



City Schools Service-Learning Snapshot

What is Service – Learning?

Service-learning links academic learning with student service that benefits the community. Service-learning projects must include academic preparation, service activities, and structured reflection. Students must complete at least 75 hours in the State of Maryland in order to graduate. Students earn hours through curricular infused activities as well as through independent service opportunities. For more information, visit the Service-Learning Resources Course on TSS at <http://www.bcpss.org/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp> .

What is preparation?

This is the first step that students take by working with their teachers and members of the community to:

- Identify issues in their community.
- Decide on a type of action that they would like to take and choose a community agency with which they would like to work.
- Plan their actual project.

How does one take action?

Students actually embark on the task that they have designed through direct service, indirect service, and advocacy.

- Through direct service, students work to alleviate the community problem by coming in face- to- face contact with individuals in the community. Direct service can include activities such as tutoring, serving meals in a soup kitchen, or visiting an elderly person.
- Through indirect service, students find resources to help alleviate problems by raising money for various causes, participating in walk-a-thons and community clean-ups.
- Through advocacy projects, students work to eliminate the causes of various community problems by writing letters about issues of concern, or lobbying to voice their concerns about problems or to correct injustices.

What is reflection?

The last phase of a student's service-learning experience is reflection. This allows the student to look back at his/her project and to review what they have learned. They can think about if they would have done things differently if they could do the project again, or what they could encourage others to do to help their community. Students provide reflection through journal entries to creating video documentaries. Students who participate in class projects can complete personal reactions to be included in a class scrapbook for others to see.

What Service –Learning is Not

Volunteerism

People volunteer for a variety of reasons, and often their volunteer experience is not linked to their academic studies. This is not student service-learning. For instance, singing in a church choir, babysitting a younger relative, or working in the school's office all are examples of volunteering and **not** service learning.

Community Service

People do community service for many reasons such as ordered by the court. This type of service may also involve a stipend, or may be a volunteer service. Community service is not linked to academics.

Work Study / Internship

Student interns are placed in a work venue to become familiar with a career, job or as a requirement of a specific academic class.

Independent Service-Learning Project Guidelines

Some students may want to complete a service-learning project that is not offered through one of their courses, a club, or school organization. In order for a student to complete an independent project, the student must do the following:

Choose a project

The student begins by designing his/her project. The community- based agency in which they would like to work must be a pre-approved site that meets the “Seven Best Practices of Service-Learning.”

Get approval

The student must also first complete the proper pre-approval and Preparation Forms and have them approved by their School-Based Service-Learning Coordinator.

Prepare for the actual project

The community agency that is going to host the student must provide the student with adequate preparation activities which will be noted on the Preparation Form as well as the Student Service Hours Record Card.

Acting on service

Once students decide what type of action they are going to be taking, they must be sure to have their site supervisor sign the Hours Record Card at each visit. It is suggested that students keep a diary or service-learning journal available each time service is performed.

Reflecting on service

Students can reflect on their service-learning experience in a variety of ways such as through their journal or diary, creating a video or documentary, or even making a scrapbook with pictures to share with others.

Tracking hours

Students must complete the Reflection Form and the Student Service Hours Record Card and submit these documents to their school-based service-learning coordinator for approval. Upon approval, the forms will be filed and their service-learning hours will be recorded.

For more information about the City Schools Service-Learning Program:

Visit: <http://www.bcpss.org/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>

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