.
  - become familiar with postsecondary expectations and requirements.
  - make more informed decisions about postsecondary plans and career aspirations.
  - develop confidence and the study skills necessary for success in postsecondary coursework.

# EPSO Week at Elementary Schools

It is never too early to promote Early Postsecondary Opportunities (EPSOs) in your schools! Elementary school students will love the chance to learn about EPSOs and potentially interact with students at the middle or high school. Here are a few ways you can engage students in an age appropriate way.

## **Dress the Part**

Encourage teachers and staffs 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 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. Use this idea in your centers or as a whole group activity.

# EPSO Week at Middle Schools

Middle schools are a great opportunity to start talking about available early postsecondary opportunities in Tennessee, as well as their college and career aspirations.

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.

## ***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 postsecondary and early postsecondary opportunity (if applicable) experiences.

## ***Bring College to the 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.

# EPSO Week Challenge

Elementary, middle, and high schools can all participate in the Early Postsecondary Opportunities (EPSO) Week Challenge.

Faculty, staff, and students may earn points for their school by completing events on the EPSO Week Challenge list below. Points vary from 1 to 15 by event. The school with the most points will earn a prize that will be announced in the weeks preceding EPSO Week.

## **How to earn EPSO Week Challenge points**

*Schools or individuals must post a tweet that meets **all** of the following criteria:*

- include the name of your school and for which event you are earning points;*
- document completion of the challenge, such as a photograph or video;*
- use the hashtag **#EPSOWeek2018**; and*
- tag your school, district, and Tennessee Pathways (**@TN\_Pathways**) on Twitter.*

## **1 Point**

- College Gear Photo.** Your school faculty and staff may earn 1 point per adult who is photographed wearing apparel from his/her alma mater or favorite postsecondary institution.
- EPSO Classroom Signs.** Your school may earn points for creating signs identifying classrooms where an EPSO is being offered. Schools may earn 1 point per photographed sign.
- EPSO Poster Display.** Your school may earn 1 point for photographing where your Tennessee Department of Education EPSO poster is displayed. Posters will be provided with EPSO Week registration materials.

## **2 Points**

- College Admissions Visit.** Your school may earn 2 points per college admissions representative who comes to visit during EPSO Week and answer your students' questions. Please note that these visits must be separate from a college fair, should you choose to have it.
- EPSO Door Decorating Contest.** Your school may earn points for holding an EPSO-themed door decorating contest. Schools may earn 2 points per decorated door.
- EPSOs in the Morning Announcements.** Your school may earn 2 points for announcing your EPSO Week events or including information about EPSOs in the morning announcements.

### 3 Points

- Student Alumni Visit.** Your school may earn 3 points by hosting a talk in which an alumnus/alumna who is currently enrolled in a postsecondary institution discusses their college or postsecondary experience.
- High School EPSO Student Talk at Partnering Middle School.** Your school may earn 3 points for arranging a talk in which a local high school student participating in an EPSO discusses their EPSO experience with middle school students. Both the participating high school and middle school will earn 3 points each.
- Postsecondary Tour.** Your school may earn 3 points for organizing a tour of a postsecondary institution.

### 5 Points

- College Fair.** Your school may earn 5 points by holding a college fair with at least five institutions represented. Your school can earn a bonus point by inviting your partnering middle school(s).
- Postsecondary Pep Rally.** Your school may earn 5 points for celebrating the hard work of your students and build continued excitement around more students taking advantage of EPSOs.
- Ready Graduate Ceremony.** Your school may earn 5 points by documenting students committing to being Ready Graduates by having a Ready Graduate signing ceremony. Students can sign a banner stating their commitment to meeting the Ready Graduate criteria.

### 10 Points



- **College Fair with Multiple Postsecondary Types.** Your school may earn 10 points by holding and documenting a college fair with at least five institutions represented. Three of the four following postsecondary types must be represented: TCAT, community college, four-year college, and a military branch. Your school can earn a bonus point by inviting your partnering middle school(s).
- **Parent and Community Night.** Your school may earn 10 points by documenting students and parents participating in an early postsecondary opportunities information night. Students and parents can have their questions answered by school counselors, teachers, local postsecondary representatives, and local industry representatives.

### 15 Points

- **Winning Logo Contest Design.** The school with the winning logo design for our logo contest will earn 15 points.
- **District-wide Participation.** Your school may earn 15 points each if every school in your district registers for EPSO Week. If your district has completed this event, send a tweet to **@TN\_Pathways**.

## EPSO Week Sample Timeline

### Monday

- Parent and Community Night. Invite students and parents to an early postsecondary opportunities information night and have their questions answered by school counselors, teachers, local postsecondary representatives, and local industry representatives.

## **Tuesday**

- Guest Speaker. Invite postsecondary admissions representatives to your school to help students learn more about their institutions.

## **Wednesday**

- Early Postsecondary Door Decorating Contest. Encourage homerooms to decorate their doors in an EPSO theme.
- Encourage students to make notes about any EPSOs they are interested in learning more about. Have the "Got Credit" sign-in sheet located on page 35 in every classroom as well as the school counselors' office.

## **Thursday**

- College tour. Schedule a college tour with a postsecondary institution to help students learn more about the institution and campus.

## **Friday**

- Postsecondary Pep Rally. Celebrate the hard work of your students and build continued excitement around more students taking advantage of EPSOs.