

The CHOICES Impact

*Interactive Workshops. Engaged Communities.
Keeping teens "into" school!*



"You gave us an education about why we need education." –Evan, middle school student, Washington

Board of Directors

Donald Brinkman
Microsoft

Richard Cordova, CPA
University of Washington

Joshua Dirks
Project Bionic

Bert Markovich, Esq.
Schwabe, Williamson & Wyatt LLP

Matt Mormino
Brighton Jones

Leo Muller
CHOICES Education Group

Elizabeth Steere
Amazon

Sushama Vadlamannati
Technical Program Manager

Key Community Partners

Businesses

Chambers of Commerce

Rotary Clubs

Student Success Organizations

School Districts

Who We Serve

Middle and High School teens in
their classrooms and beyond!

At CHOICES Education Group we strongly believe in measuring our impact on teens, and have a long history of research dating back to our origins.

Early Research on Workshop Effects

When we first began delivering CHOICES in 1985, we secured a grant from the U.S. Dept. of Education to study the effects of the program. In a time series study of 11 urban, suburban and rural schools, we found that one month after attending CHOICES, 38% of students who indicated intentions to put more effort into their attendance reported actual increases, and 56% of students self-reported putting more time and effort into their grades at school.

Formative Engagement Study

During the 2006-2007 academic year, Russell Investments of Tacoma, Washington (at that time) sponsored a "formative" study for CHOICES led by a research professor from the Experimental Education Unit at the University of Washington who specializes in at-risk students. This study tested evaluation procedures for assessing the impact of the CHOICES workshop on school engagement of at-risk youth. The approach was based on evidence from independent research demonstrating that increased school engagement is a strong indicator of on-time high school completion.

The procedures for our school engagement study included pre and post workshop observations by researchers regarding engagement levels of students, an interview with teachers regarding the perceived impact of CHOICES on student engagement, and an earlier version of the self-report student survey currently used by CHOICES after each workshop. The school selected for the study was Bethel School District's Spanaway Junior High School in Spanaway, WA.

Results of the study indicated continuing positive ratings of CHOICES by students via the current survey instrument. In addition, independent observations of "focus students" (details below) indicated a 9% increase in appropriate classroom engagement and a 9% decrease in inappropriate engagement and non-engagement coincident with their participation in CHOICES. Observations also revealed more instances of students contributing information in class, fewer instances of students disrupting the class, and more instances of teacher praise.

Teacher Administered Engagement Study

In the 2008-2009 academic year we conducted a new, teacher-administered study in three locations (Madison, FL, Danville, IL and Helena, MT) to measure increases in positive school engagement by CHOICES participants.

One aspect of this study investigated changes in 60 "focus students" that were identified by their teachers as being at-risk of dropping out of school, but that would be participating in CHOICES. The criteria for selection of these students were poor attendance, grades, conduct and/or class participation. Study instruments were completed by the teachers one week prior to CHOICES delivery and again four weeks after CHOICES delivery.

The results were as follows:

- Teacher-Reported students: (n = 60; scale range = 1-5)
- Average Engagement Score 1 week prior to CHOICES: 2.98 (Baseline)
- Average Engagement Score 4 weeks after CHOICES: 3.22
- Average Engagement Score Delta: 0.24
- Average Engagement Score Percent Delta: 8.02%

In the Helena study site we conducted a Control Group study that completed the same pre and post instruments at the same times as the Study Group, but did not participate in CHOICES until after completing the post instrument. The results for this portion of the study were as follows:

Control Group

- Teacher-Reported students: (n = 15; scale range = 1-5)
- Average Engagement Score 1 week prior to CHOICES: 2.66 (Baseline)
- Average Engagement Score 4 weeks after CHOICES: 2.85
- Average Engagement Score Delta: 0.19
- Average Engagement Score Percent Delta: 7.21%

Study Group

- Teacher-Reported students: (n = 30; scale range = 1-5)
- Average Engagement Score 1 week prior to CHOICES: 2.97 (Baseline)
- Average Engagement Score 4 weeks after CHOICES: 3.25
- Average Engagement Score Delta: 0.28
- Average Engagement Score Percent Delta: 9.35%

Percent Difference in Engagement Score Delta (Study Group over Control Group): 47.37%

Not only did these results corroborate our 2007 study by indicating an average 8% increase in school engagement among at-risk youth, but the controlled study demonstrated that students who participated in CHOICES increased their engagement 47% more than those in the Control Group (Control Group students increased their engagement by .19 points, while Study Group students increased their engagement by .28 points, a 47% higher score). This indicates a strong correlation between participation in CHOICES and increased school engagement.

Results from Recent Student Surveys

At the end of every CHOICES session, presenters administer self-report survey instruments for students to determine their response to the program and the presenter. The student survey investigates whether the content matters to them, how interesting the program is to them, as well as how easy it is to understand, how believable it is, how important graduating and pursuing post-secondary education is, what they thought of the presenter's effectiveness and how useful each of the 12 workshop activities are.

A compilation of 5,170 post-workshop surveys administered during the 2016-2017 academic year to students in 42 different schools across the country indicate continuing high ratings from students, as detailed below (summary language and data; rating is a Mean Score on a Scale of 1-4; Confidence Level is 95%; more details available upon request):

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| 1. How much did the CHOICES content matter to you? | Rating: 3.40 of 4.00 (85.12%) |
| 2. How interesting was CHOICES to you? | Rating: 3.15 of 4.00 (78.87%) |
| 3. How understandable was CHOICES to you? | Rating: 3.38 of 4.00 (84.62%) |
| 4. How believable was CHOICES to you? | Rating: 3.30 of 4.00 (82.51%) |
| 5. How important is high school graduation to your future? | Rating: 3.80 of 4.00 (94.90%) |
| 6. How important is post high school education to you? | Rating: 3.74 of 4.00 (93.57%) |
| 7. Will you pay more attention to your education now? | Rating: 3.34 of 4.00 (83.43%) |
| 8. How effective was the CHOICES presenter? | Rating: 3.47 of 4.00 (86.81%) |
| 9. How useful was the CHOICES content? (12 data points) | Rating: 3.35 of 4.00 (83.85%) |
| 10. Composite Mean Score (all 20 data points above): | Rating: 3.39 of 4.00 (84.80%) |

These striking results indicate the powerful impact of CHOICES, and therefore the dramatic Social Return On Investment (SROI) that we are realizing in communities across the US.