



FAQ for School Districts

What is Project SEARCH?

Project SEARCH is a job internship program for transition-age students and adults with disabilities nationally recognized for providing quality work experiences. With more than 18 years in operation, Project SEARCH has developed partnerships with many health care facilities and businesses with close to 400 sites across 46 states and multiple countries. Every site is licensed and receives technical assistance along with quality audits from the Project SEARCH central office located at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. The chart below includes operating sites in Wisconsin and expansion to additional sites is already planned.

One or More Years Operating in WI	New Sites that Began Operation fall 2015
Veterans Hospital and UW-Hospital, Madison	River Falls Area Hospital
Children's Hospital, Wauwatosa	Sauk Prairie Hospital
St. Joseph's Hospital, Marshfield	Kalahari Resort, WI Dells
St. Elizabeth's Hospital, Appleton	Riverview Hospital, WI Rapids
Waukesha Memorial Hospital	Sentry Insurance, Stevens Point
Wal-Mart Distribution Center, Menomonie	St. Vincent Hospital and Bellin Hospital, Green Bay
	Milwaukee County Zoo

How Does Project SEARCH Work?

Students (called interns) who become part of Project SEARCH learn to complete a variety of jobs within the business through multiple 10-week rotations over a period of 9-12 months. Project SEARCH students, who are called interns, have the opportunity to expand existing skills and learn new ones through this series of rotations. Project SEARCH interns experience full immersion in a business for 6 hours per day. Thus, Project SEARCH experiences serve as an excellent way for students and their planning teams to hone in on skills, interests, and strong employment matches by supporting career exploration through direct experience. Students may also be eligible to earn college credit for their time as Project SEARCH interns.

Who Supports Students in Project SEARCH?

A host school district, CESA, or vocational support agency provides the teacher/instructor and paraprofessional staff needed to support students in learning both technical and soft skills required for successful employment. A local vocational support person, contracted through the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), may also provide onsite job coaching services. The program ensures a 4:1 staff to intern ratio. Because the program services function within one host business, the interns receive immediate assistance and feedback when needed.

What is the Cost and Funding for Project SEARCH?

The cost to a district of placing a student in a Project SEARCH internship typically ranges from \$7,000.00 - \$8,000.00 total for the 9 to 12 months, not including transportation costs. DVR, serving as another partner, can provide funding for transportation as well as a portion of the job coaching support required by student interns.

The expenses for the host district that hires the educational team are personnel costs and instructional supplies needed. These might be items such as timers, white boards, and iPads. Project SEARCH does not require an investment in infrastructure, such as office space, by the host district. In addition to having its own students participate in Project SEARCH, the host district can enter into a 66.0301 cooperative agreement with other school districts to collaboratively support participation in the program. Under a cooperative agreement, the host district would serve as the fiscal agent. Costs can be divided by districts according to the support needs of individual students and the specific cost of the Project SEARCH program per student. Under a 66.0301, the host district would claim the categorical aid and be responsible for sending a proportional share back to each participating district. The 66.0301 agreement can either include provision of transportation to all students participating in Project SEARCH by the host district or make students' home districts responsible for transportation to and from the Project SEARCH site. Transportation would remain an aidable cost. As indicated above, DVR can also pay for transportation to and from Project SEARCH sites. More information about cooperative agreements can be found on the DPI website at http://sfs.dpi.wi.gov/sfs_coop_agree.

Why Support Students to Consider Project SEARCH?

Student interns learn real life, marketable skills to help them achieve annual and postsecondary employment goals and Project SEARCH supports them to identify a career path for the future.

Project SEARCH is aligned with several Federal IDEA indicators as follows:

- Graduation (1)
- Dropout Rates (2)
- Least Restrictive Environment (5)
- Parent Involvement (8)
- Compliant (Quality) IEP and Transition Goals (13)
- **Post School Outcomes (14)**

Outcomes! Project SEARCH has demonstrated impressive employment outcomes nationally and in Wisconsin. Nationally, **73%** of Project SEARCH graduates are employed for 16 hours or more per week at minimum wage or higher. In Wisconsin, that figure currently stands at **87%**.

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