

How *Career Choices* Can be Used to Address the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006

CAREER GUIDANCE AND ACADEMIC COUNSELING.—The term “career guidance and academic counseling” means guidance and counseling that—(A) provides access for students (and parents, as appropriate) to information regarding career awareness and planning with respect to an individual’s occupational and academic future; and (B) provides information with respect to career options, financial aid, and postsecondary options, including baccalaureate degree programs.

Comprehensive Guidance Supports Perkins’ Core Indicators

The 2006 reauthorization of the Perkins Act maintains a focus on academic standards and accountability. States develop their own performance measures, but *must* adhere to six core indicators:

- ❑ Student attainment of “challenging academic content standards and student academic achievement standards” as adopted by the state
- ❑ Student attainment of “career and technical skill proficiencies”
- ❑ Student attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, a GED credential, or a proficiency credential in conjunction with a secondary school diploma
- ❑ Student graduation rates
- ❑ Placement in post-secondary education or advanced training, placement in military service, or placement in employment
- ❑ Student “participation in and completion of career and technical education programs that lead to non-traditional” training and employment

With a continued emphasis on standards and accountability, career guidance is needed more than ever. If students are able to visualize their future and plan beyond high school, they are far more likely to take an active part in their education, graduate from high school, and pursue some form of post-secondary education or training. Perkins not only requires this, but states must be able to prove that they accomplish what they set out to do—all while continuing to integrate academics with career and technical education and maintain academic rigor.

If adopting the *Career Choices* curriculum, the following points outlining how *Career Choices* helps address the six core indicators will help as you develop your Carl Perkins grant proposals.

- ❑ By integrating academics and career guidance, *Career Choices* bolsters academics. Each activity in the *Career Choices* texts motivates students to sharpen academic skills by demonstrating the relevance of present academic studies to their future lives. At the same time they practice reading, writing, and computation, students learn to identify interests, explore career options, and build decision-making skills.
- ❑ Academic success hinges on a student’s ability to identify interests, build self-esteem, and gain decision-making skills early in their high school experience—this is what *Career Choices* does best. Completion of *Career Choices* means completion of an individualized 10-year education and career plan, ensuring future course planning success for students and simplified assessment for school counselors. The development and annual review of this plan increases the chances of graduating from high school.

- ❑ Attainment of CTE proficiencies begins with identifying an area of study congruent with a student's interests, skills, aptitudes, and work values. *Career Choices* provides exemplary guidance as students work through a self-assessment, career research, and decision-making process that aids in selecting appropriate career paths.
- ❑ Students with a plan for an economically self-sufficient future are more likely to finish high school and pursue post-secondary education. Why? Because they understand the relationship between high-paying jobs and their education. Throughout a course based on the *Career Choices* materials, students learn the costs of the lifestyle they envision for themselves and plan for a career that will support that lifestyle. And, as students revisit and revise their 10-year plans, they are reminded of the importance of appropriate education and training.
- ❑ Identifying and investigating their interests and aptitudes helps students (especially young women) realize that myriad careers are open to them and understand the costs—both in personal satisfaction and economic terms—if they don't plan for a financially solvent future. By exploring a variety of career options, students discover careers they'd never thought of—or heard of. A comprehensive career guidance experience will increase the likelihood that students will investigate and pursue a career in a nontraditional field.

“After utilizing Career Choices as a counseling instrument and a career cluster selection, less than 5% of our students are changing programs. This evidence supports our belief that the program is a key to career decision-making.”

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