

The America's Choice School Design

Fact Sheet

The America's Choice[®] School Design is a comprehensive, K–12 school-improvement program developed by the National Center on Education and the Economy (NCEE), a non-profit education organization founded in 1988. It offers designs and the assistance and materials needed to implement them for elementary, K–8, middle and high schools.

The program draws on the best educational practices in the United States and on extensive research done by NCEE on the most effective education systems in Europe, Asia and Australasia.

The America's Choice program grew out of an earlier NCEE school reform program, the National Alliance for Restructuring Education. Legislation passed by the U.S. Congress in the mid-1990s included the National Alliance on a short list of programs presented as examples of the kind of comprehensive school reform programs the Congress was urging schools to adopt.

Today, the America's Choice design is one of the largest *comprehensive* school-improvement programs in the nation.

The America's Choice School Design is in use in 547 schools serving approximately 350,000 students in 97 school systems in 16 states in every region of the country in SY 2003–04. The program serves 375 elementary schools, 150 middle schools, and 22 high schools.

Individual schools can choose to use the America's Choice design. Entire school districts have also adopted the design, and two states, Georgia and Mississippi, have adopted the America's Choice design as their preferred solution for low-performing schools statewide.

The America's Choice program stresses the alignment of standards, instruction and assessments. The America's Choice team has invested heavily in the development of powerful, standards-based curriculum, including courses designed to bring students who are far behind up to standards. It uses highly successful, research-based teaching strategies, and offers unusually intensive and continuous professional development and on-site technical assistance to the schools in its network.

The America's Choice literacy model features two-and-a-half hours of literacy instruction a day at the primary school level. The entire literacy program, which extends from

kindergarten through high school, includes skills instruction, mini-lessons, author and genre studies, writers workshops, readers workshops, and rituals and routines that enable teachers to spend time with individual students and small groups of students who need extra help to meet demanding standards. Double period “Ramp-Up” courses are offered for students with serious reading deficits.

The America’s Choice mathematics curriculum is built on the world-renowned Japanese model. It includes attention to the development of math skills and knowledge, conceptual mastery of mathematics and the ability to apply what the student knows to complex, real-world problems. It also includes powerful catch-up strategies intended to help students who are years behind in mathematics catch up to their peers. The rituals and routines in this curriculum are intended to make sure that students acquire the necessary skills and really understand and can use the core concepts that underlie mathematics.

The program also includes performance standards, aligned curriculum materials, leadership development, and extensive training of school coaches, as well as extensive support for structured professional development at the school site.

The base cost for the America’s Choice program ranges from \$70,000 for the elementary school program to \$75,000 for the high school program.

Contact information: www.americaschoice.org, via email at info@americaschoice.org, or via phone at 1-888-882-9538.