

Start on Success

Start on Success (SOS) is a school-to-work internship program started in 1995 by the National Organization on Disability. Students with disabilities on track for a standard or advanced studies high school diploma participate in SOS during their senior year of high school. The goals of this employer-based, highly structured program are to build stronger relationships between schools and the business community, to increase the career potential of students with high incidence disabilities, and to prepare students for employment after high school. Virginia is piloting this program in three school divisions: Norfolk, City of Richmond, and Danville.

Benefits of SOS to a School Division

- Establish partnerships among students, school divisions, parents, employers, agencies, and employment service providers.
- Improve career readiness and postsecondary education preparation programs for students with high incidence disabilities.
- Improve post school outcomes in postsecondary education, training, and/or employment.
- Increase graduation rate of students with disabilities by providing work experience opportunities while in school.

Benefits of SOS to Students

- Learn career readiness and employment skills while in high school.
- Obtain mentorship support during an internship to insure job retention and success.
- Practice soft skills needed for employment success.
- Practice self-advocacy/self-determination skills in the workplace.
- Receive a paycheck for work performed as an intern.