

## Project SEARCH High School Transition Program

In 2013, the Vermont (VT) State Personnel Development Grant supported the development and implementation of two new VT Project SEARCH sites. The VT Project SEARCH Leadership Team includes representation from the VT Agency of Education, Vocational Rehabilitation, the VT Developmental Disability Services, and host businesses. Local teams include representatives from these same organizations, as well as personnel from area schools and community organizations.

At each internship site, a classroom teacher and two job coaches work with the Project SEARCH interns and establish intern sites throughout the site. Each class day, there is at least one hour of class time and five hours of internship time. Interns rotate through at least three internship sites, each year. At the beginning of each rotation, there is a two-week period of full class time while the interns debrief the previous internship, and plan for the next one.

### VT Project SEARCH Schools

Students are recruited from all the high schools in Chittenden County. During the 2015-16 school year, nine high school students with disabilities participated as Project SEARCH interns at The Edge.

Students are recruited from all the high schools in Rutland County. During this first year, of the seven high school students with disabilities who began as Project SEARCH interns, five are still active in the program.

### Internship Sites

**The Edge** is a comprehensive sports and fitness company, with five locations in Burlington, VT. It offers exercise programs similar to many clubs (pool, tennis, group fitness, gym, etc.) but also includes physical therapy, and programs for approximately 520 children.

Internships include: administration, front desk, child care, pre-school, indoor/outdoor maintenance, aquatics/pool maintenance, fitness department, group exercise, and PlaySpace (drop off day care for members using the facilities).

The **Rutland Regional Medical Center** is a 123-bed hospital, employing over 1,600 professional and support staff. Providing preventive, diagnostic, acute and rehabilitative services, the Medical Center serves Rutland County, portions of southern and central VT.

Internships include: Outpatient Rehab, Finance, Human Resources, Education and Training, Gift Shop, Medical Records, IT, Heart Center, Materials Management, Print Shop/Mail Room, and Food and Nutrition Services.

### Impact of VT Project SEARCH

Members of the two local VT Project SEARCH sites were surveyed in April 2016 to assess the impact of Project SEARCH activities on students' vocational skills, soft skills, and their ability to generalize their skills in multiple internships, and if the students were provided a range of opportunities. As shown in Chart 1, the nine respondents felt that Project SEARCH activities had a high impact on these student outcomes.

### Testimony

*Students have developed a strong sense of their strengths and discovered opportunities for the future they hadn't considered. They see a future for themselves they had not envisioned prior to Project SEARCH.*

### Impact of Project Search (N=9)

(Scale: 1 = No Impact, 2 = Little Impact, 3 = Mixed Opinion, 4 = Impact, 5 = High Impact)

