

2024 Futures in Focus Project Summaries

County	Foundation	Project Title	Project Summary	Students Impacted
DeSoto	DeSoto County Education Foundation	Exploring the Future	This project proposes to immerse 25 middle school students in secondary education opportunities, career paths, and technical certifications. The Foundation will collaborate with South Florida State College (SFSC), Desoto County Library, and Team Arcadia to investigate local job markets and growth industries. The Foundation and local partners will arrange four off-school experiences with activities ranging from exploring educational opportunities at SFSC to connecting with in-demand occupations and industries. Students will learn job application skills and engage in arts/dance for self-esteem. Through reflection surveys, the program will seek to enhance awareness, gratitude, empathy, and skills among participants.	25
Dixie	Dixie Education Foundation	Dixie Students Prepare for Success	This project's objective is to enhance career aspirations and decision-making skills of ESE students by introducing them to various career fields and training programs. Through a combination of formal and informal sessions facilitated by volunteers and staff, soft skills essential for employability will be emphasized. Collaboration with local professionals from Career Source and Vocational Rehabilitation Services will provide additional opportunities for skill enhancement and employment. Students will utilize Xello career exploration software and engage in Career Exploration BINGO to assess progress. Visits to career/technical certification programs, guest speakers sharing career experiences, and resource-sharing sessions with Career Source and Vocational Rehabilitation staff will further prepare students for successful futures. The District ESE instructor will lead site visits, classroom sessions and school visits, ensuring comprehensive guidance and support throughout the program.	27
Flagler	Flagler County Education Foundation	Simulation Day	This project aims to revolutionize education for middle and high school students with disabilities, offering a "Simulation Day" to explore diverse career pathways. By adhering to The Guideposts for Success framework, the Simulation Day will integrate preparatory experiences, career exploration, and youth development through four events. With Flagler Technical College collaboration, students will discover secondary education, apprenticeships, and in-demand occupations. Essential resources from the Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation will be provided, focusing on self-sufficiency and productivity. Through reflection sessions and mentorship, students gain confidence and leadership skills, ensuring they will be well-equipped for future success.	100
Hernando	Hernando County Education Foundation	Focused on the Future	This project aims to enhance employment opportunities for high school students with disabilities. This unique opportunity targets 25 to 35 students with IEPs or 504 Plans, offering four field trips and classroom activities focusing on their advancement. Students will gain exposure to resources from the Florida Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and CareerSource, fostering educational and vocational exploration. Activities include visits to Transition Fairs, universities offering inclusive education services, group discussions, and journaling sessions. Key outcomes include increased awareness of growth occupations, enhanced confidence levels towards post-high school employment, and higher completion rates for FAFSA applications among participants.	35

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Jackson	Jackson County Education Foundation	Sunshine Kids' Path to Success!	Through this project, students will explore educational and vocational paths leading to employment by visiting businesses and industries for firsthand experiences. Peer-to-peer conversations with young employers will enhance understanding. Priority will be on junior and senior students, but all 9-12 graders are eligible to participate. Despite recent adversities like Hurricane Michael and the COVID-19 pandemic, the ESE population remains resilient. Guest speakers, including FDOE Department of Vocational Rehabilitation representatives and successful former students with disabilities, will share with students about career diversity. This initiative aims to foster community support, encourage interaction between students from different schools, and provide valuable experiences for students.	99
Lake	Education Foundation of Lake County	Tavares Transition Training (T3)	This project's objective is to expose students with intellectual/developmental disabilities to educational and vocational opportunities, fostering independence and productivity post-K-12. Through activities emphasizing self-advocacy and self-determination, students will explore possibilities and develop skills for pursuing their dreams. They will visit post-secondary institutions with programs for them, engage in leadership development and job exploration, and hear from guest speakers from Vocational Rehabilitation and other agencies. Field trips to CareerSource of Lake County and Books-A-Million will provide hands-on experiences and journaling opportunities. Speaker days with representatives from Vocational Rehabilitation, Centers for Independent Living, and Agency for Persons with Disabilities will inform students and families about available services. Additional field trips to University of South Florida, St. Petersburg Campus and Disney Imagination Campus will expose students to post-secondary programs and potential job opportunities. Trips to Sunday Cool T-Shirt Warehouse will expand exposure to manufacturing jobs. Weekly classroom lessons will cover self-esteem, social skills, career exploration, and work-related soft skills, with a focus on high-demand industries.	34
Okaloosa	Okaloosa Public Schools Foundation	EDUCATE. GROW. SUCCEED.	This project supports students and families with resources and opportunities post-graduation. Following The Able Trust Guideposts for Success, this includes: School-based preparatory sessions; Career and work-based learning experiences; Youth development and leadership activities; Connecting activities like career fairs and meetings with public service officials; Family involvement through meetings and post-secondary education support; and Communication enhancement via mentorship and collaboration with CareerSource. Through these efforts, students gain self-advocacy skills, explore career paths, and prepare for post-secondary success.	30
Santa Rosa	Santa Rosa Education Foundation	Increasing Vocational Connections for ESE Students	This project's purpose is to enhance career readiness for students with exceptionalities in Santa Rosa County. Activities will focus on middle school ESE students, expanding Career and Technical Education and fostering connections with CareerSource, Vocational Rehabilitation, and local businesses. Field trips and family engagement events are planned to expose students to career options. Students will be introduced to Defined Learning and Defined Careers for certification opportunities and understanding community connections. Family engagement sessions and student feedback will ensure ongoing support and improvement, empowering students for future success.	250