

Service-learning in Allegany County Public Schools

WHY SERVICE-LEARNING?

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.
- 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.

Statistics on service-learning in Allegany County

Starting in the 6th grade students can start working towards a service-learning elective credit. In order to receive the elective credit, students must complete at least 132 **BEYOND** the required 75 service-learning hours needed to graduate. During the 2016-2017 school year, **139 seniors** were awarded the elective credit.

Total number of required hours completed by Allegany County students during the 2016-2017 school year.

6th grade- 679 students completed approximately 10,170 service-learning hours.
7th grade- 678 students completed approximately 20,370 service-learning hours.
8th grade- 647 students completed approximately 9,705 service-learning hours.
9th grade- 678 students completed approximately 10,170 service-learning hours.

Totaling 50,415 hours of service for grades 6th-9th

There were over 50 projects completed by Allegany County students during the 2016-2017 school year. Students were involved in numerous projects ranging from food drives to supporting native tree planting as part of Cumberland's Urban Tree Canopy Initiative. Seventh grade students had a chance to make a difference by participating in Bridging the Watershed at Rocky Gap State Park. They were able to make a personal connection with the natural world through hands - on curriculum-based outdoor studies. Through understanding the concepts of citizenship and civic responsibility, students learned about the importance of volunteering to help a non-profit agency that helps families in need. In conjunction with this lesson, students researched the Ronald McDonald House using various websites and you tube videos made by families who had used the facility. Then students collected pop tabs to be taken to the RMH in Morgantown as a donation. Service-learning allows avenues for students to learn and make a difference in their communities at the same time.