

Project SEARCH Overview for VRS Community Partners

January 2024



Welcome!

- Introductions
- Poll



Project | SEARCH

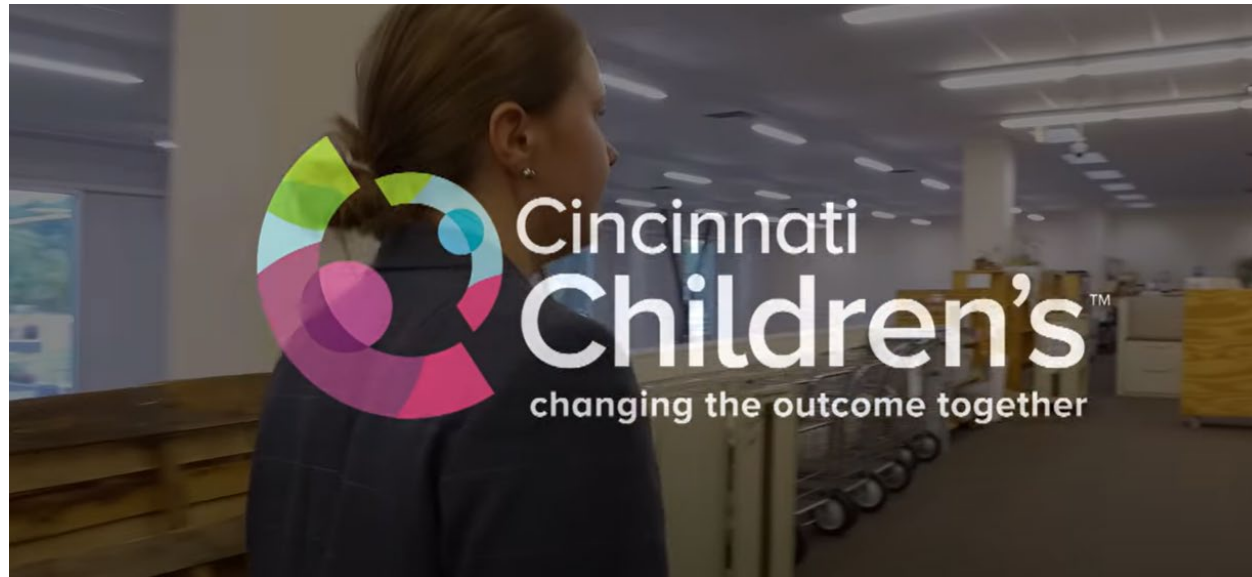


Program Overview



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Video



Project SEARCH Founders

**Erin Riehle, a Nursing
Director**



**Susie Rutkowski, a Special
Education Director**



Cincinnati Children's Hospital Project SEARCH



- Program began in 1996
- Developed as a means to:
 - Meet entry level employment needs at Cincinnati Children's
 - Support the diversity initiative, and
 - Partner with schools and community services agencies to improve outcomes



What is Project SEARCH?

Evidence-based one-year internship program for students with intellectual/developmental cognitive disabilities, ages 18-22, in their last year of high school eligibility.



Goal of the Program

The goal of Project SEARCH is for interns to obtain **competitive, integrated employment** within 9 months after completion of their internship experience.



International Program

- 48 states
- 10 countries
- 715 programs
- 43,233 students served since 2010



12 Minnesota Project SEARCH Sites

- **Avera Hospital** (Marshall)
- **Children's Minnesota**
(Minneapolis)
- **Embassy Suites** (Bloomington)
- **Essentia St. Mary's** (Detroit Lakes)
- **Gillette Children's Specialty Healthcare** (St. Paul)
- **Hennepin Healthcare**
(Minneapolis)
- **M Health Fairview Lakes Medical Center** (Wyoming)
- **M Health Fairview Ridges** (Burnsville)
- **Mayo Clinic** (Rochester)
- **Medtronic** (NW Metro)
- **NEW! Sanford Medical Center** (Worthington)
- **State of Minnesota** (St. Paul)

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Minnesota Data

Project SEARCH started in Minnesota in 2009 at Medtronic.

As of 2024, 541 interns have participated in Project SEARCH.

71% have obtained competitive integrated employment.

Brief Program Description

One school year

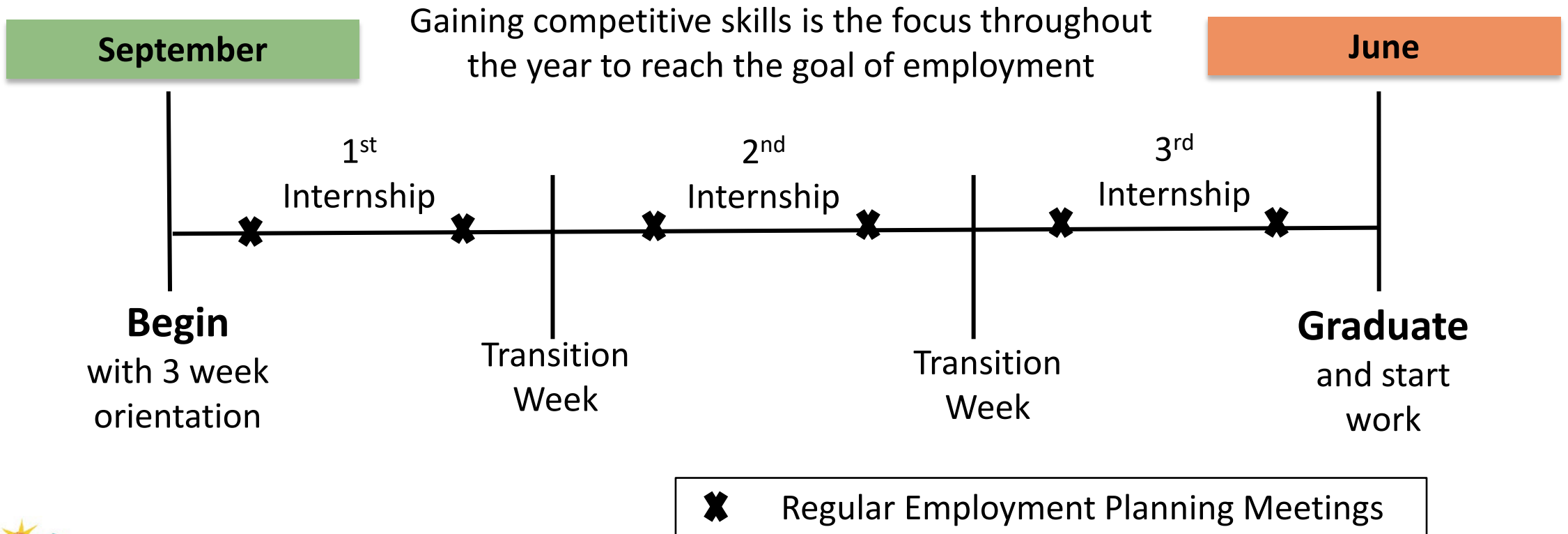
- 8-10 student interns with a variety of intellectual and developmental disabilities
- Are totally immersed in host business culture
- With a certified instructor and skills trainers on-site
- Participate in internships with continual feedback
- To work toward the outcome of employment in the community



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What does the year look like?

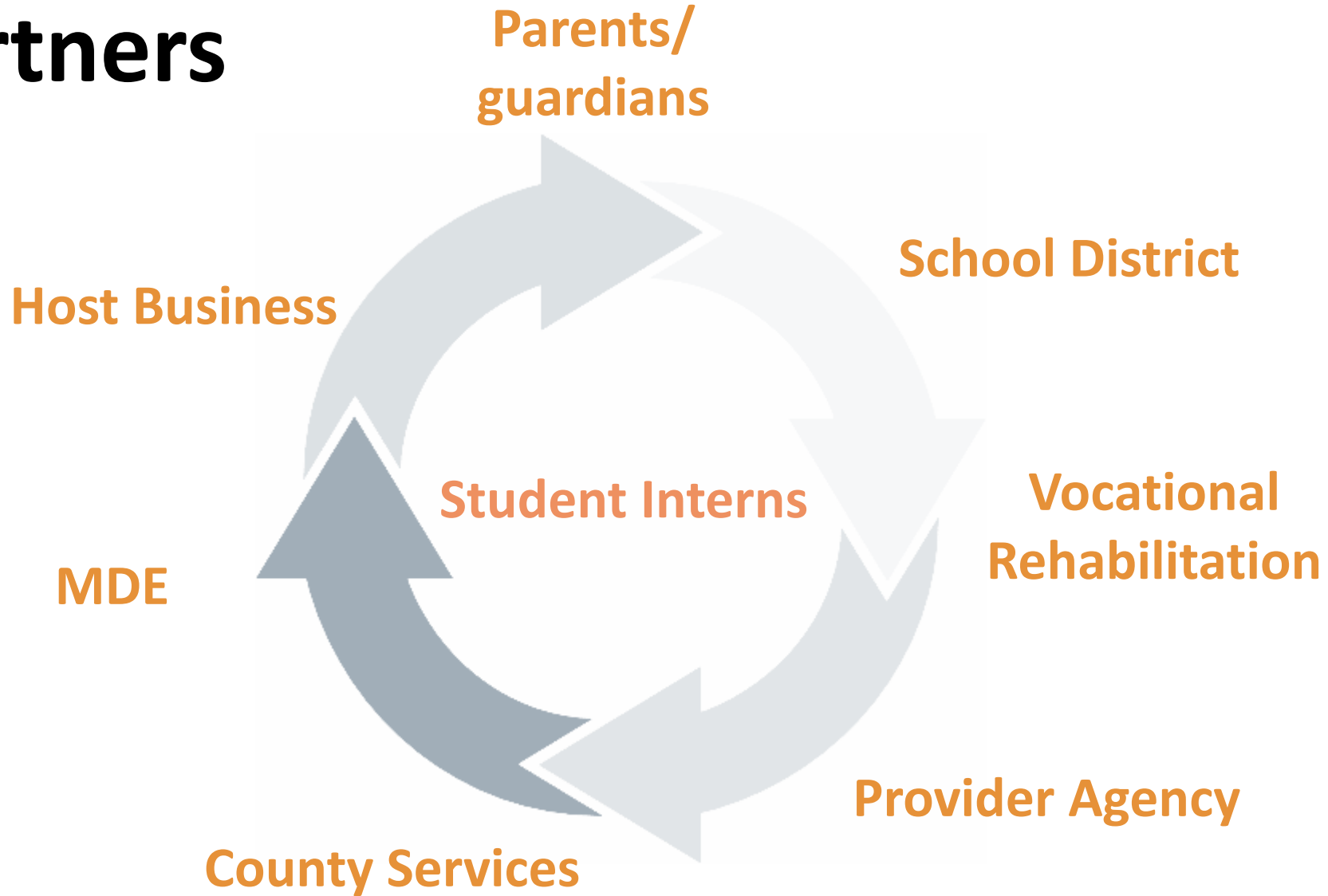
(Follows the School Calendar)



Partner Roles

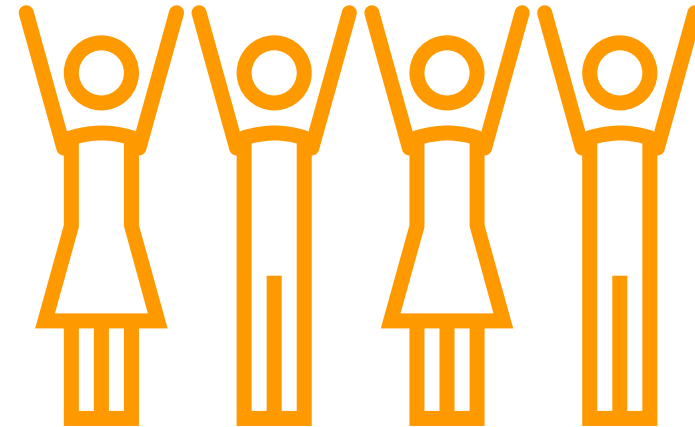


Partners



Partners slide 2

- MDE: Lead agency, statewide coordination
- Host school district
- Host business
- County
- VRS/SSB
- Parents/guardians
- **Provider Agency= YOU!**



Project SEARCH Partners

Host School District

- Provides special education instructor and skills trainers

Host Business

- Provides classroom space
- Arranges for internship rotations within the business
- Ensures staff are engaged as mentors to the interns



Project SEARCH Partners (continued slide 2)

County Services

- Ongoing liaison with employer once the eligible Project SEARCH intern graduates
- Eligibility for case management and waived services is determined through MnChoices assessment.
- Handles any needed accommodations



Project SEARCH Partners (continued slide 3)

Vocational Rehabilitation Services (or SSB)

- Provides career counseling during internships and follow-up support after graduation, funds Pre-ETS, job placement and coaching through Provider Agency

Parents and Guardians

- Parents are part of the team in helping to acquire employment
- Everyone works together in looking for **competitive, integrated employment** for the Project SEARCH graduate



Project SEARCH Partners (continued slide 4)

Provider Agency (DEED-VRS contracted Community Partner)

- Attends intern meetings and tracks progress throughout Project SEARCH
- Provides Pre-ETS during internships
- Begins job placement toward the end of the year (goal: CIE within 9 months)
- Job coaching as needed
- Long-term follow-along support as needed through waiver funding



Provider Agency Selection Process



Letter of Interest

- One Provider Agency is selected for each site through the Letter of Interest (LOI) Opportunity
- Must have capacity to serve 5-10 new interns each year
- Current opportunity:
 - Children's Minnesota- Minneapolis
 - Sanford Medical Center- Worthington
- **Due Date: Friday, February 23, 2024, 4:30 p.m.**



Important: Addendum to LOI

- Initial communication went out January 4th about LOI
- Addendum will be announced this week:
 - [Project SEARCH Letter of Interest Addendum 1](#)



Questions?

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