

# going places newsletter

An Early Awareness Program for Students

SPRING 2006 • COUNSELOR

## SPECIAL Interest Articles

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### Would YOU like a **FREE iPod** with your Award-Winning Career and College Planning Website?

Your students can win a free iPod Nano™! To celebrate its award-winning career and college planning Website, AES announced the launch of a new Website contest that will be offered at [EducationPlanner.org](http://EducationPlanner.org).

A link on any **EducationPlanner** interior webpage will take visitors who wish to enter the contest to a questionnaire about the Website. Correct entries will be automatically entered into the contest and winners will be selected through a random drawing. Nine (9) Apple iPod Nanos™, valued at \$199 each, will be given away every month from through May 2006.

**EducationPlanner.org**, named the nation's #1 college planning Website for 2005 by *Forbes.com*, provides free, 24 hour access to resources that help students research careers, search for schools and offers test preparation and practice exams for the PSAT, SAT & ACT. Also, **EducationPlanner** offers one of the largest free undergraduate and graduate scholarship search databases with more than 1.8 million awards worth almost \$8 billion. Additionally, **EducationPlanner** includes online college admission applications, extensive student aid information, online applications for student and parent loans, and an interactive financial aid award analyzer and calculators.

For more information and to register for the EducationPlanner iPod™ contest visit [EducationPlanner.org](http://EducationPlanner.org).

## Consequences of Failing to Complete High School



From an early age, students need to be made aware of all the benefits of graduating from high school and pursuing higher education and of the disadvantages of failing to complete high school.

In addition to the obvious fact that high school dropouts earn approximately \$9,200 less than high school graduates and that "Over a 40 year work life, an individual with a bachelor's degree will earn approximately \$1.1 million more than a high school dropout." (Day, 2002), there seems to be an epidemic of students who are failing to complete high school. Each year, almost one third of all public high school students—and nearly one half of all blacks, Hispanics, and Native American students—fail to graduate from public high school with their classes. High school dropouts are much more likely than their peers who graduate to:

- Be unemployed
- Receive public assistance
- Be on death row
- Be divorced
- Be single parents of children who eventually drop out of high school themselves
- Live in poverty
- Be in prison
- Be unhealthy

In a report conducted by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the authors approach the dropout problem from the perspective of the students who drop out, themselves, offering the reasons why they say they did not complete high school and what steps can be taken to remedy the problem.

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Although there are no panaceas, among the conclusions reached by the authors for improving the chances that kids will remain in school until graduation are:

- Improving teaching and curricula to make school more relevant and engaging and enhance the connection between school and work
- Improve instruction and access to supports for struggling students
- Build a school climate that fosters academics
- Ensure that students have a strong relationship with at least one adult in the school
- Improve communication between parents and the school

See this full report at: <http://www.civicenterprises.net/pdfs/thesilentepidemic3-06.pdf>.

Information in this article was adapted from *The Dropout Challenge* by David S. Broder, *Washington Post*, and *Alliance for Excellent Education Website* ([www.all4Ed.org](http://www.all4Ed.org)).

## NO Such Thing as Enough FREE Money



Have your students visited the scholarship database on the award-winning EducationPlanner site yet?

A vast pool of resources is at their fingertips. This scholarship database is the world's largest FREE scholarship database and contains 1.8 million awards worth over \$8 billion -- the FREE money is there for the taking!

Students need to fill out a questionnaire, and based on their answers they are provided with a list of scholarships for which they may be eligible to apply, along with the application criteria and any restrictions associated with the scholarship.

Unlike many scholarship search engines with far fewer awards, the scholarship search on **EducationPlanner** is 100% FREE to use!

## Show me the Money... and the Benefits

### *Perks & Benefits as Part of a Job*

**Most students easily make the connection between work and salary, and when asked, will gravitate toward jobs known for higher pay. In middle and high school, they can start becoming familiar with that lesser known factor in employment compensation: benefits.**

In a tight labor market economy, attracting and retaining workers takes more than money. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in March 1998, benefits averaged 28% of the total compensation package.

Some companies hope to entice employees with a range of off-beat benefits such as pet insurance, entertainment discounts, or mobile dry cleaning services. Others are sticking with the basic healthcare and retirement benefits.

The list of potential unique benefits include financial planning, retailer discounts, legal services, auto insurance, acupuncture, herbal remedies, massage therapy, laser eye surgery and discounted airline/hotel fares/vacation plans. Some home-office/telecommuting tools can benefit both employee and employer, such as computers, Internet access, cell phones and pagers.

Factors influencing this new benefits landscape include an aging workforce, more dual-income households, alternative work schedules, concern for work/life balance, changes in health coverage and medical protocols, and the Web.

Recent reports detail many unique techniques to lure employees.

- Some new employees with skills & training in demand are offered lucrative signing bonuses.
- Seeking resumé for a software development position a company offered a leased BMW with all costs except gasoline paid by the company.
- A sales staff was offered the opportunity to leave each day at 2 PM in any month in which their sales topped the previous year by 20%. Sales & profits grew markedly.
- Eating sweets was always a perk at a Florida chocolate manufacturer, but the company added a free daily lunch, a \$25 birthday gift certificate, and a honeymoon cruise when getting married.
- One executive search firm responded to employee concerns by announcing it would provide \$5,000 a year for employees with children in college.

(Source: *Career Opportunities News*)

While most middle school students understand the concept of pay for work, many are not fully aware of the kinds of perks and benefits attendant to employment. One way to make the point is to have each student interview a parent/guardian or relative to learn about the employment benefits they receive. Have the class (or small groups of students) develop a combined list. Be sure to have them describe each benefit to develop a full understanding. Post the names of the employment benefits around the room and have the students stand next to the benefit they would most want to be part of their job. Then have them move to the second most important perk. For an interesting values discussion, have the students explain why they chose the benefits they did. Our bet is that, for middle school students, the BMW will win out over life insurance!

**EDITOR'S NOTES:** The Going Places Early Awareness Program is a service of American Education Services. The "Going Places" Newsletters for parents and counselors are semi-annual publications of the AES Going Places Program and are intended for the benefit counselors, students, and parents. Questions and comments are welcomed and can be directed by e-mail to [goingplaces@aesSuccess.org](mailto:goingplaces@aesSuccess.org), in writing to AES/PHEAA Development & Regional Services, 1200 North Seventh Street, Harrisburg, PA 17102-1444, or by phone at 1.800.831.0797 option #1. Please visit [aesSuccess.org](http://aesSuccess.org) where, 24/7, you may use the AES Online Request For Materials to conveniently order additional copies of this item, and other materials to guide your planning for higher education.