

From School to Self-Sufficiency: A Unified Approach to Harmonizing Employment, Education, and Independent Living in Adult Transition

Dr. Jennifer Middendorf

Kasey Anderson

Erik Chrissis



Outcomes

1. Identify strengths and any potential gaps in current transition services.
2. Design a tiered transition roadmap that integrates vocational training and independent living goals directly into the existing curriculum and programming.
3. Implement collaborative strategies to unite school-based teams with community partners.



Agenda

1. Rationale for Strengthened Transition Programs (“Why”)
2. Overview of the Burnsville Eagan Savage Transition (BEST) Program Approach (“What”)
3. Defining the Structure for Program Success (“How”)



Rationale for Strengthened Transition Programs ("Why")

“In 2025, people with disabilities were much less likely to be employed than were those with no disability” (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2026).

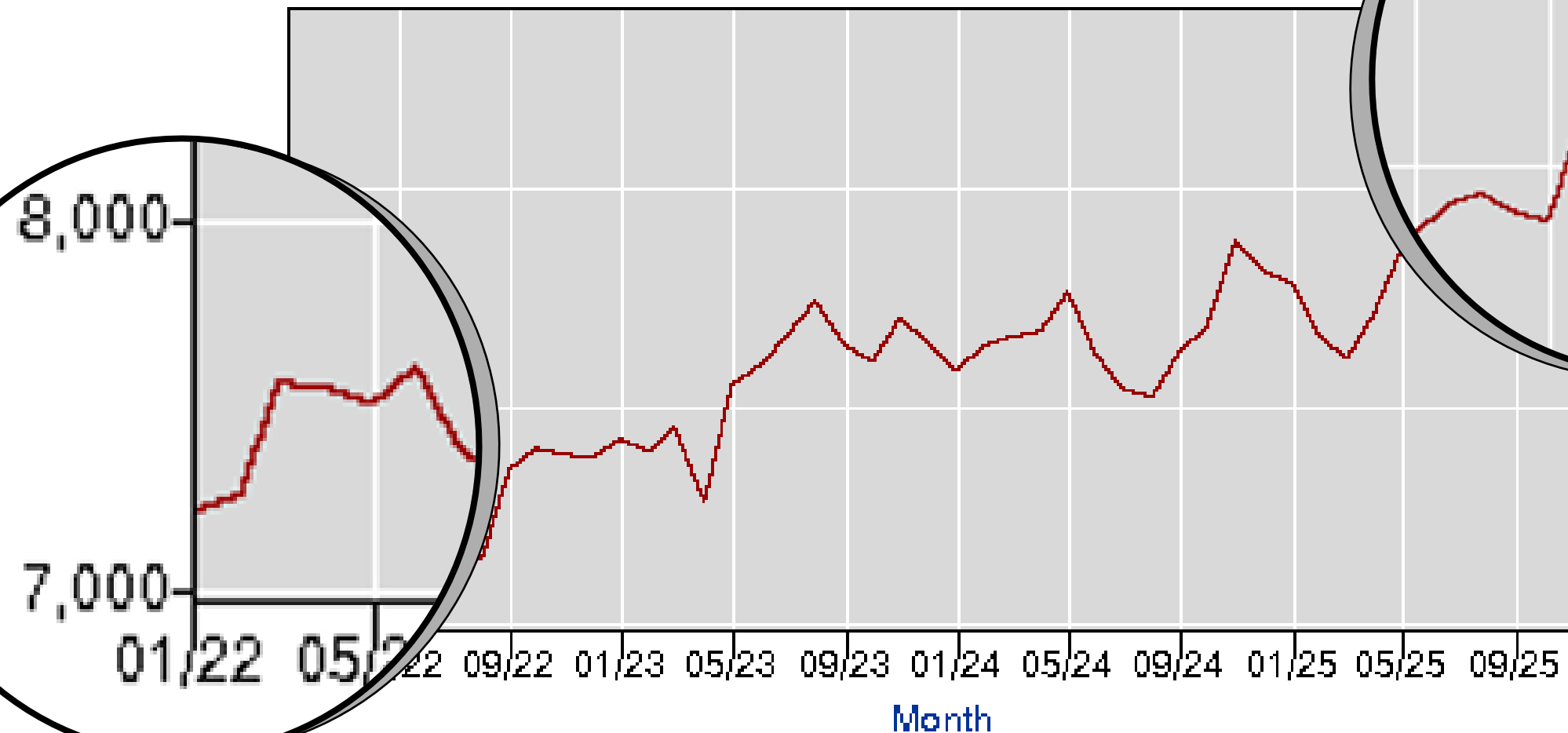


Rationale for Strengthened Transition Programs (“Why”)

Employment Statistics

Number of People with Disabilities in the U.S.

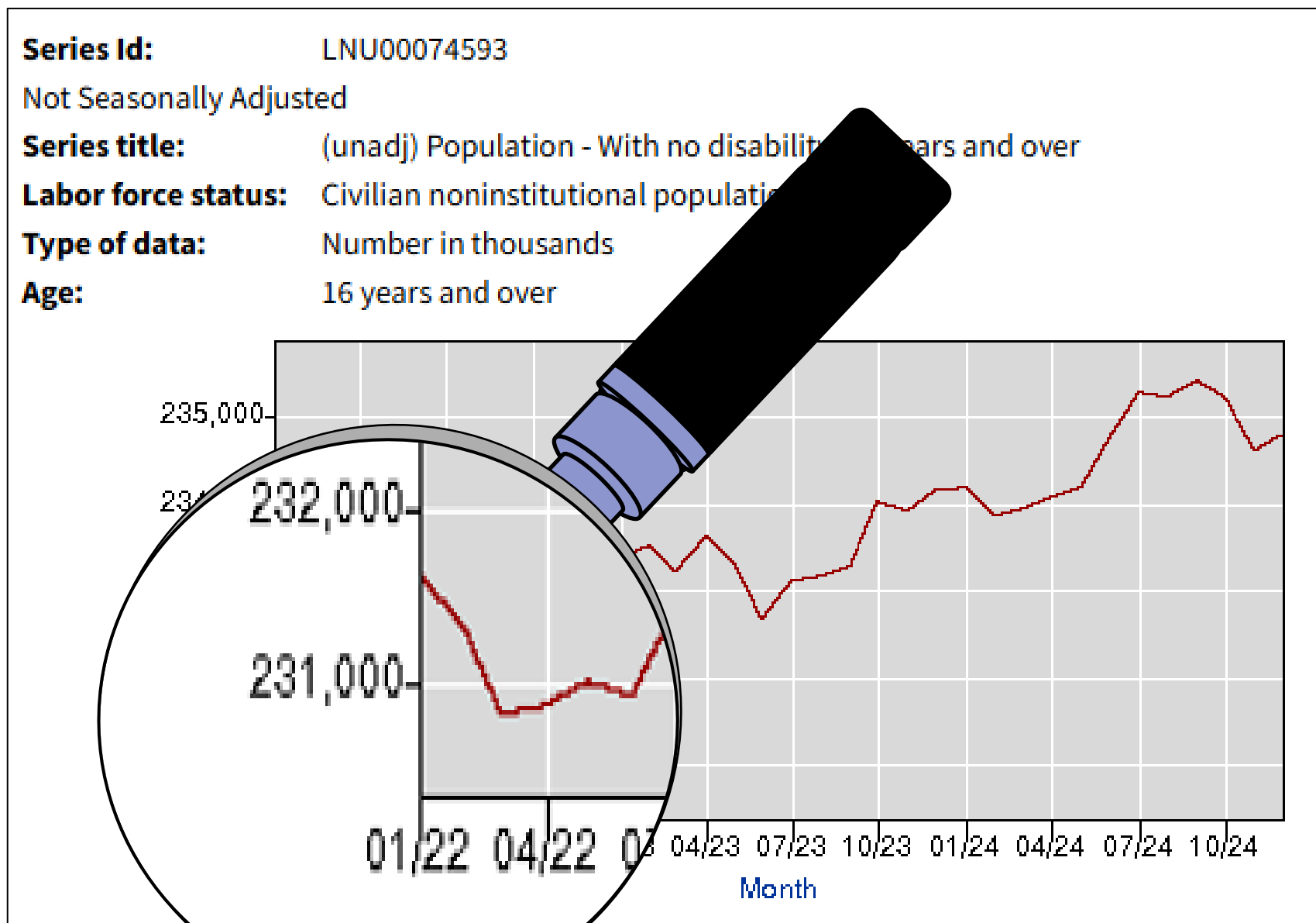
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 Not Seasonally Adjusted
Series title: (unadj) Civilian Labor Force - With a disability, 16 years and over
Labor force status: Civilian labor force
Type of data: Number in thousands
Age: 16 years and over



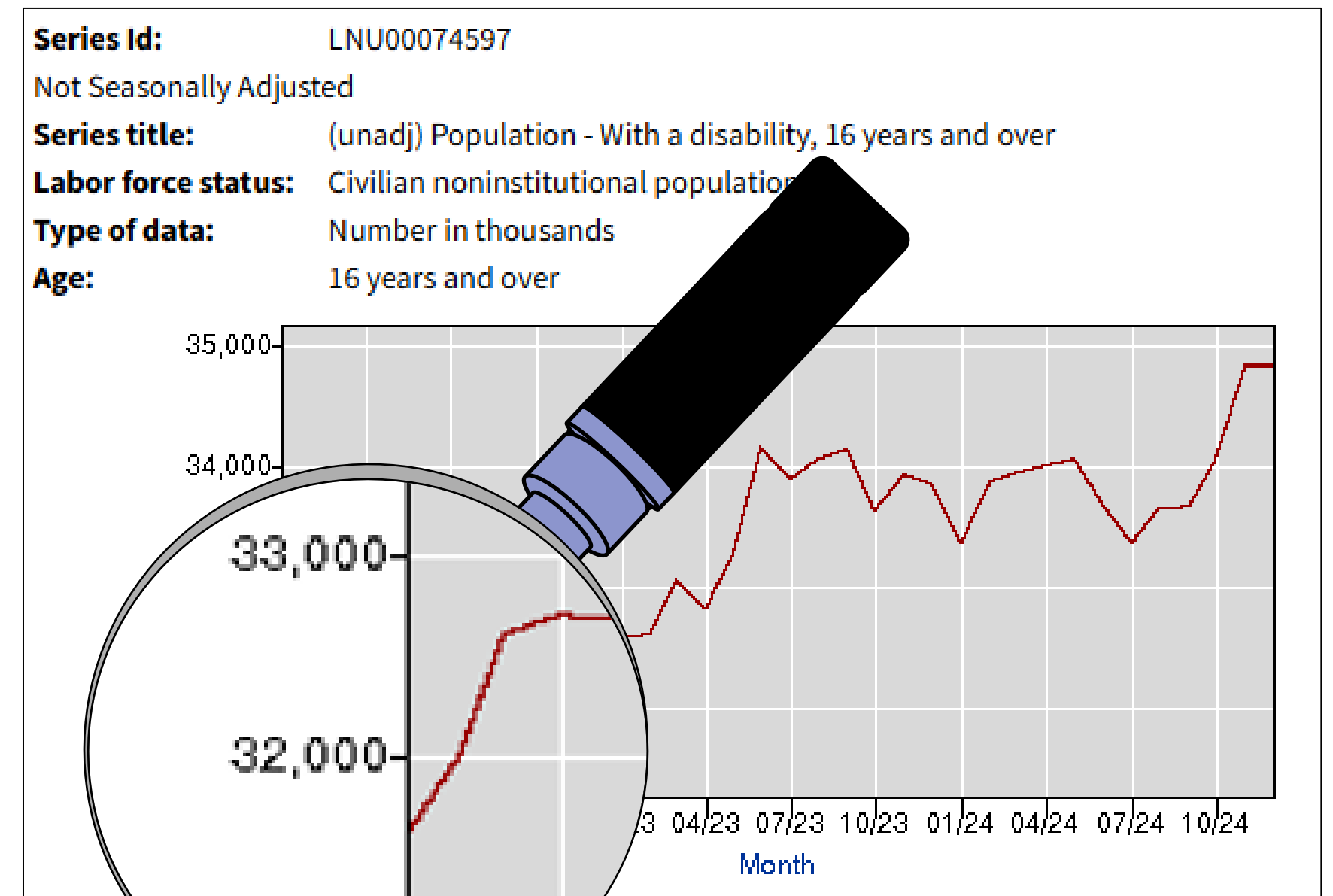
Rationale for Strengthened Transition Programs (“Why”)

Employment Statistics

Number of People in the U.S. from January 2022 to December 2024



No Disability



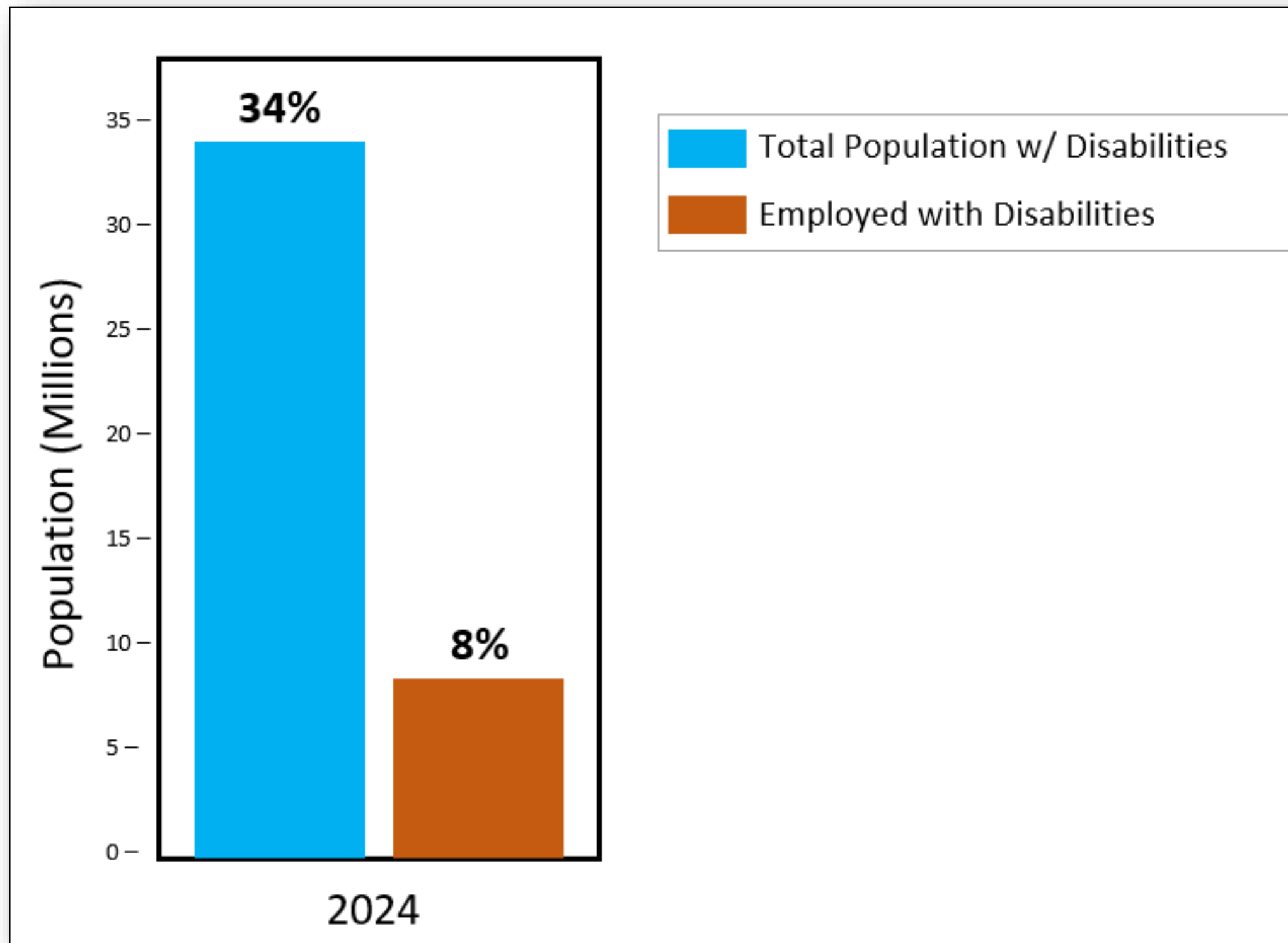
Disability

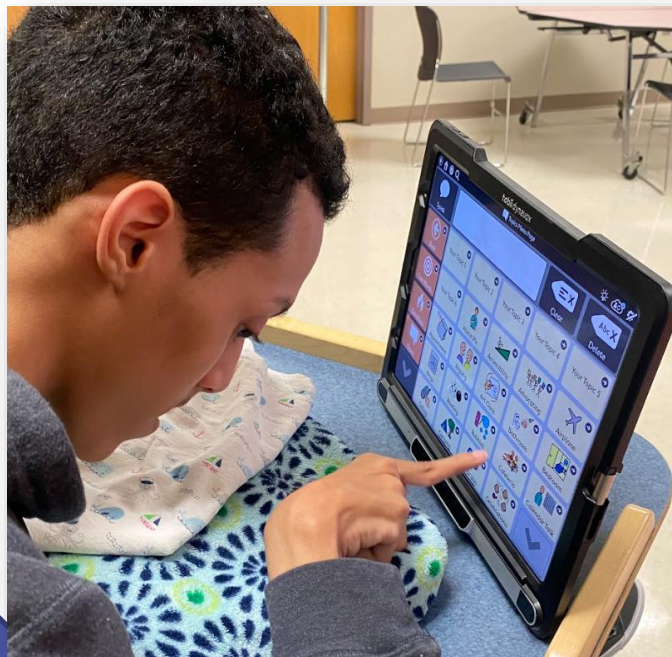


Rationale for Strengthened Transition Programs (“Why”)

Employment Statistics

People with Disabilities in the U.S.: Total vs. Employed (2024)





Overview of the Burnsville Eagan Savage Transition (BEST) Program Approach ("What")



Overview of the Burnsville Eagan Savage Transition (BEST) Program Approach (“What”)

BEST Logistics



Year	Enrollment Type		Count
	Resident	Open Enrolled	
25-26	33	6	39
24-25	35	4	39
23-24	35	7	42
22-23	29	7	36



Overview of the Burnsville Eagan Savage Transition (BEST) Program Approach (“What”)

BEST ***Logistics***

Staff

- 3 Teachers
- 2 Work Coordinators
- 9 Job Coaches
- 1 Administrator
- 1 Admin Assistant
- Related Services - Consult as needed

Hours/Calendar

- Follow high school

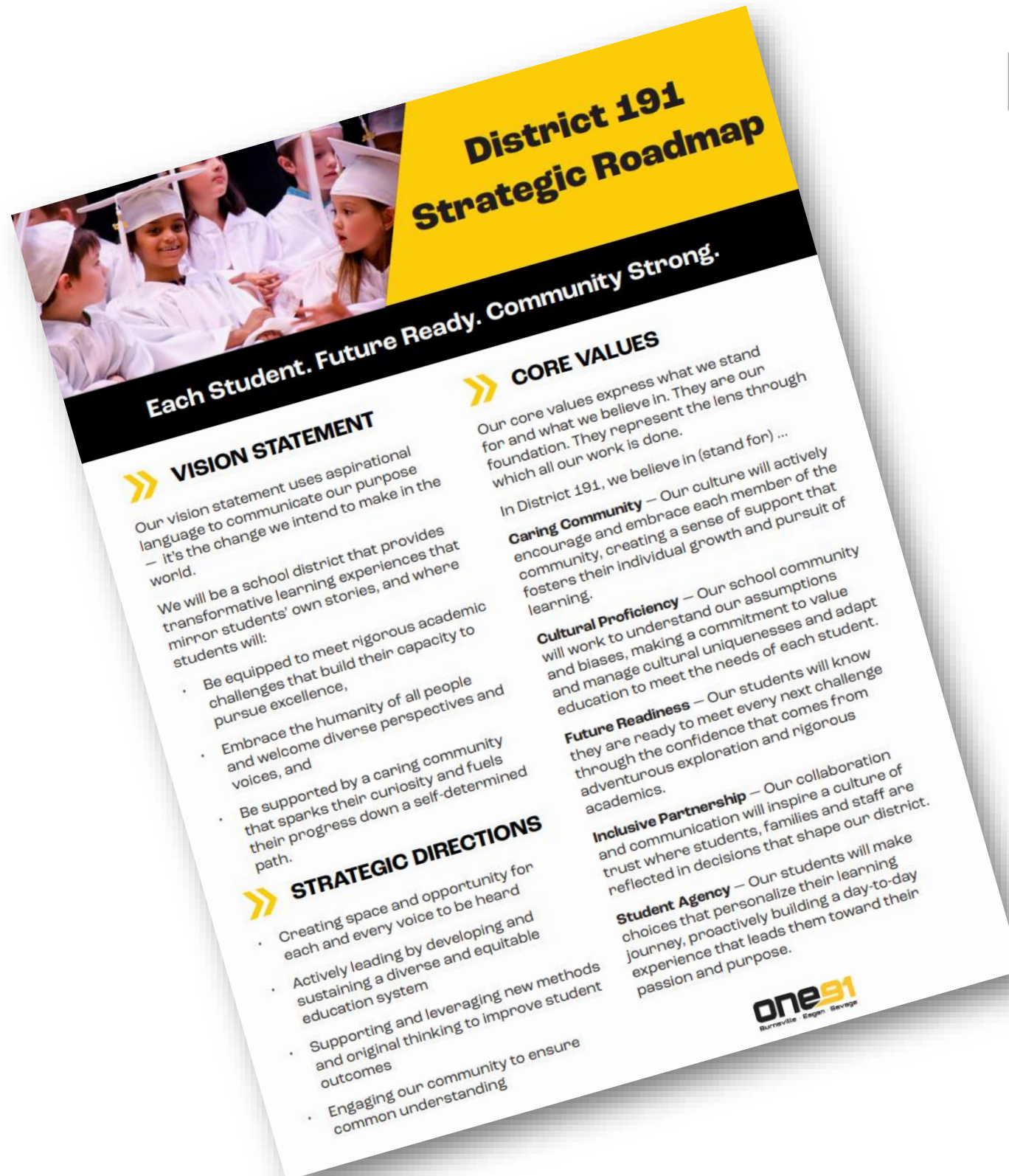
Student Daily Schedule

- Seminar classes focused on functional skills, workplace readiness, career investigations, etc.
- Community-based learning
- Job Sites (volunteer)
- Trainings (VRS)



Overview of the Burnsville Eagan Savage Transition (BEST) Program Approach (“What”)

BEST Logistics



Profile of a One91 Learner





Overview of the Burnsville Eagan Savage Transition (BEST) Program Approach (“What”)

BEST Logistics

BEST Shared Vision

The Burnsville Eagan Savage Transition (BEST) Program provides a **positive** and **safe** environment that promotes **independence** for students in a community based, real-world environment to foster successful young adults. We believe students can achieve independence through focused efforts at **job sites** and in the **community**, and have the right to be **valued**, **respected**, and **included** in the community and workplace.



Overview of the Burnsville Eagan Savage Transition (BEST) Program Approach (“What”)

Focus on IEP Goals

Individual Education Plan

Post-Secondary Goals: Education/Training, Employment, Independent Living

- Specific employment outcomes
- Actively engaged post transition program



Annual Goals: Ensure annual goals are directly aligned to prioritized post-secondary outcomes.

- Building soft skills related to transition areas
- Functional academics



Overview of the Burnsville Eagan Savage Transition (BEST) Program Approach (“What”)

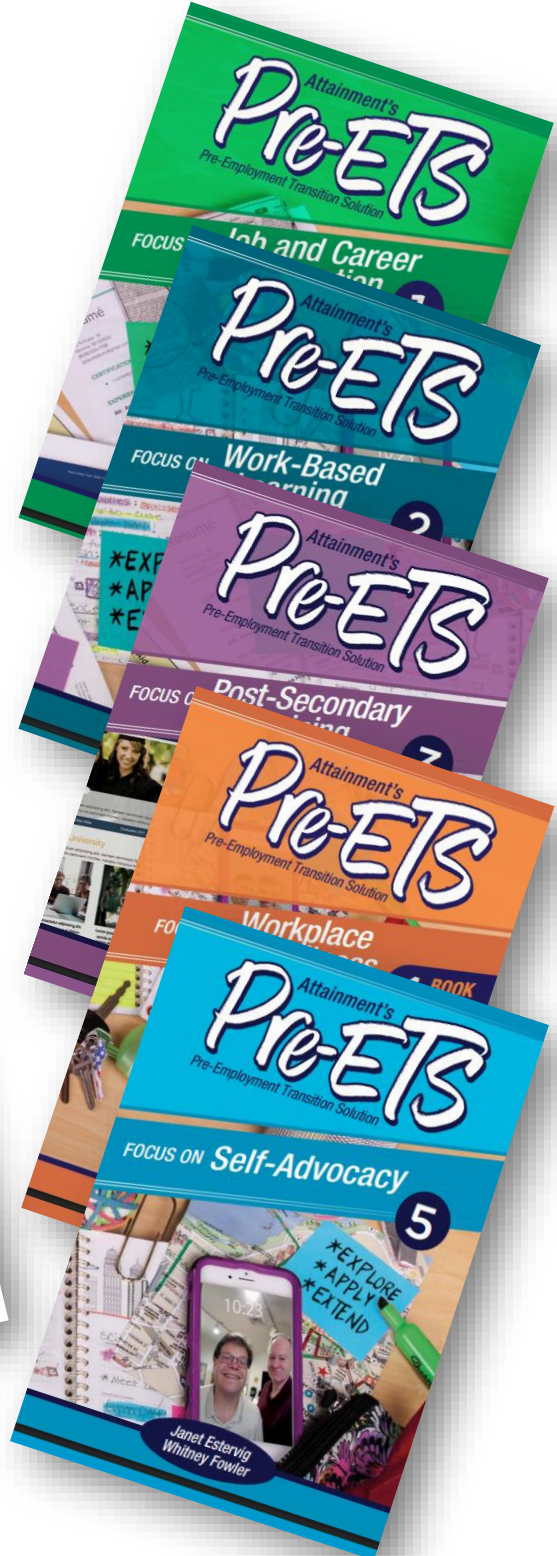
Curriculum & Instruction

Lessons for Living, Learning, and Working
Presented by Project SEARCH

PRE-TRANSITION CURRICULUM
These lesson plans can complement a daily schedule for high school-age students or adult learners with intellectual and developmental disabilities to facilitate a successful transition to employment.

1. Daily Living Skills
2. Functional Literacy
3. Functional Math
4. Job Search Process
5. Self-Advocacy
6. Social and Communication Skills
7. Soft Skills
8. Technology

Created by twenty-five experienced Project SEARCH instructors from across the United States with Project SEARCH National staff.
November 2022



Attainment's Pre-ETS Pre-Employment Transition Solution

- FOCUS on Job and Career
- Attainment's Pre-ETS Pre-Employment Transition Solution
- FOCUS on Work-Based Learning
- Attainment's Pre-ETS Pre-Employment Transition Solution
- FOCUS on Post-Secondary
- Attainment's Pre-ETS Pre-Employment Transition Solution
- FOCUS on Workplace
- Attainment's Pre-ETS Pre-Employment Transition Solution
- FOCUS on Self-Advocacy

*EXPLORE *APPLY *EXTEND

Janet Estervig
Whitney Fowler



Evidence-Based

- Workplace Readiness
- Independent Living Skills
- Social Emotional Learning
- Functional Academics

Charting the LifeCourse



Overview of the Burnsville Eagan Savage Transition (BEST) Program Approach (“What”)

Curriculum & Instruction

Hands-On Learning Tasks within the Classroom



- Specifically tailored to focus on IEP goals and community job site prep
- Supports curriculum

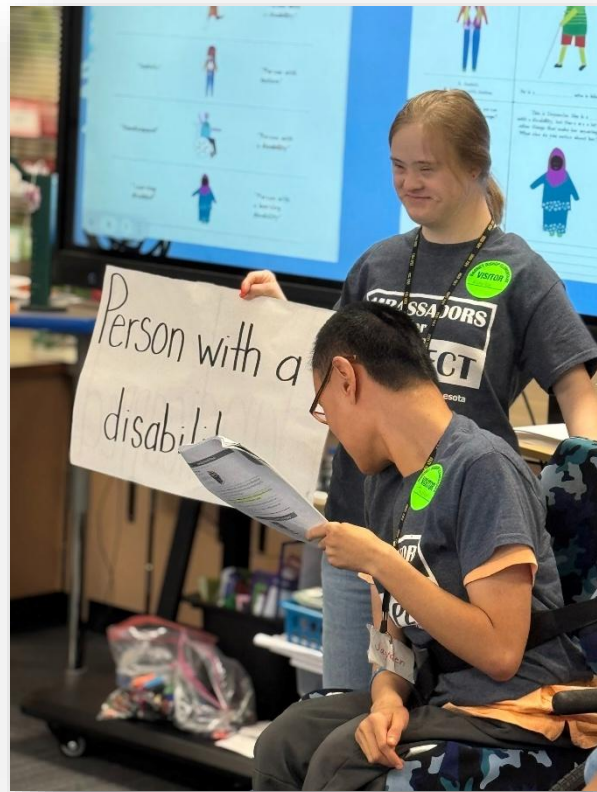


Overview of the Burnsville Eagan Savage Transition (BEST) Program Approach (“What”

Curriculum & Instruction

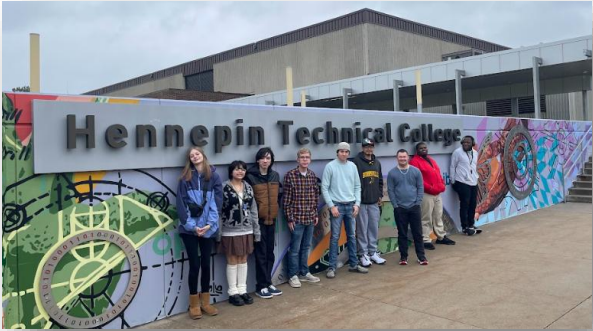
Topical/Supplementary Curriculum Out of the Classroom

- Social/Emotional Learning
- Special Events
- Travel Training, MDI, A4R



Overview of the Burnsville Eagan Savage Transition (BEST) Program Approach (“What”)

Curriculum & Instruction



Community-Based Learning (CBLs)

Focus on Independent Adult Living

- Safety, Recreation & Leisure, Navigating the community, Shopping
- Business and college tours
- Career Fairs and events/expos



Overview of the Burnsville Eagan Savage Transition (BEST) Program Approach (“What”)

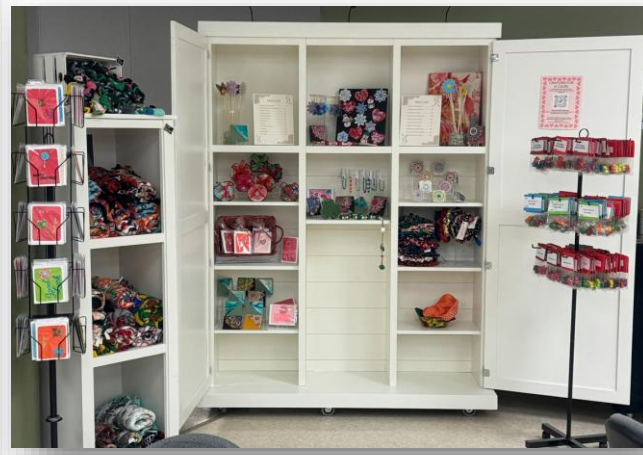
Curriculum & Instruction



Tiered Work Experiences

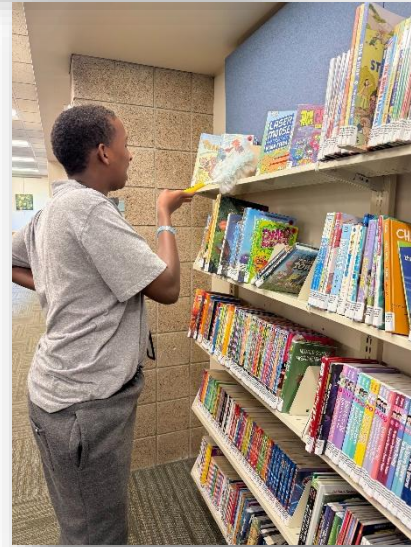
In-House

- Production Lab
- CORE Lab
- BEST Coffee ~N~ More
- ECSE
- Greeter
- Custodial
- Billing
- Finance
- Brain Power
- Pantry Pack



Overview of the Burnsville Eagan Savage Transition (BEST) Program Approach (“What”)

Curriculum & Instruction



Tiered Work Experiences

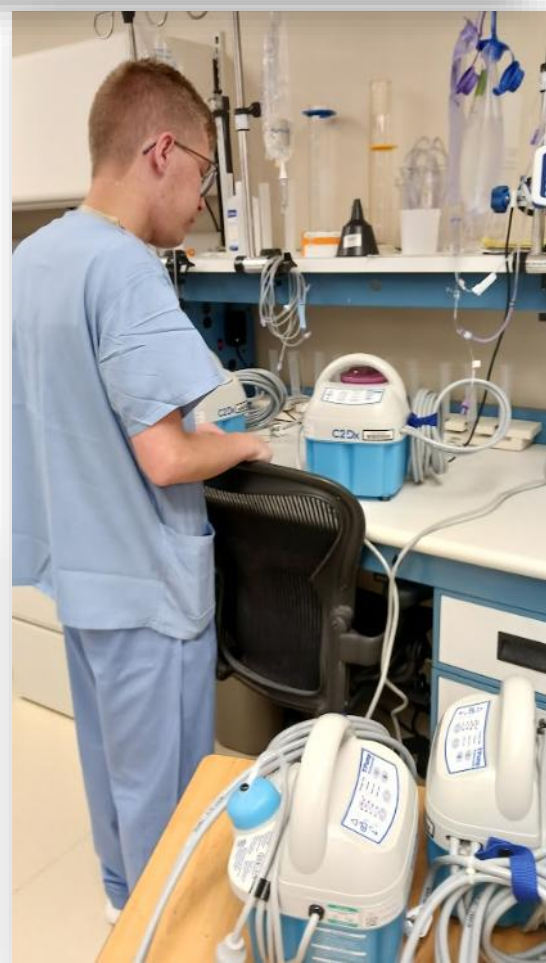
Community

- District 191 Cafeterias
- Embassy Suites Hotel
- CHAP Thrift Store
- Ebenezer Senior Living
- Arbors at Ridges
- Burnhaven Library
- Little Libraries



Overview of the Burnsville Eagan Savage Transition (BEST) Program Approach (“What”)

Curriculum & Instruction



Tiered Work Experiences

Project SEARCH

- One-year integrated internship for final year students in transition whose goal is competitive employment upon graduation
- Collaboration between ISD 191, Dakota County, MN DEED, MDE, and MHealth Fairview Ridges Hospital

Participating departments include Nutrition, Supply Chain, Imaging, Lab, Specialty & Inpatient Rehab, Pediatrics, Environmental Services, Outpatient OT/PT, Facilities, NICU, ICU/Med Surg, Bio Med Tech, Endoscopy, Surgery, Labor & Delivery



Overview of the Burnsville Eagan Savage Transition (BEST) Program Approach (“What”)

Data Collection & Measuring Success

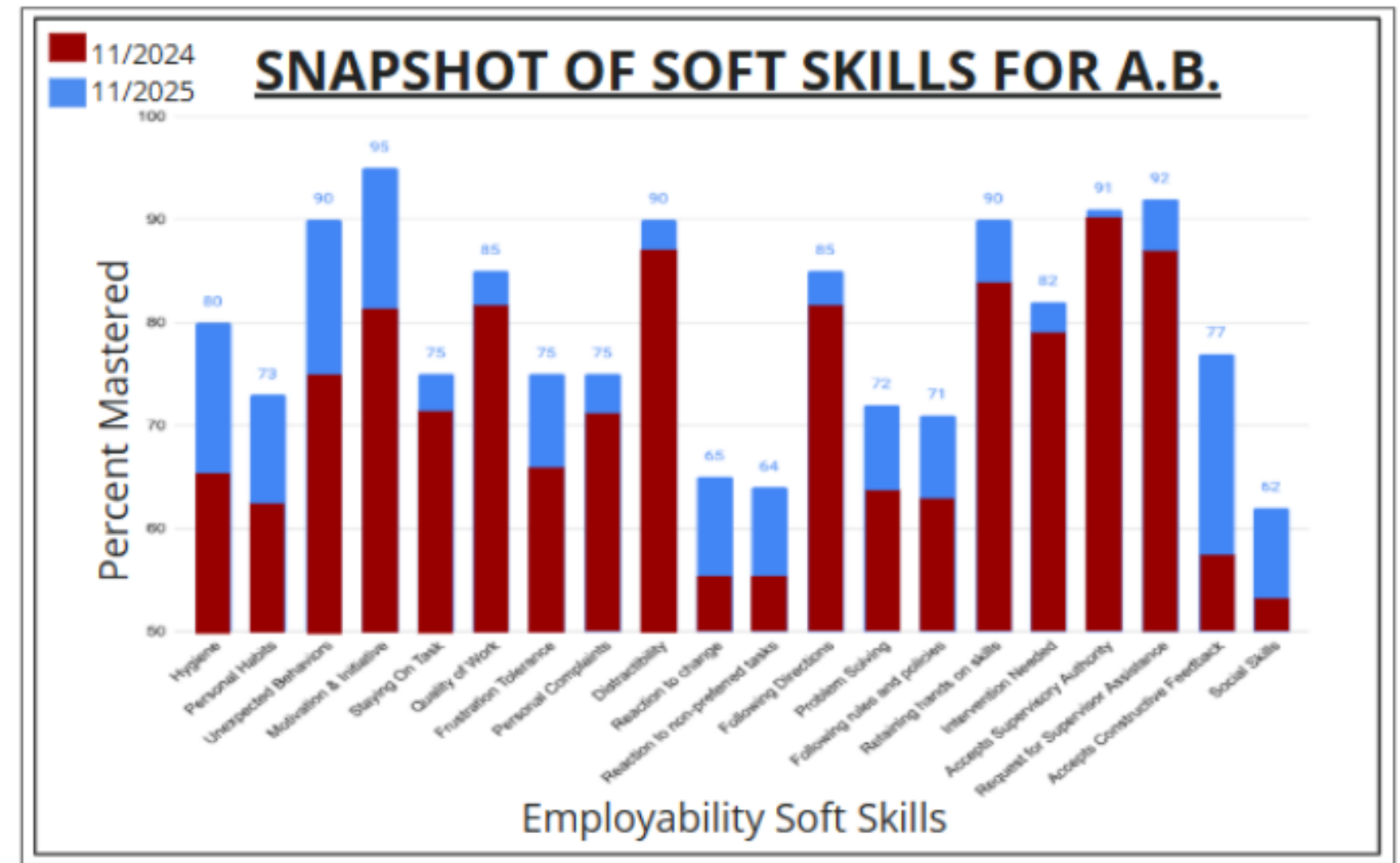
Soft Skills Data Sheets

25-26
Community Based Vocational Training - Employability Soft Skills Data Collection
BEST Services - ISD 191

Student name: _____
Job Site: _____
School Staff Observer: _____
Review Week: _____
Date: _____
Attendance (P=Present / A=Absent): _____
Time at Site: _____
Staff/Student Ratio: _____

0 = Refusal / Noncompliance or very unexpected or disruptive behaviors
1 = Demonstrates very limited independence / Required significant redirection or assistance / Does not meet expectations for adult workplace & paid employment
2 = Demonstrates partial independence / Prompting required 2 or more times / Meets partial expectations for adult workplace & paid employment
3 = Demonstrates independence / Prompting or assistance required in +2 instances / Meets most expectations for adult workplace
4 = Demonstrates complete independence, and some leadership abilities / Meets full expectations for adult workplace & paid employment

NA = Not Applicable - will not be included in totals / %	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Total	%
Pre-Employment Behaviors							
1. Hygiene/Grooming & Appearance							
2. Personal Habits							
3. Unexpected Behaviors							
Additional Notes (if important):							
Job Performance & Productivity							
4. Motivation & Initiative (e.g., starting up tasks)							
5. Staying on Task							
6. Quality of Work							
Interactions with Supervisors/Co-workers							
16. Amount of Intervention Needed to Maintain Work Independence							
17. Accepts Supervisory Authority/Response to Close Supervision							
18. Request for Supervisor's Assistance							
19. Accepts Constructive Feedback							
20. Social Skills (e.g., greets others, respects peers, tone of voice)							

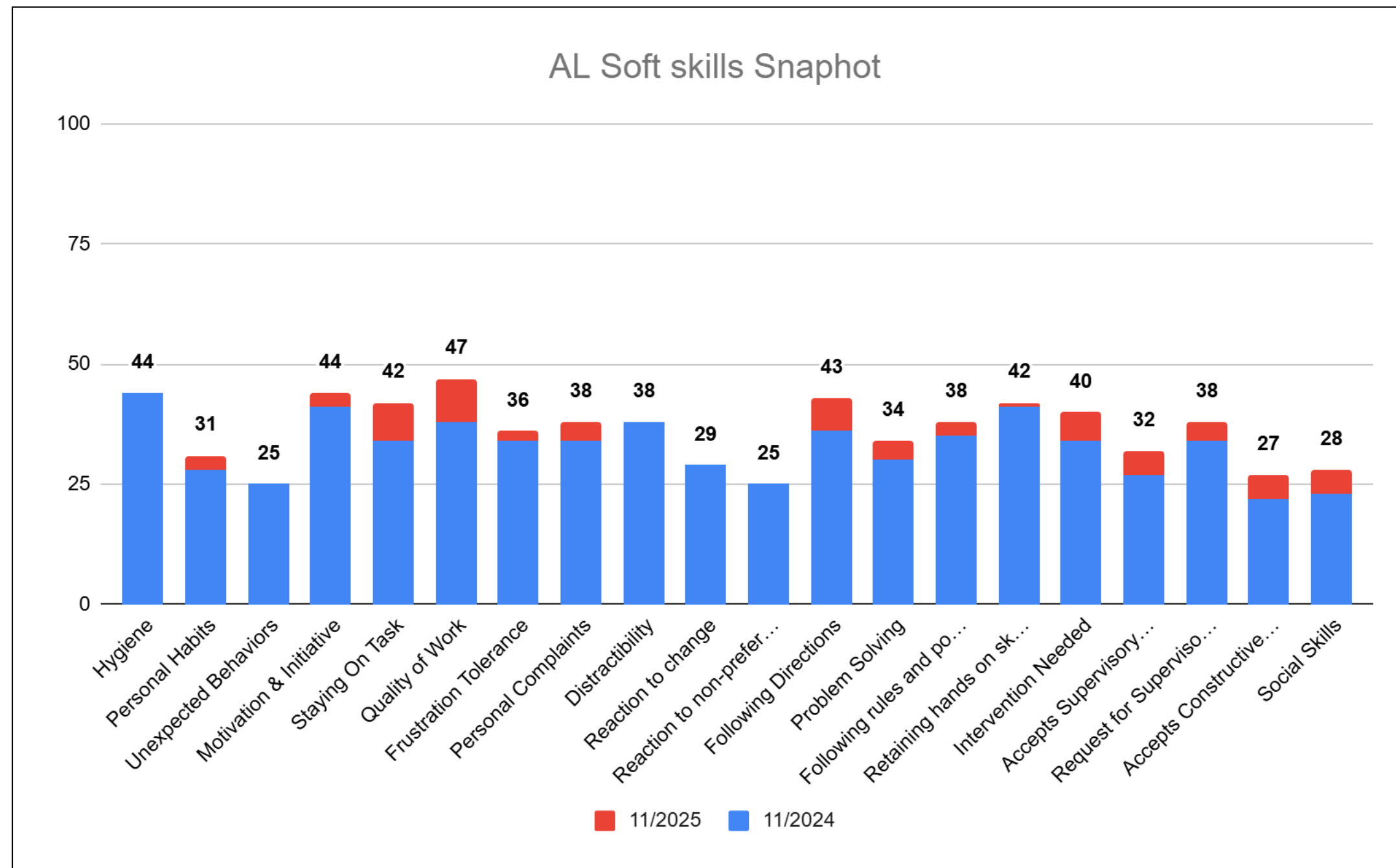


Overview of the Burnsville Eagan Savage Transition (BEST) Program Approach (“What”)

Data Collection & Measuring Success

Soft Skills Data Sheets

Student Example – High Needs

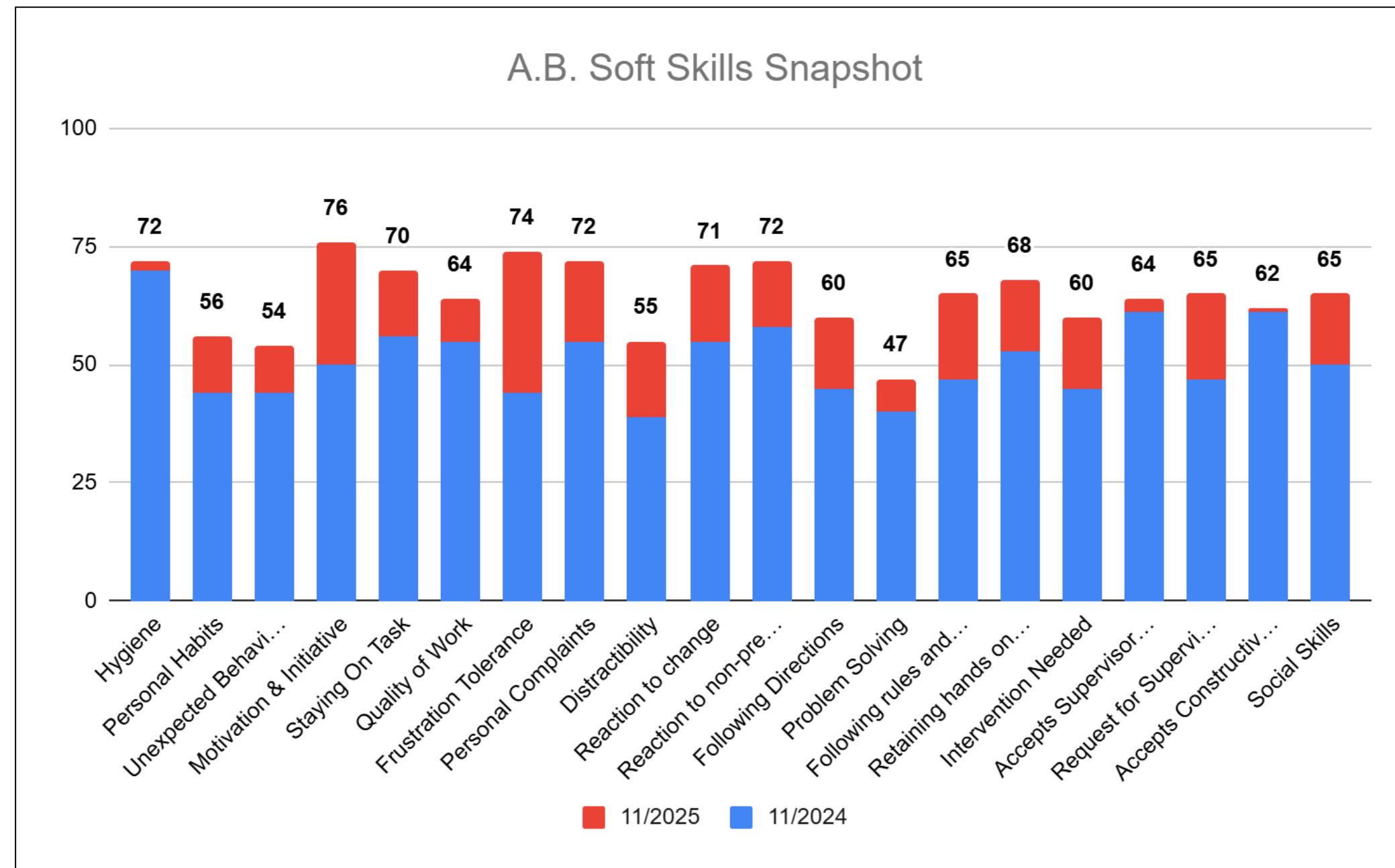


Overview of the Burnsville Eagan Savage Transition (BEST) Program Approach (“What”)

Data Collection & Measuring Success

Soft Skills Data Sheets

Student Example – Medium Needs

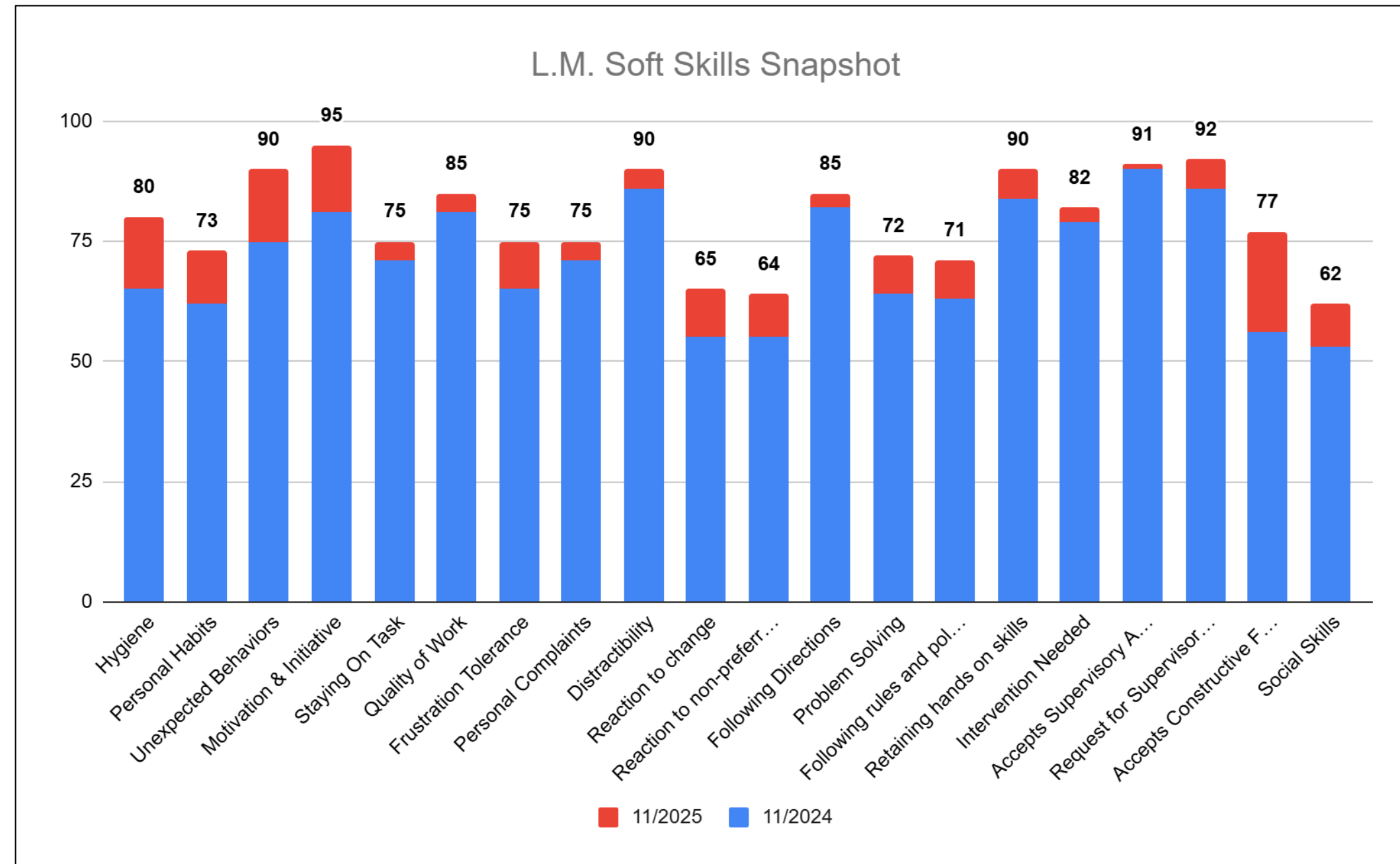


Overview of the Burnsville Eagan Savage Transition (BEST) Program Approach (“What”)

Data Collection & Measuring Success

Soft Skills Data Sheets

Student Example – Low Needs



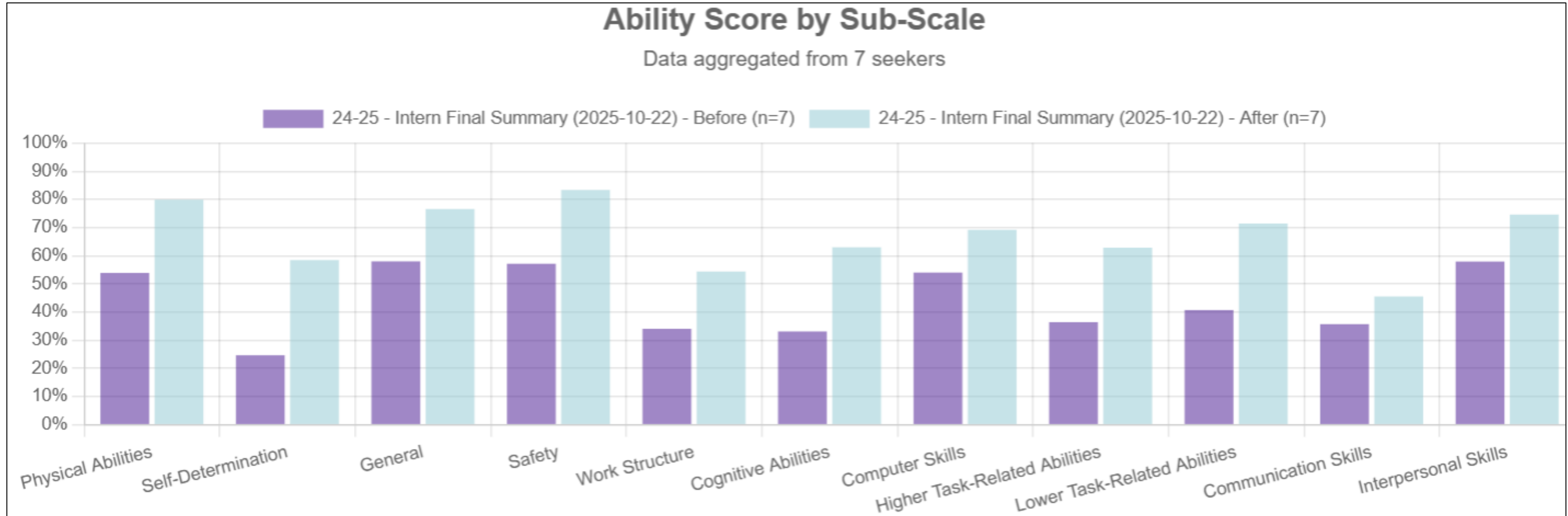
Overview of the Burnsville Eagan Savage Transition (BEST) Program Approach (“What”)

Data Collection & Measuring Success

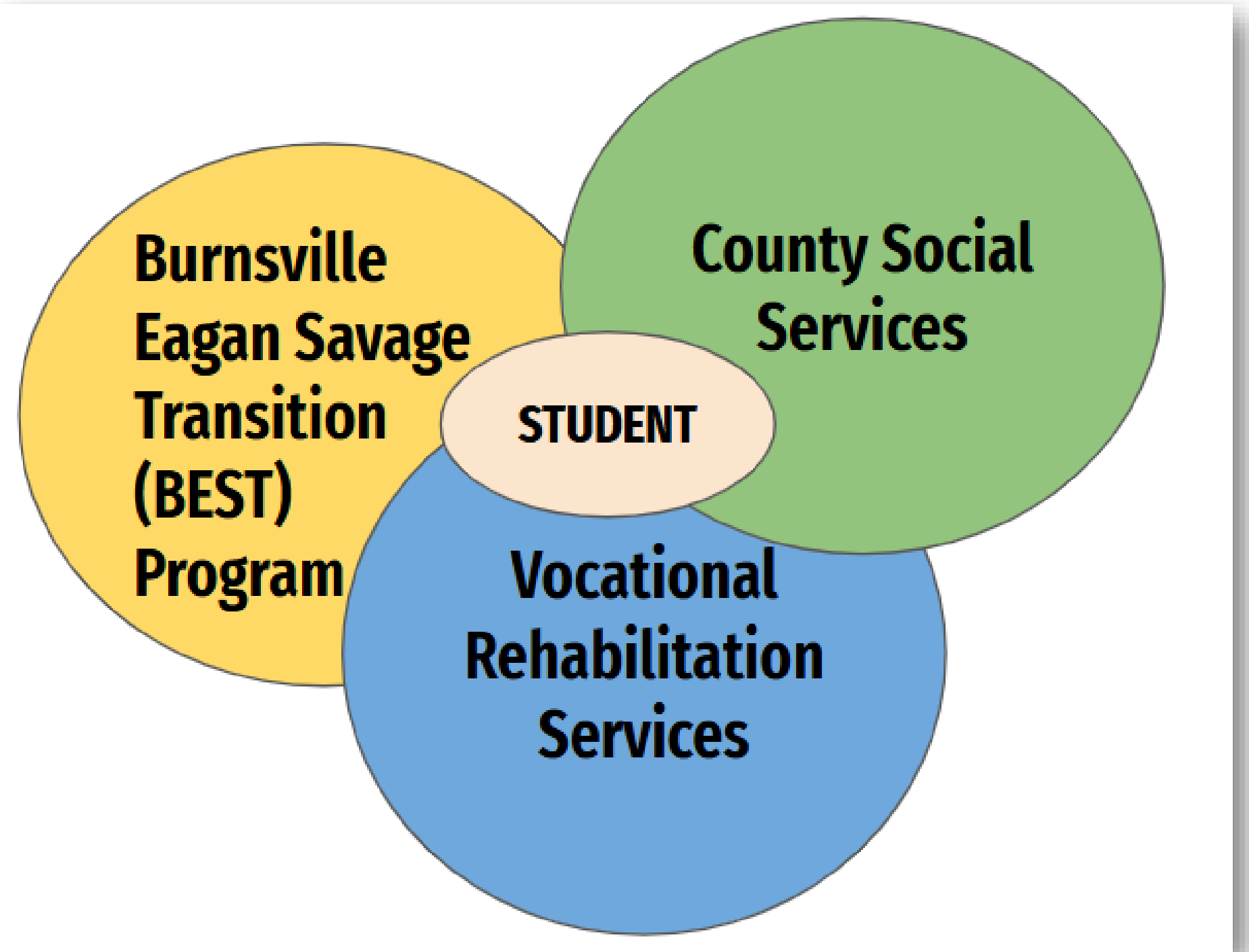
Project SEARCH Data Collection



VocFit.com - Results - 24-25 (Baseline, purple, September 2024 to Final, light blue, May 2025)



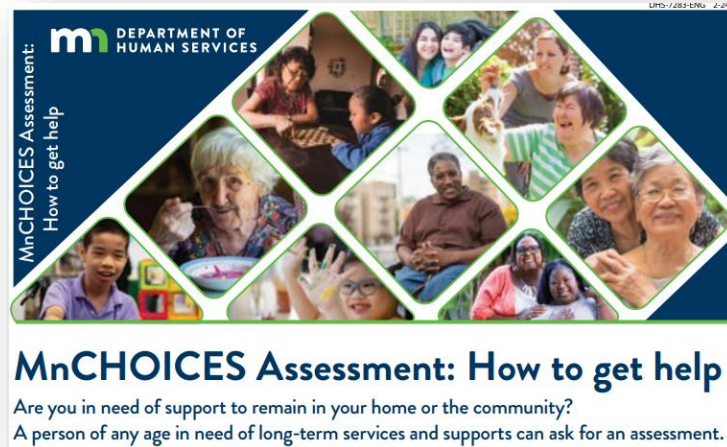
Defining the
Structure for
Program
Success
("How")



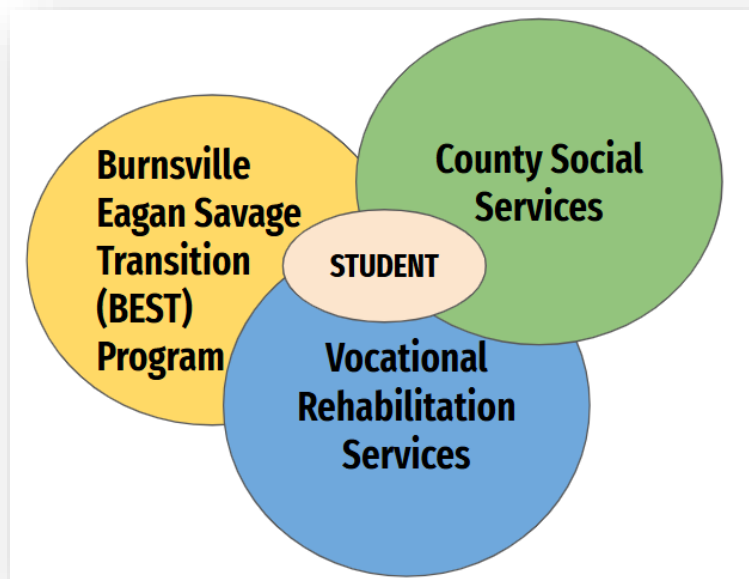
Defining the Structure for Program Success (“How”)

Partnerships & Communication

County, Vocational Rehab Services, Service Providers



- Student connections
- Targeted data (student interests, family input, etc) closer to final year
- Post-graduation plan (Competitive integrated employment, customized employment, supported employment, day services, education/training, etc.)




CUSTOMIZED EMPLOYMENT

Customized Employment (CE) is job placement for persons who have disabilities which significantly impact their ability to find or keep a job using traditional job search methods. The goal of CE is to match Job Seekers' strengths, skills, interests, and support needs with a tailored or "customized" position in their community.

Customized Employment consists of three phases:

- PHASE I: DISCOVERY – Learning about the person's skills, interests, strengths, contributions and conditions for success
- PHASE II: JOB DEVELOPMENT – Learning about the business needs and creating a good job match
- PHASE III: EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT – Identifying support needs and putting supports in place



What is Customized Employment?

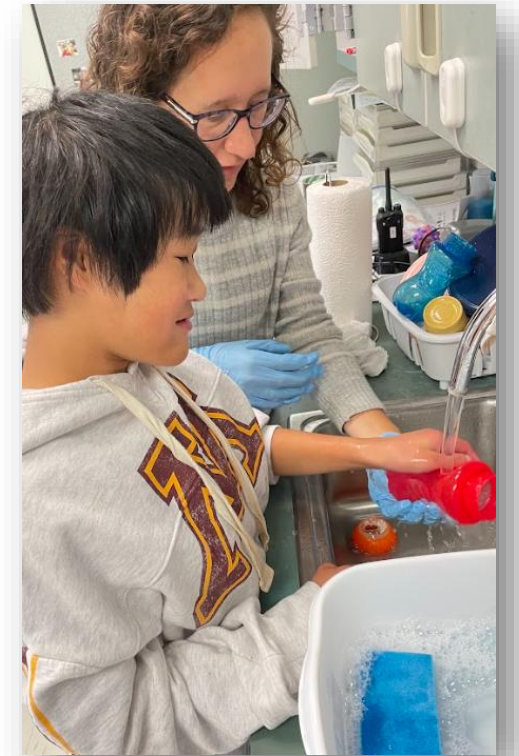
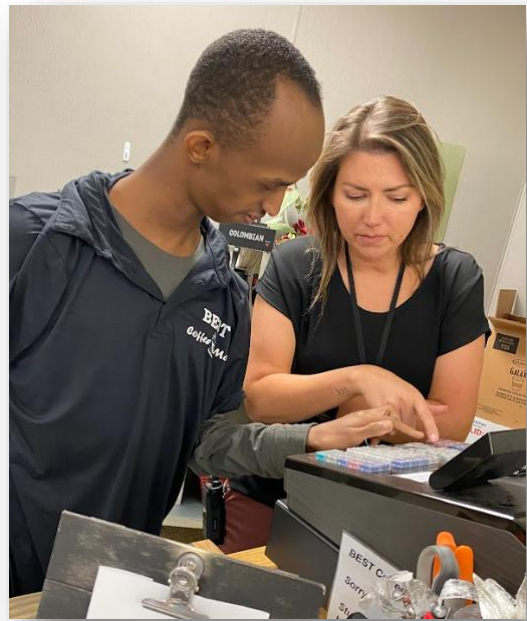
- 1 Discovery**
Using an in-depth process, an Employment Specialist spends time with the Job Seeker, getting to know their skills and talents through observations, community activities and conversations with family, friends and others who know the person well.
- 2 Planning Meeting**
The Employment Specialist, Job Seeker and the Job Seeker's support team meet to discuss the Job Seeker's skills and the conditions they need for success in the workforce. They brainstorm jobs and businesses that would be a good match.
- 3 Job Development**
Using the information gathered during Discovery and the Planning Meeting, the Employment Specialist meets with potential employers to learn about unmet needs that the Job Seeker could fill.
- 4 You're hired!**
The Job Seeker, Employer, and Employment Specialist work together to negotiate the terms of the customized position. The Job Seeker is now the Employee.
- 5 Coaching and Support**
Job Path provides whatever level of on-site coaching support is necessary to ensure success.

Defining the Structure for Program Success (“How”)

Strategic Resource Allocation

Program Needs for Successful Operation

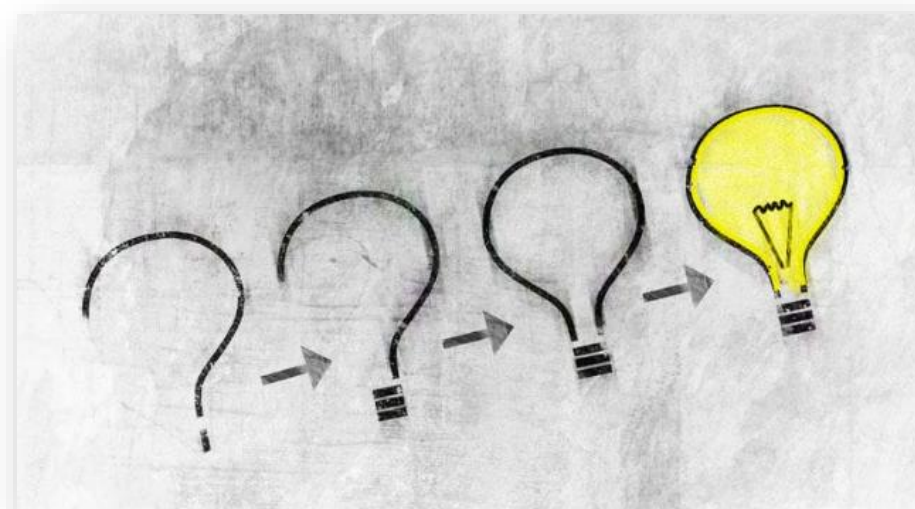
- **Specialized Staffing:** Licensed educators, work coordinators, and job coaches.
- **Operational Logistics:** Dedicated vehicles and transportation support.
- **Infrastructure:** Capital for internal work-site development and launch.
- **Professional Development:** Advanced training and certification for work coordinators.



Organizational Drivers

Program Needs for Successful Operation

- **Proactive Talent:** Cultivating forward-thinking, action-oriented personnel.
- **Evidence-Based Strategy:** Leveraging data-driven insights for all decision-making.
- **Collaborative Environment:** Facilitating on-site agency access and dedicated meeting spaces for students.





QUESTIONS

