Allegany County Service-Learning Guidelines

Mission Statement
The goal of the Service-Learning Program in Allegany County is to reach academic objectives through project-based learning in a classroom setting.

Definition of Service-Learning
Service learning is a teaching method that combines meaningful service to the community with curriculum-based learning. Students improve their academic skills by applying what they learn in school to the real world, and then reflect on their experiences to reinforce the link between their service and learning. (Learning in Deed)

Projects should

- Meet a community need.
- Satisfy specific curriculum objectives.
- Be selected by the students with appropriate teacher guidance.
- Meet Maryland's Seven Best Practices.
- Involve the students in preparation, action, and reflection
    - Preparation, identifying projects and learning skills;
    - Action,
        - Direct Service such as tutoring or helping at a nursing home,
        - Indirect Service such as organizing a food drive or cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay, and
        - Advocacy projects such as DARE or writing letters to congress; and
    - Reflection, evaluating projects through discussion or completion of the writing prompt on the Service-Learning Verification/ Reflection Form.
- Be documented.

Allegany County Guidelines

1. Students, parents, and individuals/ organizations who accept student volunteers are hereby advised that while service-learning is mandated, that is not a sufficient basis for attaching liability to the Allegany County Public Schools. The Board of Education of Allegany County does not provide general liability insurance for individuals or organizations that accept student volunteers. Organizations should verify the adequacy of their own insurance coverage.

2. The Allegany County Program will meet or exceed the minimum number of hours (75) of service learning as required by the State of Maryland.

    Students may count a maximum of…

    - 15 hours in sixth grade
    - 30 hours in seventh grade *(at least 15 will be participating in Rocky Gap Outdoor School)*
    - 15 hours in eighth grade
    - 15 hours in high school…. **towards the 75 required hours.**

3. ACPS students earned their hours through embedded curricular units starting in grade 6.

4. Students will have the opportunity to receive hours in Creative Arts, PE, Health, English, Math, Science and/or Social Studies.

5. Students who do <u>NOT</u> fulfill the required hours must make up those hours on their own time or under the discretion of their teacher.

6. Service-Learning hours will be pro-rated for students transferring into Allegany County Public Schools from private or out of state schools.

   <u>Transfer Policy (hours must be completed below)</u>
   6th grade: 75 hours;
   7th grade: 60 hours;
   8th grade: 30 hours:
   High School- 9th-12th grade: 15 hours
   12th grade 2nd semester: 5 hours.

7. Service learning activities will be approved by the teacher and school principal, prior to the activity taking place.

<u>Guidelines for projects completed during school hours</u>

- Service-learning projects will be completed through interdisciplinary team projects or through independent courses under the discretion of the teacher in charge. All sixth grade students will receive service-learning orientation from the teacher or county coordinator.

- In order for a project to be a successful service-learning project, **ALL** projects must follow the Maryland's Seven Best Practices and include preparation, action and reflection. This includes projects such as collection drives, recycling, etc.

- It is the responsibility of all teachers to enter projects and hours in the service-learning tracker. For assistance, please contact Kara Kennell

- Service Learning will be introduced to sixth graders during the first few months of school. Students will be refreshed on service learning in seventh, eighth and a variety of high school courses. Additionally, a letter will be sent home prior to all projects explaining how service hours are being awarded.

Service-Learning Elective Credit- (EXTRA hours beyond required hrs)

Students may accumulate additional service hours beginning the summer after the completion of grade 5 through grade 12. These hours will count towards a Service-Learning Elective Credit at time of graduation.

Exemplary independent service hours must be documented on a Service-Learning Verification/ Reflection Form, and must be approved by a teacher/coordinator the same year.

Students wishing to work towards this elective credit must complete a **total of 132 hours _beyond_ the initial 75 required service-learning hours. To earn a Service-Learning Elective Credit, students can have a mix between curriculum based and independent projects.**

(Activities might include serving a non-profit agency such as the food bank or senior centers OR serving with organizations or clubs such as scouts or 4-H)

Students shall: not be paid for their service; not earn hours served at a for-profit business; not earn hours for service during religious services; not earn hours for assisting family members with tasks such as cutting the lawn, babysitting, shoveling snow, cleaning, etc. Please check with the school service-learning contacts if you need clarification.

Guidelines and Clarification earning extra hours

Extra- Curricular Activities

Students who engage in extra- curricular activities like drama shows, can receive 10 hours' maximum per show. However, hours can only be counted **IF** they are raising money for a charity or having a collection drive for a non-profit organization. Each show must donate at least $50 to a non-profit organization or at least 50 items.

Extra-curricular performances beyond school hours that embed a service under teacher's supervision may receive hours. For example, if a student is in the choir or band and performs for a non-profit organization such as a nursing home, 9-11 Memorial, Veteran's Day ceremony, etc., they can receive an hour for their performance. Hours **WILL NOT** be awarded for performances for parents, school events, football games, etc.

Students who are part of a team, organization, club, etc. can earn hours for providing a service to the community if it is supporting a non-profit organization. If the team receives compensation of any kind from the students helping, a portion of the proceeds **MUST BE DONATED** to a need in the community (non-profit organization).

Students participating in a Unified sport (tennis, bocce ball, track, etc.) may receive up to 25 hours for the year. However, students must be hands on throughout the season to help the special education students. Coaches will need to sign off on the verification forms to verify those students did participate and engage in helping others.

<u>**Work Study Internship**</u>:

Student interns frequently work at for-profit business to benefit the financial standing of that business. They are not necessarily working to improve their communities through these internship experiences. There can be overlap between work-study internships and service learning. Students are engaged in service-learning if through their internship experiences they work to improve the health or welfare of their community while linking this to their academic studies. Students can receive a maximum of 40 hours per year. For example, they are visiting the nursing homes to do hair, nails, etc. for the residents as part of the cosmetology class.

<u>**Student Aid:**</u>

Students, who serve as a teacher's aide throughout the school year, can receive a maximum of 20 service hours per year. **However, it must be a** direct service for other students such as tutoring or creating educational displays or resources. Making copies, grading papers, washing boards, cleaning the classroom, etc. is considered clerical and cannot be more than 25% of the experience. Students may also work within the school office, library or with the school nurse provided the experience still meets the program guidelines.

<u>MSDE Guidelines</u>

Service-Learning projects should be designed to meet the Seven Best Practices:

- Meet a recognized need in the community
- Achieve curricular objectives through service-learning
- Reflect throughout the service-learning experience
- Develop student responsibility
- Establish community partnerships
- Plan ahead for service-learning
- Equip students with knowledge and skills needed for service

Stages of an effective high quality service-learning project:

1. Preparation
   - Introduce the concept of service-learning and good citizenship
   - Identify a community or school need
   - Develop specific skills needed to carry out the project
   - Explore issues related to the project

2. Action (3 types)
   - Direct Service: tutoring, mentoring, and visiting the elderly….
   - Indirect Service: drives, collections, fundraisers, clean-ups, construction, environmental
   - Advocacy: lobbying, speaking, performing, writing….

3. Reflection
   - Explore the impact and importance of citizen service to the community
   - Reflect on what was learned
   - Instill habits of participation as a citizen

For more information and to view the complete MSDE Guidelines, please click on the link below….

http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Pages/Service-Learning/Graduation-Requirement.aspx

REASONS WHY IS SERVICE-LEARNING IMPORTANT?

Service-Learning is neither an add-on nor a diversion from the curriculum. It is an approach to teaching that provides students with authentic learning experiences in which they learn academic content in a real-life, real-world context. There are many advantages to this approach including:

- The students love doing it. It is engaging, inspiring, and motivates them to learn.
- It develops the students' communication skills by requiring them to read, write, listen, and speak.
- In addition to academic content, students learn a range of valuable practical skills including: problem solving, organizing, collaborating, project management, research, and dealing with obstacles and setbacks.
- It develops character virtues and interpersonal habits such as respect, responsibility, empathy, cooperation, citizenship, initiative, and persistence.
- It makes a positive contribution to the community.
- All students can actively participate and make a meaningful contribution regardless of their talents or their challenges.