



Carey M. Wright, Ed.D.  
Interim State Superintendent of Schools

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**TO:** Local Directors of Special Education  
**FROM:** Antoine L Hickman, Ed.D. *AH*  
Assistant State Superintendent  
Division of Early Intervention/Special Education Services  
**DATE:** December 19, 2023  
**SUBJECT:** Service-Learning Graduation Requirement for Students Receiving Special Education Services

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Service-learning activities allow students to engage in contextual learning in preparation for employment and adult life. These experiences offer meaningful opportunities for civic engagement and contributions to the community. Under Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) [13A.03.02.09B\(1\)](#), in order to be awarded a Maryland high school diploma, the student must meet the service requirements specified in COMAR [13A.03.02.05](#), regardless of disability status.

COMAR [13A.03.02.09E](#), which governs the requirements of a Maryland High School Certificate of Completion, does not have any similar language. Therefore, a student who will receive a Maryland High School Certificate of Program Completion may, but is not required to, complete the service-learning requirement. That said, the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE) believes there is great value in completing service-learning hours, even for students with significant disabilities, so we encourage Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams to discuss ways in which all students may participate.

For assistance in developing or differentiating service-learning experiences to meet individual needs, please contact Lauren McKinley, Service-Learning Specialist, Youth Development Branch in the Division of Student Support, Academic Enrichment, and Educational Policy (DSSAEEP), by email at [lauren.mckinley@maryland.gov](mailto:lauren.mckinley@maryland.gov) or by phone at (410) 767-0357. You may also contact Molly Conner, Branch Chief, Performance Support and Technical Assistance Branch in the Division of Early Intervention and Special Education Services (DEI/SES), by email at [molly.conner@maryland.gov](mailto:molly.conner@maryland.gov) or by phone at (410) 767-0775.

Thank you for your work providing service-learning experiences for students in Maryland.

c: Dr. Deann Collins, Deputy Superintendent, Office of Teaching and Learning, MSDE  
Mary Gable, Assistant State Superintendent, DSSAEEP, MSDE  
Molly Conner, Chief, Performance Support and Technical Assistance, DEI/ES, MSDE  
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