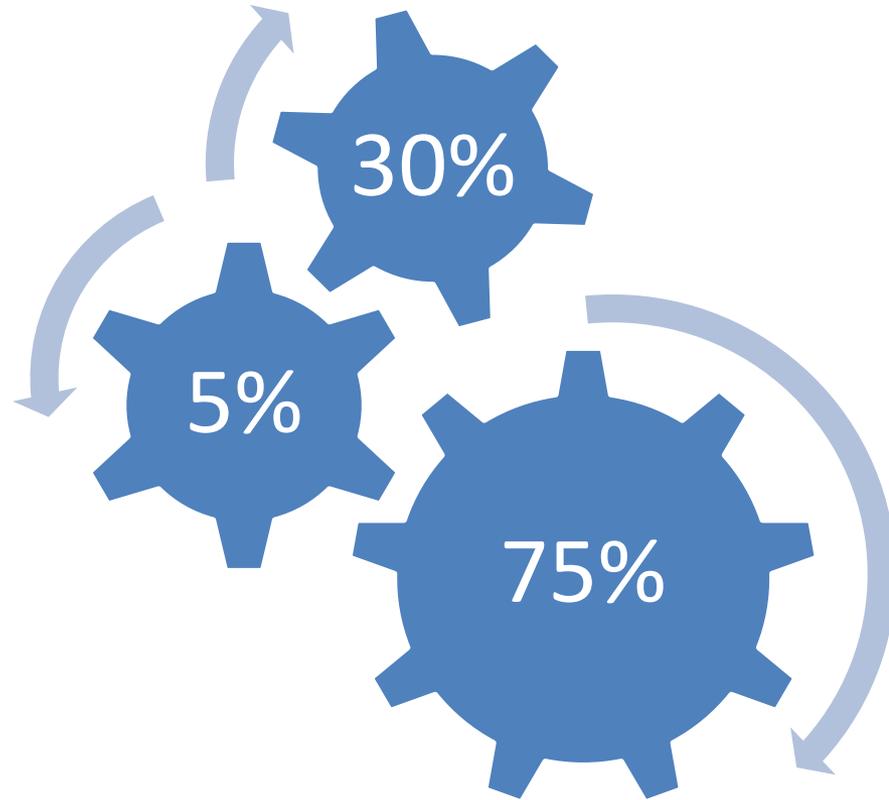


# **The Power of Hands-on Career Exploration**

# Your Presenters

- **Dr. Chuck Gardner**, Director of Curriculum, Cyber Innovation Center, Bossier City, LA
- **Shawn Zimmerman**, Certified Vocational Evaluator, VA Dept. of Rehabilitative Services
- **Tish Harris**, Grant Coordinator, Career Pathways for Individuals with Disabilities, VA Dept. for the Blind and Vision Impaired
- **Chanthen Nene**, former Academy student, mentor and Classroom Assistant, current VCU student

# Hands on Works



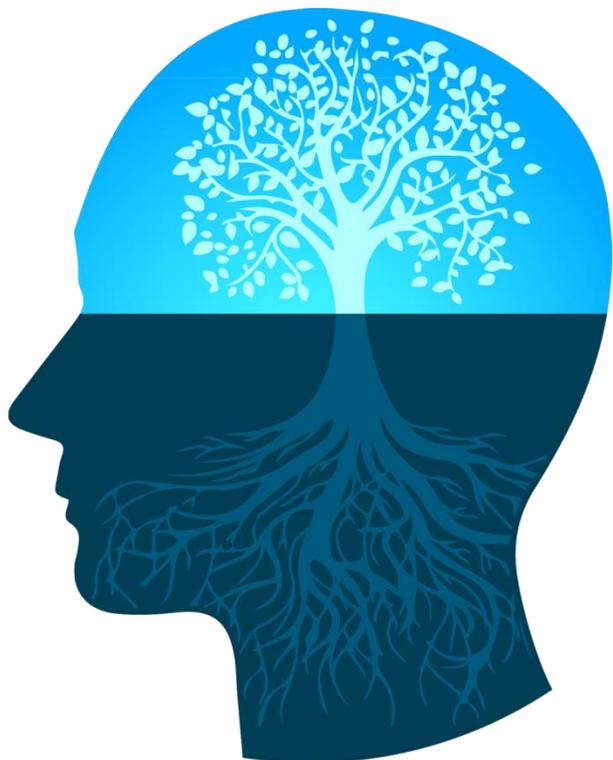
# Our Challenge

- Engage high school students with disabilities
- Use curriculum approved and used by the VA Department of Education for camps or classes
- Use curriculum for in demand pathways
- Make the curriculum fully accessible
- Provide expert instruction
- Provide classroom accommodations as needed
- Allow our students to excel!

# Where in the world did this idea of academies come from?

Two Words: Joe Ashley

His charge: Propel a mindset change



DBVI Commissioner Hopkins:

Let's show that our students can excel or even outperform students at the public school summer camps by adapting their curriculum, making it accessible.....

And next year....let's create something new!

*never fall into the tyranny of low expectations*

# Academies were born

2017

- Robotics and Cyber at VA Rehabilitation Center for the Blind and Vision Impaired (NICERC)
- Water Filtration Academy at WWRC

2018

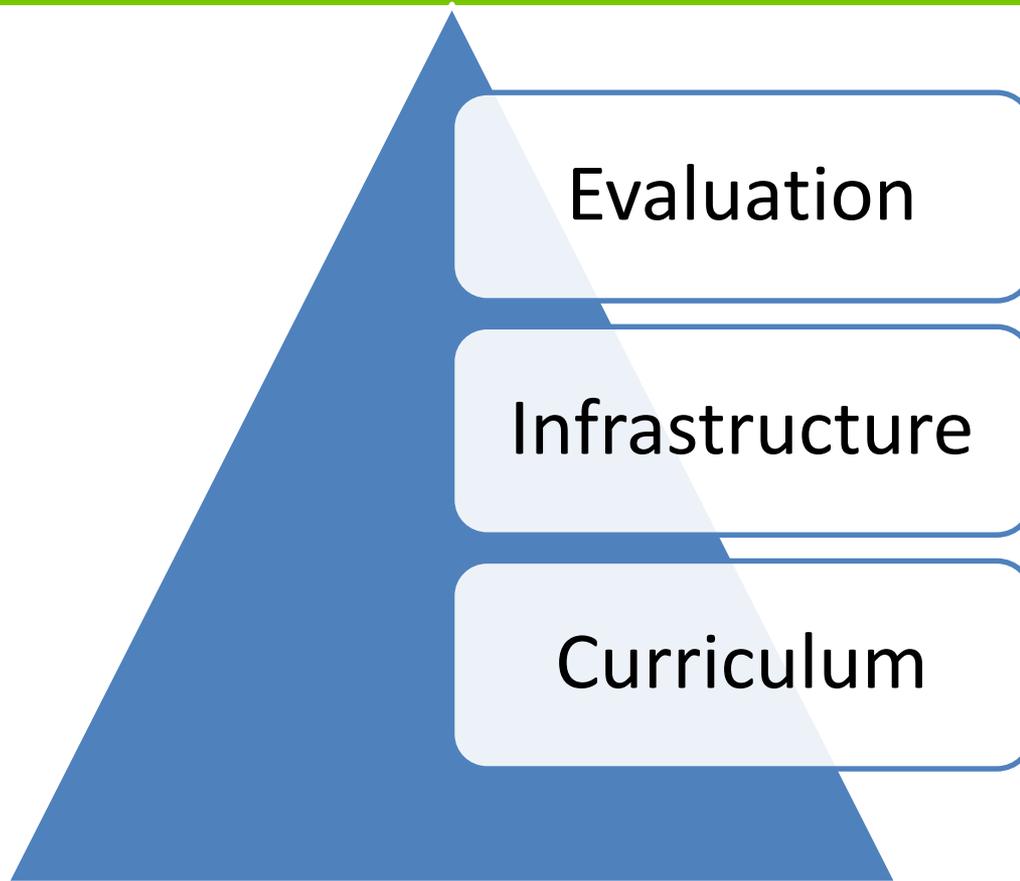
- Continued Academies from 2017
- Added Cyber Analyst and Coding (NICERC)

2019

- Continued Academies from 2017 & 2018
- Added Welding, Health Care, Manufacturing

# The Process

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# Curriculum Source – NICERC and CIC

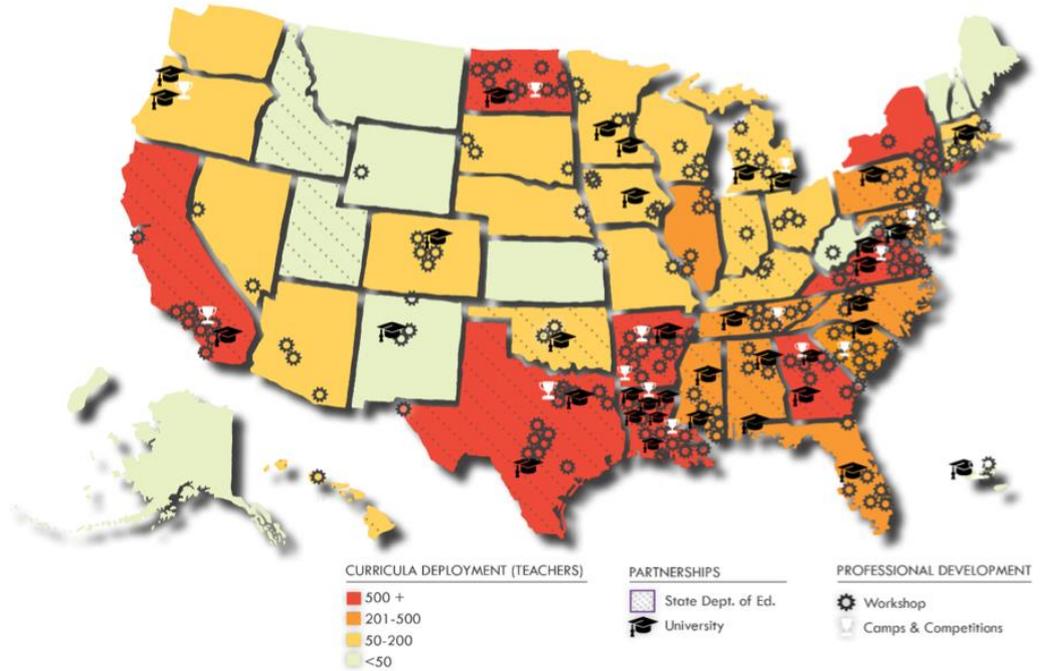


# Regional Educational Model for the Nation



**CISA**  
CYBER+INFRASTRUCTURE

- Perpetual and Sustainable
  - Teacher-focus curricula and training model
- Demonstrated Capacity
  - Labor market in Northern Louisiana outperformed initial commitments.
- Replicable Model
  - By design, teachers from any school can begin integrating cyber foundations into the classroom.



# Infrastructure- Tish

- Flyers and Information Dissemination
- Recruitment
- Application review
- Supplies
- Authorizations
- Budget
- If needed, room and board
- Invites for final event day and follow up

# Admittance Process

- Consumers that apply are reviewed per academy
- Math/Reading requirements may vary
- Thorough case review, including discussing consumer with RC, teachers, parents, etc. may be necessary

# Cyber Security Analyst Academy Structure

- Introductions, students choose roles
- Intro to Cyber Security and different employment opportunities
- Scenarios from NICERC
- Wrap-up

# Let's hear it first hand!

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## Meet

# Chanthen Nene

# Two Pathways Diverged in A Yellow Wood...

- In the summer of 2016, I chose the Career Pathway to DBVI's Robotics Academy in Richmond, hesitantly...
  - I am Chanthén Néné and will briefly share my experiences and where the pathway is taking me.
- I am: a freshman at VCU, an alumnus and subsequently a mentor and assistant instructor at the Robotics Academy, a person with nystagmus and partially developed optic nerves, an aspiring film director and entrepreneur.
- My DBVI counselor recommended the Academy to me and my family.

# What I found in the ~~Woods~~ Academy

- I came hesitantly, unsure how much my impaired vision would get in the way of doing Robotics. I viewed the Academy as a place for people with disabilities. I found instead:
  - Instructors and staff who focused me on my **abilities** inside and outside the classroom.
  - Other kids with differing ~~disabilities~~.
  - I had a knack for programming and tech in general.
  - That when you feel good about yourself, you also feel like helping other kids. Or may be it's the other way around!

# Where the Pathway is taking me

- Sometimes I still feel my vision makes some things difficult, but Career Pathways taught me that focusing on my abilities:
  - ✓ Will ensure I excel in a very visual field like Cinema: my first major.
  - ✓ Gives me the confidence to start my own company: I will be doing a double major in Business and was selected for VCU's Da Vinci Entrepreneurship Program.
  - ✓ Makes me want to pay it forward and help other kids find the career of their choice. (Tish doesn't know this yet, but I will be reaching out to her for guidance with an idea for a way my tech startup-to-be could do this.)

# In Conclusion, For Me...

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**DBVI & Career Pathways have made all the difference**

**Thank you!**



# The Quantitative Results: The Data Speaks

## Robotics Academy-

**57 of 63 for 91%**

Have entered or plan to enter a  
Career pathway through college ( 2 or 4  
year), credential training, or going directly  
into employment.....

# The Costs beyond free NICERC curriculum



One day Cyber Analyst

\$0 Cash Outlay

Staff time to set up and recruit

Evaluate applications

Instructor time

Copy needed materials



Two Day Coding with Micro bit

\$25 per student cash outlay

Staff time to set up and recruit

Evaluate applications

Order Microbits

Find classroom volunteers

Instructor time



Five Day Robotics

\$1800 per student includes laptop, bot, instruction, recreation and evening activities, room & board

Staff time to set up and recruit

Evaluate applications

Order supplies

Set up Rally- high visibility

Find classroom volunteers or PWE

Students keep all equipment!

# New in 2020 Leap into Linux

- Learn how networks and web servers operate
- Investigate Compliance: how to modify websites to make them compliant
- Learn tools to explore a computer network's structure
- Experience setting up your own server  
Retro-fit non-accessible websites
- Create your own webpage for others to visit

# How to fund?

- Capacity building grants
- STEM grants at state level
- Partner with federal grantee (such as Career Pathways)
- Partner with a business
- Foundation grants
- Non-profit partners

# Questions?

- Dr. Gardner, [chuck.gardner@cyber.org](mailto:chuck.gardner@cyber.org)
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