

Guidelines on In-School Service Learning

Chicago Public Schools defines Service Learning as a *teaching and learning methodology that connects classroom curriculum with identified community issues and needs. Service Learning engages students in projects that serve the community and build their social and academic capacities.* Ideally, service projects move students out of the school building and into the community to:

- ✓ provide a real benefit to the community,
- ✓ enhance student learning,
- ✓ develop student civic engagement skills,
- ✓ expose students to community issues and organizations, and
- ✓ expand student career choices.

All service opportunities, whether inside or outside the school, should meet the definition of Service Learning and meet the core goals of a quality service project. A list of high quality Service Learning projects is included on the back of this document.

In addition, the following guidelines must be followed for in-school service projects:

- ✓ Students may earn no more than 20 hours on in-school projects, i.e., projects that do not provide any measurable benefit beyond the school building.
- ✓ Project opportunities must be submitted for pre-approval to the Service Learning Coach.

The following examples demonstrate what can and what cannot qualify for Service Learning credit.

Approved

A student or group of students works with a teacher to implement a unit by providing input on curriculum, tutoring assistance, observing and delivering a lesson and debriefing the experience with the teacher.

A student or group of students in a Math class may work with a coach to gather statistical data and provide regular reports. These statistics ideally become information that the Math teacher utilizes to enhance learning in the classroom.

Not Approved

A student or group of students files documents for a teacher/administrator or grades papers for a teacher.

A student or group of students cleans the classroom for a teacher.

Service Learning in Chicago Public Schools

Innovative Service Learning Projects

Containing Invasive Species/Restoring Precious Ecosystems

Students at multiple schools participate in the Calumet Is My BackYard Service Learning project. Students learn about biodiversity and invasive species in Environmental Science classrooms and then do field work in the Lake Calumet area of Chicago to contain invasive plant species and restore prairie and wetland areas in four different locations. Students also monitor the biodiversity of the areas through a partnership with the Field Museum.

Educating Homeless Children

Students learned about reading and writing strategies in the classroom then established a relationship with a local homeless shelter for women and children in order to provide pre-Kindergarten educational activities for children. The students were concerned about homelessness and the fact that children who are homeless typically find themselves behind when they get to Kindergarten.

Creating a Library

Students at a college prep. school and a school for youth with cognitive disabilities worked together to create a new library at the school for youth with disabilities. The students developed a plan, collected books and cd's, won a \$2,500 grant and installed library furniture.

Practicing World Languages

Students in a Spanish language class prepared activities for senior citizens at a center for Spanish-speaking elderly. The students conducted the activities in Spanish to strengthen their language skills and provided an important service to seniors in the community.

Student Election Judges

150 students from several high schools signed up to be election judges for the most recent local election. Following their work as judges, students met with the Chicago Board of Election commissioners to advocate for more judge positions for young people and to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current system.

Adopt-a-Beach

Students in an Environmental Science class worked with the Lake Michigan Federation to adopt a local beach. The students participated in a citywide coastal cleanup sponsored by the Federation, conducted a needs assessment of the beach, conducted water quality testing and reported the results, and cleaned up the beach, documenting the kinds of trash found at the beach.

Senior Citizen Prom

Students from multiple classrooms at Curie High School sponsored a prom for senior citizens. The students studied the music and styles that are interesting to seniors and then hosted the senior citizens for an evening of music, dance, and fine dining.

Public Art Honoring Civil Rights Leaders

Students worked with their art teacher to create a public mosaic of Roberto Clemente and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The mural occupies a public space and honors the leaders' legacies.