

welcome



Minnesota Service Learning

Thank you for your interest in service learning. This informational packet will provide you with a variety of resources to assist you in the implementation of the teaching methodology - in your classroom, your school, your district or your organization. It includes information about the following:

- Definition of Service Learning
- Principles of Effective Practice
- Research Findings
- Minnesota Department of Education Initiatives
- Funding Sources
- Further Information Sources
- Examples

Service learning is a powerful teaching strategy with research that proves its success. The Minnesota Department of Education is committed to increasing the number of learners in service experiences that provide immediate relevance to academics as well as opportunities to demonstrate how to solve real-life problems.

Service learning provides the context in which learners can gain organizational, team and problem-solving skills, and other attitudes and capabilities necessary to succeed in learning and work.

For more information, contact the Minnesota Department of Education, Service Learning Specialist, at (651) 582-8434 or michelle.kamenov@state.mn.us.

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definition



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Service learning is ...

a form of experiential learning whereby students apply content knowledge, critical thinking and good judgment to address genuine community needs.¹ Service learning is a way of teaching and learning that engages all learners in hands-on academic projects in the community to meet learning objectives and strengthen communities.

Service is cleaning up a river bank.

Learning is sitting in a science classroom, looking at water samples under a microscope.

Service learning is science students meeting academic standards by taking samples from local water sources, then analyzing the samples, documenting the results, presenting the scientific information to a pollution control agency and reflecting on the impact these results may have on future pollution control issues and our own behaviors and attitudes.²

Service learning isn't ...

Community service ...	because service learning has clear and direct ties to academic curriculum, in addition to community outcomes.
Field trips ...	because service learning often happens within the four walls of the classroom or school building.
Time away from class ...	because service learning is class.
Stand-alone projects ...	because service learning requires preparation, action and reflection that often results in asking tougher and bigger questions, and service learning only affects academic achievement when it is: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. intentionally integrated with a specific subject and/or content;2. aligned with standards; and3. uses reflection activities that necessitate higher-order thinking skills.³
An add-on ...	because service learning is a methodology to achieve core academic outcomes.

¹ Minnesota Department of Education

² Adapted by the Minnesota Department of Education from the Saint Paul Public Schools Plan for District-wide Service Learning, prepared by the National Youth Leadership Council

³ Billig, Phi Delta Kappan, May 2000

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effective practice



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The Principles of Effective Practice for K-12 Service-Learning¹

- 1. Curriculum Integration:** embedding service-learning experiences in curricular goals and standards that drive student learning of concepts, content, and skills in academic disciplines and cocurricular settings.
- 2. Reflection:** facilitating continuous reflection before, during, and after the service experiences—using multiple, cognitively challenging methods to encourage critical and creative thinking that addresses learning objectives.
- 3. Youth Voice:** engaging the vision and leadership of young people as valued contributors to society by integrating their ideas into the selection, design, implementation, and evaluation of service-learning experiences.
- 4. Diversity:** fostering civil discourse and democratic values through the inclusion of diverse perspectives and experiences, and through a respect for all learners.
- 5. Meaningful Service:** applying problem-solving and critical thinking skills to community and civic needs in real-world environments.
- 6. Process Monitoring:** analyzing student reflections and assessment measures, in combination with project and partner evaluation data, for continuous review and improvement.
- 7. Duration:** ensuring that service and learning experiences are of sufficient intensity and duration (or are equal to one semester), so that all phases of planning, through project evaluation, are included.
- 8. Reciprocal Partnerships:** leveraging community assets and promoting collaborative communication and interaction among stakeholders.

¹ "The Principles of Effective Practice for K-12 Service-Learning" are reprinted from *Growing to Greatness 2007: The State of Service-Learning*, copyright © 2007 National Youth Leadership Council, St. Paul, Minn. www.nylc.org. Used with permission.

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research



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The Impacts of Service Learning on Youth, Schools and Communities: Research on K-12 School-Based Service Learning, 1990-1999¹

Service learning has a positive effect on the personal development of public school youth.

Students who participate in service learning are less likely to engage in “risk” behaviors.

Service learning has a positive effect on students’ interpersonal development and the ability to relate to culturally diverse groups.

Service learning helps to develop students’ sense of civic and social responsibility and their citizenship skills.

Service learning provides opportunities for students to become active, positive contributors to society.

Service learning helps students acquire academic skills and knowledge.

Students who participate in service learning are more engaged in their studies and more motivated to learn.

Service learning is associated with increased student attendance.

Service learning helps students to become more knowledgeable and realistic about careers.

Service learning results in greater mutual respect between teachers and students.

Service learning leads to more positive perceptions of school and youth by community members.

¹ This research brief was developed by Shelley H. Billig, Ph.D., RMC Research Corporation, Denver, CO, as a part of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation’s Learning In Deed Initiative.
Additional research is available at www.servicelearning.org.

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state programs



Minnesota Service Learning

The following is a summary of major state-sponsored activities. For more information about any of these initiatives, contact Michelle Kamenov, Service Learning Specialist, Minnesota Department of Education, at (651) 582-8434 or visit <http://education.state.mn.us>.

Learn & Serve America, School-Based: The Corporation for National and Community Service provides funds to support service learning in K-12 schools. The Minnesota Department of Education receives those funds and in turn grants them to Minnesota school districts.

Community Education, Youth Development and Youth Service Programs: All school districts have the option to levy special funds to support youth development and youth service programs through Community Education. Through these funds, more than 200,000 youth participate in service every year.

Peer Consultants: Funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation and Learn and Serve America, peer consultants provide teacher development in the area of service learning. There are peer consultants located throughout Minnesota available at no cost to school districts.

Minnesota Student Service Awards: Founded in 1988, the Minnesota Student Service Awards seek to celebrate and recognize programs and organizations throughout Minnesota that involve students in community service and/or service learning.

Outstanding Contributions to Service Learning Awards: These awards recognize individual teachers, administrators, higher education faculty and staff, consultants, volunteers, students, legislators, community agency personnel, community leaders, coordinators, policy makers and advocates who serve to advance the field of service learning. Awards are given in the areas of policy, practice and passion.

Minnesota Service Learning Leader Schools: Selection as a Minnesota Service Learning Leader District or School is a great honor. It is recognition of excellence in service learning. Reviewers place recipients in one of two categories: emerging leaders or established leaders.

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funding sources



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Service learning is a teaching strategy and therefore, as they allow, established classroom budgets should cover expenses related to ongoing projects. Through community education, school districts may access special revenue to support youth development and youth service programs. To supplement these existing funding sources, many service learning grants are available including:

The Minnesota Department of Education offers grants on a regular basis to fund the development of an infrastructure supportive of service learning. <http://education.state.mn.us>

The School Grants Website details a wide variety of grants available. www.schoolgrants.org

The Corporation for National and Community Service engages Americans of all ages and backgrounds in service to help strengthen communities through Learn and Serve America, AmeriCorps and Senior Corps. www.cns.gov

Constitutional Rights Foundation Robinson Mini-Grants provide seed money for student-teacher teams and community organizations engaged in service learning projects that address serious community problems. www.crf-usa.org

Do Something is a non-profit that seeks to get more young people engaged in social action through grant giving and online networking. www.dosomething.org

The Starbucks Foundation funds programs for youth, ages 6-18, that integrate literacy with personal and civic action in the communities where they live. Grants range from \$5,000-\$20,000. www.starbucks.com/aboutus/grantinfo.asp

Youth Service America offers grants to help young people and organizations plan and implement service projects for Global Youth Service Day as well as ongoing service learning throughout the year. www.ysa.org/awards

The ING Unsung Heroes award program selects 100 winners to receive \$2,000 to help fund their innovative class projects. Three of those are selected to win the top three awards of \$25,000, \$10,000 and \$5,000. www.ing.com/us/unsungheroes

For a more complete list, visit: www.servicelearning.org/resources/funding_sources/index.php

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more information



Minnesota Service Learning

The following organizations offer resources, training and bright ideas related to service learning.

Local Resources

Minnesota Department of Education

National Youth Leadership Council

Search Institute

Minnesota Campus Compact

Minnesota Alliance with Youth

Center for Service Learning & Social Change

Serve Minnesota

4-H

Extension Offices

<http://education.state.mn.us>

www.nylc.org

www.search-institute.org

www.mncampuscompact.org

www.mnyouth.net

www.centerforservicelearning.org

www.serveminnesota.org

www.fourh.umn.edu

www.extension.umn.edu

National Resources

Learn and Serve America

Corporation for National and Community Service

National Service-Learning Partnership

National Service-Learning Clearinghouse

National Youth Development Information Center

Youth Service America

Learning In Deed

Education Commission of the States

Close Up Foundation

Constitutional Rights Foundation

National Dropout Prevention Center

America's Promise

Campus Compact

www.learnandserve.org

www.cns.org

www.service-learningpartnership.org

www.servicelearning.org

www.nydic.org

www.ysa.org

www.learningindeed.org

www.ecs.org

www.closeup.org

www.crf-usa.org

www.dropoutprevention.org

www.americaspromise.org

www.compact.org

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examples



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Water Quality and Environmental Studies, Edina High School

Students in this environmental studies class used various testing programs to determine the water quality index for Nine Mile Creek. Students researched testing methods, performed tests, and in working with the Watershed District, chose a variety of avenues to announce their results.

Building Bridges of Friendship with Iraq, Morris Area School District

Students wanted to show their support for local guardsmen and their families. Prior to leaving for Iraq, the guardsmen visited classrooms to explain what they would be doing and answered questions the students had. Students then learned about Iraqi culture, weather and ecosystems. As part of the language arts curriculum, students learned how to write a friendly letter and wrote frequently to the guardsmen. Upon their return, students documented their stories of service.

Theories of Relativity, Spring Lake ALC, Carver-Scott Educational Cooperative

The literature class at Spring Lake ALC related modern fiction to real-life truths while reading Theories of Relativity. While reading about a teenage boy living on the streets, they were motivated to learn more about homelessness and then to do what they could to help others in need.

Stories of Service, St. Peter High School

The Stories of Service Project mobilized 11th-grade United States history students to use technology to preserve the memories, documents, personal memorabilia and diverse perspectives of veterans in their community who served our nation in World War II, Korea and Vietnam.

Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in Authentic Environmental Research, Perham High School

This class was dedicated to conducting authentic environmental research, working with local, regional and state experts. The curriculum is unique in that students worked with professionals in the field, learned how real research is conducted, and used state-of-the-art technology. Their work resulted in reports shared with local government and the public.

Mini-Minnesota, Crossroads Science School, Saint Paul Public Schools

Students restored part of the schoolyard to an ecologically rich environment, modeling the three natural biomes of Minnesota. Students learned about the characteristics of different types of trees and shrubbery, created a plan of action for the land including a visual map, and then carried out their plan for restoration.

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