

Service Learning Snapshot for Teachers and Coordinators

What is Service Learning?

Service Learning is a flexible method of teaching and learning that applies academic and real-world skills to create meaningful youth-led experiences with community partnerships. The goal of Service Learning is to empower youth to become engaged in their personal, social and working lives.

What are the Benefits of Service Learning?

Students engaged in Service Learning are more academically proficient. Students who participate in Service Learning experiences are more workforce ready, motivated to learn, committed to civic participation and connected to their schools and communities. Service Learning has proven to develop and improve the following skills: analysis, critical thinking, communication, problem solving, research and public speaking.

How is Service Learning implemented?

Service Learning experiences can involve a single student, a group of students, a classroom or a whole school. The goals, objectives, resources and administrative support largely determine how a school may structure its Service Learning program. Service Learning may be its own stand alone class or can be incorporated into the curriculum of an existing class.

What are the responsibilities of the Teacher/Coordinator?

Service Learning teachers serve as facilitators and guide meaningful, student-led experiences. It is the responsibility of the teacher/coordinator to communicate expectations and goals to students, communicate with administration and community partners, create assignments, provide orientations and evaluations for students and partners, acquire necessary releases and documentation, and assign grades. The Service Learning Teacher must have valid 7th-12th grade certification, along with other considerations (see the “Teacher Certification for Service Learning” in the SD Service Learning Framework for more information). Teachers must possess strong communication skills, resourcefulness, flexibility, enthusiasm, and a do-what-it-takes attitude.

What are the student requirements for credit?

For students entering 9th grade in the 2010-11 school year, of the 22 credit hours required for graduation, one unit must be comprised of any combination of approved CTE courses, capstone or Service Learning experiences or world language courses. A total of 60 – 75 hours of work, which can be a combination of learning experiences, service experiences and a project/presentation must be completed to receive .5 Service Learning credit. The nine Standards of Quality Service Learning must be addressed in each Service Learning experience as well.

Issues to Consider:

Service Learning experiences which take students out of the school building contain an element of risk. Attention should be paid to the issues of student transportation, confidentiality and safety, with appropriate liability release forms implemented to protect our students and our school district. Some Service Learning experiences may have associated costs. These may be covered by the school district or by engaged partners in the community.

SD's Standards of Quality Service Learning:

*Meaningful Service
Link to Curriculum
Reflection
Diversity
Youth Voice
Partnerships
Progress Monitoring
Duration and Intensity
Career Development*

**To access the SD Service Learning Framework and additional resources, visit
<http://doe.sd.gov/octe/servicelearning.asp>.**
