



# K–12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice

**Meaningful Service.** Service-learning actively engages participants in meaningful and personally relevant service activities.

Students identify, authenticate, and learn about a recognized community need. Student actions are reciprocal, valued by the community, and have real consequences while offering opportunities to apply newly acquired academic skills and knowledge.

**Link to Curriculum.** Service-learning is intentionally used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or content standards.

The process includes deliberate cross-curricular connections whereby students learn skills and content through varied modalities that meet academic standards, and enables the transference of skills and content to new applications. The content informs the service and the service informs the content.

**Reflection.** Service-learning incorporates multiple challenging reflection activities that are ongoing and that prompt deep thinking and analysis about oneself and one's relationship to society.

Students participate in systemic varied processes that integrate empathetic response with cognitive thinking related to social issues and their lives. This affective and cognitive blend deepens the service learning as students apply and transfer new understandings of themselves, others, and the world around them.

**Diversity.** Service-learning promotes understanding of diversity and mutual respect among all participants.

Student experience affords opportunities to form multidimensional understanding and varied points of view. This process allows students to gain perspective and develop mutual respect and appreciation for others, while replacing stereotypes with accurate information.

**Youth Voice.** Service-learning provides youth with a strong voice in planning, implementing, and evaluating service-learning experiences with guidance from adults.

Students experience significant age-appropriate challenges involving tasks that require thinking, initiative, and problem solving as they demonstrate responsibility and decision-making in an environment safe enough to allow them to make mistakes and to succeed.

**Partnerships.** Service-learning partnerships are collaborative, mutually beneficial, and address community needs.

Students participate in the development of reciprocal partnerships and share responsibility with community members, parents, organizations, and other students. These relationships afford opportunities to interact with people of diverse backgrounds and experience, resulting in mutual respect, understanding, and appreciation.

**Progress Monitoring.** Service-learning engages participants in an ongoing process to assess the quality of implementation and progress toward meeting specified goals, and uses results for improvement and sustainability.

Once students identify and authenticate the need, they use varied methods to observe and track change and improvement as they carry out the service learning process. Advancement toward intended or developing outcomes is examined, along with effectiveness of applied procedures and recognized mutual benefits. Findings are shared with stakeholders.

**Duration and Intensity.** Service-learning has sufficient duration and intensity to address community needs and meet specified outcomes.

The length of the experience allows for a complete and thorough process as articulated in the Five Stages of Service Learning, with age-appropriate content, skill development, and depth of material covered.