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School Dropout Prevention Initiative

- **No Child Left Behind Act of 2001**
  - **Title I**— Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged
    - **Part H** — School Dropout Prevention
      - **Subpart 2** — School Dropout Prevention Initiative

Funding Program Overview

Detailed information: http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg15.html

Purpose and Background

The School Dropout Prevention Initiative is designed to provide for school dropout prevention and re-entry and to raise academic achievement levels by providing grants that:

a) challenge all children to attain their highest academic potential; and
b) ensure that all children have substantial and ongoing opportunities to attain their highest academic potential through school-wide programs proven effective in school dropout prevention and re-entry.

Funding and Eligibility

(Federal Appropriation Fiscal Year 2004: $4.971 million)

In years when funding appropriated for Part H is less than $75 million, grants are awarded on a competitive basis to state educational agencies and local educational agencies. State agencies may also award subgrants, on a competitive basis, to local educational agencies (public schools or charter schools) that serve students in 6th to 12th grades and have annual school dropout rates that are above the state average rate, or to middle schools that feed students into such 6 to 12 schools. In addition, enrollment at these schools must be at least 50 percent low-income students, or a majority of students must come from feeder schools where enrollment is at least 50 percent low-income students.

Funds can be spent for designated purposes such as remedial education, meeting state academic achievement standards, and counseling and mentoring for at-risk students. Developing clear linkages to career skills and employment is one of several strategies noted for implementation of this initiative.

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Alignment of Choices CD Edition to Requirements of Title I-H-2

Overview: Comprehensive and High-Quality Information

Choices is an interactive program that supports a range of student computer literacy skills, such as: searching large databases, accessing and printing information, using a word processor, creating a personal file and saving data to it, following links to selected websites and exploring those websites.

Choices also helps high school students focus on their academic career today and make plans for a smooth transition to a variety of post-secondary education and career options in the future. *Choices* helps students see clear linkages between their school work and career skills by providing information that is comprehensive, accurate and up to date. The program motivates and engages students through interactive activities for:

- Self-assessment of interests (English and Spanish), work values and basic skills;
- Career exploration with information that highlights necessary academic and career skills for hundreds of occupations;
- Post-secondary education exploration;
- Four-year high school course planning;
- Career and education portfolio building; and
- Financial aid and scholarship research and application.

Choices provides a seamless connection to thousands of college websites, America's Job Bank, state job banks, scholarship databases and other high-quality career sites. Students can apply to colleges online. Parents can complete college financial need forms and use tools to better understand the process of financing college costs.

Choices connects to more than 200 online career videos. They bring job information to life through real-world interviews with workers in the field. The videos show workers in action, giving a first-hand sense of what a career is really like. Students learn about required education/training and career skills, work activities, job outlook and earnings.

Academic Integration

Choices includes creative, outcome-based solutions for teaching established curricula and supporting remediation efforts with technology. Lessons are designed to integrate career development concepts into the core academics through the use of technology. They support teacher efforts to use technology to enhance academic instruction. The lessons are an excellent way to enrich academic learning and motivate students.

Accountability

The *OnTrack* accountability system provides counselors and administrators with data about *Choices* assessment results and progress with education and career planning for individual students or groups of students. *OnTrack* accountability data can be imported into applications such as Excel for further analysis and consolidation. Schools can also send *OnTrack* student information to parents and guardians quickly and easily, thus promoting parental involvement.

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Authorized Activities

Each eligible entity that receives an award under this part may use the funds to carry out an array of activities that advance student academic achievement and support the student's completion of secondary school and transition to vocational technical training, further education or employment. *Choices* content and processes align most closely with the activities described below.

Part H, Subpart 2 – School Dropout Prevention Initiative
SEC. 1822. Program Authorized

(b) Subgrants to Local Educational Agencies

(1)(E) Remedial education

(1)(G) Efforts to meet state student academic achievement standards

Choices CD Edition Alignment:

Choices content offers a wealth of opportunities for academic enrichment and remediation support. For example, students might begin by taking an interest inventory that identifies career clusters and specific occupations of interest to the student. Follow-up reading about key occupations gives students practice in reading comprehension and exposes them to new vocabulary. Graphics and charts give students assistance in comprehension. The occupation reports further validate the importance of academic achievement with highlights of required education/training and career skills. Related school subjects and a suggested four-year course of study are also provided. The *Choices* Planner and portfolio invite students to write descriptions of their skills through a guided process, create written education and career plans and practice resume writing.

The very nature of using *Choices* leads students to use many critical thinking skills, such as analysis, synthesis and evaluation. Students must make decisions and set priorities when they search for occupations, colleges or scholarships. They are given opportunities to compare and contrast options. They are encouraged to retrieve, evaluate and manage information. Ready-to-use lessons give teachers yet another tool to enhance academic achievement. They blend career development concepts, the use of technology and academic skills into interesting lessons that engage students, build on their own context and motivate learning.

Part H, Subpart 2 – School Dropout Prevention Initiative
SEC. 1822. Programs Authorized

(b) Subgrants to Local Educational Agencies
(1)(H) Counseling and mentoring for at-risk students

SEC. 1825. Strategies for Capacity Building

(2) … And developing clear linkages to career skills and employment

Choices CD Edition Alignment:

Choices can form the framework for solid academic, post-secondary education transition, and career counseling that is outcome-based. *Choices* is a comprehensive, useful and concise tool that guides students through the career and education planning process and gives them immediate results. The program supports academic and career counseling by providing resources for students in the areas of:

- Interest assessment (English and Spanish) and work values assessment;
- Career exploration with information that highlights necessary career skills for hundreds of occupations;
- Post-secondary education and training (comprehensive, national database with complete search capabilities for two and four- year colleges and technical schools);
- Four-year high school course planning;
- Career and education portfolio building; and
- Financial aid and scholarship research and application.

Choices also provides a seamless connection to thousands of college websites, America's Job Bank and state job banks (for job search and job placement activities), scholarship databases and other high-quality career sites. Parents and students use tools to better understand the process of financing college costs and preparing for college.

The *Choices* Planner and portfolio support student documentation of their employability skills, goal setting, the development of four-year high school course plans and transition planning for post-secondary options. There are also activities that support job placement services, such as resume writing, job interview preparation and job search. The Planner and portfolio can provide an ongoing record of student plans and progress.

Choices comes with extensive professional resources for counseling program implementation and a variety of counselor training opportunities to maximize the use of the system.

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Subpart 2 – School Dropout Prevention Initiative
SEC. 1830. Reporting and Accountability

(a) Local Educational Agency Reports

(1)...shall provide, on an annual basis, a report regarding the status of the implementation activities funded under this subpart

Choices CD Edition Alignment:

The *OnTrack* accountability system provides administrators with records that report the use of *Choices* as part of broader implementation activities for dropout prevention. Information can be reported by student or aggregated by class.

Teachers and counselors can also review each student's *Choices* assessment results and progress with education and career planning. *OnTrack* helps counselors document a student's interests, focus occupations and the colleges researched. Analyzing how students use *Choices* will help to target those who might be in need of additional counseling.

OnTrack is also a good vehicle for communicating information to parents and guardians quickly and easily.

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