Funds for Technology

- **No Child Left Behind Act of 2001**
  - **Title V** — Promoting Informed Parental Choice and Innovative Programs
    - **Part D** — Fund for the Improvement of Education
      - **Subpart 3** — Partnerships in Character Education

Funding Program Overview

Detailed information: http://www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg69.html

Purpose and Background
In general, the Secretary of Education is authorized to award grants for the purpose of designing and implementing character education programs. Such programs must be integrated into classroom instruction, consistent with State academic content standards, and carried out in conjunction with other educational reform efforts. Each eligible entity awarded a grant under this section may select the elements of character that will be taught under the program for which the grant is awarded. Sample elements include: justice, fairness, respect, responsibility and trustworthiness.

Funding and Eligibility
(Federal Appropriation Fiscal Year 2004: $24.691 million)

Funds are awarded by the Secretary to State educational agencies (in partnership with local educational agencies, non-profit organizations, and/or institutions of higher education) and local educational agencies that comply with specific requirements as noted.

Grants are awarded on a competitive basis for a period not to exceed five years. Each entity desiring a grant must submit an application to the Secretary that includes a description of the program's proposed activities and objectives, the population to be served, evaluation procedures, and how parents and community groups will be involved.

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Alignment of Choices CD Edition to Requirements of Title V-D-11

Overview: Dynamic Counseling Tool That Supports Character Education

Choices is an interactive program that can be used to support key aspects of character education and academic achievement initiatives. *Choices* 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. The program complements character education by reinforcing the importance of various character elements, such as critical thinking, decision-making, problem solving, honesty, responsibility and other positive social skills in the workplace. *Choices* 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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SEC. 5431. Partnerships in Character Education Programs

(a) Program Authorized

(1) In General—The Secretary is authorized to award grants to eligible entities for the design and implementation of character education programs that

(A) are able to be integrated into classroom instruction and to be consistent with State academic content standards; and

(B) are able to be carried out in conjunction with other educational reform efforts

Choices CD Edition Alignment:

Choices is an interactive program that can be used to support key aspects of character education and academic achievement. The program complements character education by reinforcing the importance of elements of character, such as critical thinking, decision-making, problem solving, honesty, responsibility and other positive social skills in the workplace. It provides online resources for self-assessment of interests, work values and basic skills.

Both the Basic Skills Survey and the Work Importance Locator not only enhance student awareness of positive character traits, but also connect those traits to specific occupations in which the student has an interest. Students learn how the character they build in school transfers to success in the workplace. *Choices* also contains an electronic Planner and portfolio where students can write descriptions of their skills and character traits through a guided process, create written Individual Education and Career Plans, and practice resume writing and other job seeking skills.

The very nature of using *Choices* leads students to tap into 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 have opportunities to compare and contrast options and to use the insights gained for effective academic and career planning. In essence, using *Choices* is an excellent way for students to practice some of the underlying skills that build strong character.

Since *Choices* can be installed on every computer in a school, it supports the requirement that character education programs serve all students. For example, students might access *Choices* in labs, the media center, classrooms and the counseling center. Students can use *Choices* on their own and as often as they like. With a flexible and user-centered approach, *Choices* lets students start where they want and get immediate results. The *Choices* technology provides an effective way to reach all students and facilitates efforts to increase student understanding of work and self, decision-making, and academic and career planning.

Choices data can augment information gathered for character education program evaluation. 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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