SERVICE LEARNING

HANDBOOK

Garrett County Public Schools
40 South Second Street
Oakland, Maryland 21550
301-334-8900

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Effective July 1, 2015 (for class of 2019)

Liability

The opportunity to purchase school insurance is available to all students in Garrett County. Parents may want to examine the policies offered by the school system.

Although most organizations do carry insurance in some form, others may not. In these instances, the parents and students will need to use their own judgment. We encourage parents and students to look further into the various organizational policies and procedures concerning insurance coverage.

Some state organizations that do not carry liability insurance are usually covered under the Maryland Tort Laws.

For more information, contact your local school or the Garrett County Board of Education office at 301-334-8900.

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF GARRETT COUNTY DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE ON THE BASIS OF SEX, RACE, AGE, COLOR, RELIGIOUS BELIEF, NATIONAL ORIGIN OR HANDICAPPING CONDITION.

Service Learning Program Advisory Committee

The Service Learning Program Advisory Committee consists of teachers, administrators, central office staff, organizations, parents and students. This committee meets annually to review and discuss any issues pertaining to the Service Learning program. Members are as follows:

> Director of Secondary Education
> Supervisor of College and Career Readiness
> Service Learning County Coordinators
> Principals or Assistant Principals from the two middle and high schools
> 2-3 teachers from the two middle and high schools
> 1-2 students from each of the schools
> 2-3 community organizations
> 2-3 parents

School Project Committee

The School Project Committee reviews special projects within the school. The committee shall consist of the following individuals:

> Principal or Assistant Principal
> 2 Teachers
> Supervisor of College and Career Readiness
> Service Learning County Coordinator

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INTRODUCTION

This purpose of this handbook is to explain Student Service Learning and how the Garrett County Service Learning Program works. An outline of Garrett County's Service Learning plan is included as well as the steps to complete the requirement.

Topics covered will include choosing the appropriate types of service, determining the number of hours needed at the middle and high school levels, using the Service Learning Index and determining what kind of activities count as Service Learning.

WHAT IS SERVICE LEARNING?

Service Learning provides the mechanism for young people to see the value of community service while developing connections to classroom learning and applying those lessons to actual service activities. Service Learning projects must include **preparation, action and reflection.** Students can use their service experience to acquire new skills and knowledge that they can apply to real life situations.

BENEFITS OF SERVICE LEARNING

- Social responsibility, concern for the welfare of others
- Knowledge and exploration of service related careers
- Gain knowledge from a wider range of backgrounds and life situations
- Problem solving
- Enable youth to take responsibility and discover their own self-worth

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

Maintain and submit all necessary forms to the proper persons. The validation/tracking form MUST be received within four months of the date on which the activity was completed. If the form is not turned within the four month time line, the student will not receive credit toward their hours at the high school level.

The student should act responsibly and fulfill the terms of any agreement or expectancies of cooperating agencies, institutions or organizations for which the student has agreed to perform service.

The student must provide his/her own transportation to and from the agency, institution or organization. In a case where transportation is a major problem (parent has no vehicle and unusual circumstances are present), notify your school guidance office or the service learning coordinator.

Some community projects can be approved by the administrative staff should the project occur during school hours.

The service activity must be with an approved and properly supervised community or school organization.

The student will make contact with the agency or organization. Organizations need to speak with the student, not the parent.

TRANSFER INFORMATION

Students transferring into a Garrett County high school from a school system which **does require** Service Learning will:

1. Complete all required curriculum units applicable to the Service Learning program in courses for which the student is scheduled; and
2. Be exempt from the fifteen hour independent requirement if the transcript indicates fifteen hours of service has been previously performed or that the student Service Learning requirement has been satisfied in another school; or
3. Complete sufficient hours of service, either in addition to hours transferred or of original hours to satisfy the fifteen hour requirement.

Students transferring into a Garrett County high school from a school system which **does not require** Service Learning will complete hours as noted below:

- 12th grade – must complete 5 independent hours
- 11th grade – must complete 10 independent hours
- 10th grade – must complete 15 independent hours
- 9th grade – must complete 15 independent hours

STATE MANDATE

In July of 1992 through action by the State Board of Education, Maryland became the first state to require student Service Learning for high school graduation. The requirement applies to all students beginning with the graduating class of 1997.

The Maryland State Board of Education stated that starting with the Class of 1997, in order to graduate from high school (COMAR) 13A.03.02.06, students must complete:

- Seventy-five hours of student service that includes preparation, action and reflection components and that, at the discretion of the local school system, may begin in the middle grades; or
- A locally designed program in student service that has been approved by the State Superintendent of Schools.

The Garrett County Public School System chose to design a local program. Details of the program can be found on page 3 of this handbook.

RECOGNITION

A certificate of recognition will be given to those students who demonstrate outstanding achievement in Service Learning by completing 100 hours or more of service activities. An annual Service Star award is given by the State to one student from each Garrett County High School. For more details on this award contact the county coordinator.

OVERVIEW OF SERVICE LEARNING IN GARRETT COUNTY

The service learning program for Garrett County Public Schools evolved from the recommendations of a planning group composed of parents, students, civic club representatives, community agencies, teachers and school administrators and teachers.

The resulting plan includes a curriculum-based approach for the middle school students. Through teacher directed classroom activities, the students will learn the basics of Service Learning. Learning will take place through class projects and studies that pertain to Service Learning's Seen Best Practices and tie into the Common Core, STEM, and Next Generation Science Standards. Students who fail to complete middle school requirement will need to make up those hours in addition to the high school component hours.

High school students will receive ten hours of Service Learning through Science and Social Studies embedded hours. An independent component of fifteen hours will also be required through community-based projects and service.

Service Learning activities and instruction will be modified accordingly with Individualized Education Plans where appropriate; according to specifications of the IEP.

Should a student be exempt from the requirement due to profound disability, staff will document the exemption information on the IEP. Students receiving a Certificate of Completion are also required to complete Service Learning.

Alternate program students, including evening high school students who entered ninth grade in September 1993 and after, will also be required to meet the Service Learning requirement. A student who is attending the alternative program will be responsible for making up any Service Learning hours missed. Students at the middle school level will need to add those class hours missed to the number of hours required for high school.

HIGH SCHOOL SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAM

Students will complete the Service Learning requirement in high school. All students will take a Social Studies and a Science course in which ten hours are embedded.

In addition to the infused hours, students will be required to complete fifteen hours of independent service with an approved school or community-based organization. Students can begin to accumulate hours as soon as they have completed eighth grade, including the summer between eighth and ninth grades. Any in-school projects must be submitted by a teacher and approved by the school project committee. Any hours above the 75 hours required will be recorded for recognition purposes.

Any student who has not completed all components of the Service Learning program upon entering his/her senior year will be notified of their status. Each high school will provide the student with appropriate support and assistance needed in obtaining their hours.

At the end of the first semester of the student's twelfth grade year, should the student remain delinquent, students and parents will be informed of failing performance when it appears that is will affect the student's opportunity to graduate. Should a student not complete all graduation requirements, including the component of the Service Learning program by the end of the last day of senior finals, the student will not participate in graduation ceremonies and the diploma will not be awarded until the requirement is fulfilled.

MIDDLE SCHOOL SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAM

The middle school hourly equivalents are as follows:

Grade 6		TOTAL HOURS
Health/WINNERS	10 hours	
Interdisciplinary Team Projects	10 hours	20 hours
Grade 7		
Interdisciplinary Team Project	10 hours	10 hours
Grade 8		
Health	10 hours	
Interdisciplinary Team Project	10 hours	20 hours
TOTAL HOURS		**50 hours**

Students transferring into a Garrett County middle school will be given credit and/or recognition for students Service Learning courses and activities contained in their official school transcripts. Since it would be impossible to duplicate the program and activities of the previous years, upon entering the Garrett County School system, students will complete the student Service Learning program and activities appropriate for their current grade level.

MARYLAND'S SEVEN BEST PRACTICES

What makes a Student Service Learning project meaningful and effective? High quality experiences meet **Maryland's Seven Best Practices for Service Learning** and serve as a lens to determine quality for integrated projects.

These projects allow students and teachers to:

1. Meet a recognized need in the community.
Students work to identify pressing community needs and devise and participate in projects that address those needs. Students might engage in direct, indirect, or advocacy projects.

2. Achieve curricular objectives through service-learning.
Service learning provides an opportunity for classroom knowledge to be applied and tested in real-life settings. Service-learning projects should meet existing course outcomes in an experiential manner.

3. Reflect throughout the service-learning experience
Through reflection activities in the form of discussions, journaling, performing, writing, etc., students come to more fully understand the connection of their schoolwork to the service work performed. Reflection helps students explore the cycle of: What & Why? So What? Now What?

4. Develop student responsibility
High quality service-learning allows students to take leadership and ownership over the projects performed. Students learn important school, work, and life skills such as working as a team, organizing and scheduling activities, and problem solving when given increased responsibility for the success of projects.

5. Establish community partnerships
Service-learning experiences provide opportunities for students to learn about their communities, explore career possibilities, and work with diverse groups of individuals.

6. Plan ahead for service-learning
As with all effective instruction, an action plan must be created which features specific objectives to be achieved through the activity.

7. Equip students with knowledge and skills needed for service
To effectively engage in a project, students must understand the issue they will be addressing.

SERVICE LEARNING: WHAT COUNTS AND WHAT DOES NOT COUNT?

Service Learning should always follow the Seven Best Practices as well as county program guidelines. In order to assure quality Service Learning projects, students, parents and organizations should be aware of the below guidelines.

1. The action of caring for someone must focus on external needs. For example, a club can work to support a community activity, charity or school initiative. The activity cannot be self-based. Service Learning credit will not be given for hours spent benefiting a student's own club or organization.

2. The organization must be an approved site and listed in the Service Learning Index. To be included in the Index, organizations much complete the appropriate form and submit to the Service Learning Coordinator or Central Office.

3. Service opportunities are available within several categories. Human needs, education, environment, and public safely are the main areas in which students can find service needs. Community needs examples include: ending bias, stopping crime, serving those with disabilities, tutoring, senior citizens, abuse prevention, drug prevention, literacy, etc.

4. Student service cannot be used to replace regular employee service. This measure is to protect the student and the paid staff of an establishment. The project will not be accepted if profiting, making a percentage, or taking other self-serving benefits occurs. Services cannot benefit a business; they must benefit the community. Students are first provided this knowledge in middle school and again in high school.

5. Service Learning can only be performed by the student during the school day if the activity is approved by the Coordinators or Committee for Service Learning. Additional hours beyond the embedded will accumulate towards service recognition awards.

MIDDLE SCHOOL SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAM

In the middle school program, all students will be included in Service Learning instruction and activities. Service Learning and the WINNERS program are components of the Health curriculum. Students become familiar with Service Learning language and concepts that will assist them in developing interests for independent hours and continued community service. They are provided with their handbook and an introduction to policies and procedures as well as paperwork.

Each grade level interdisciplinary team of teachers is responsible for creating and implementing a project which will include group, class, and individual projects.

The project will include **preparation, action and reflection**. Tracking is not necessary unless students desire to perform independent hours in addition to the curricular component hours. Should a student accumulate additional hours and submit appropriate tracking forms, the additional hours will travel with the student as they enter high school. These hours can count towards meritorious recognition but not towards the required hours.

Should a student fail to complete any of the Service Learning components of middle school, an hourly equivalent will be added to the student's independent hour requirement at the high school.

SERVICE LEARNING INDEX

The Service Learning Index is a detailed list of approved community and school-based organizations that have agreed to assist Garrett County students in obtaining their hours. In order for the project to be valid, the organization must be in the index. If they are not, then the hours cannot be validated. Should an organization wish to be evaluated for inclusion, they will submit the index application available from Coordinators or Central Office. Organizations are reminded to use the Seven Best Practices for a guideline in creating activities and projects for the students.

A listing of the participating organizations can also be found at the Garrett County Board of Education web site (www.garrettcountyschools.org). Copies of the index are located in school libraries and guidance offices as well as GC Public Libraries.

The organizations are listed in alphabetical order in the index. The index includes name of organization, contact person, description of the organization, and an idea of the activities available through that organization.

Students can contact the organization in advance to inquire about a project. This will give the student an opportunity to use their communication skills. This will also show respect for the operations of the organization by not imposing immediate need upon them. The students should choose projects or activities in which they are interested. Service Learning is designed to encourage a student to take part in their community and foster the desire to assist others, understanding how student, service involvement makes a difference.

THREE COMPONENTS OF SERVICE LEARNING

PREPARATION

Service Learning has three components. The first is **PREPARATION.** Before a student can begin his/her project, he/she must first create a plan to carry out the project. Preparation begins with selection of the activity that the student would like to do. Other factors include:

1. Transportation – Is the activity in the student's community? Will he/she need to travel to complete the activity?
2. Interest – Does the activity or project interest the student?
3. Service Learning – Is the student already participating in activities that count as Service Learning?
4. Orientation – What are the organization's policies, mission statement, vision, etc.?

After the student decides upon the activity, he/she should contact the organization to begin to make arrangements. If a student is having difficulty finding activities, he/she should consult the index – see page 9. Students may also seek advice from guidance counselors, service learning coordinators or other faculty/staff.

ACTION

The second component is **ACTION** which falls into three categories: **DIRECT, INDIRECT and ADVOCACY**.

Direct Service – face-to-face contact with those the student is helping. Examples would be tutoring, helping shut-ins, delivering food to the needy, Special Olympics, Blind Skiers, mentoring, etc. Direct service is a rich experience that is encouraged and may lead to other types of service.

Indirect Service – "behind the scenes" to channel resources to alleviate a need. This may involve some face-to-face contact as well but is usually benefiting a community rather than a small group or individual. Examples include such things as environmental projects, food and clothing drives, construction projects, ramps for elderly, clean ups, beautifications, after prom, etc.

Advocacy – this is citizenship. These projects allow students to have a voice and use talents to solve community issues. Students may have performed direct or indirect service and recognize a greater need about which they are passionate and desire to change a situation. Examples might include lobbying, petitioning, presentations, surveys, speaking out on issues.

Once the organization has been chosen and the specific project determined the activity may be performed. The experience will be the determining factor in deciding whether the student will come back to volunteer in the future. Organizations will attempt to focus on this as an educational learning experience for students and seek to make the activity as rewarding as possible.

REFLECTION

The third component is **REFLECTION**. Reflecting enables the student to understand the important of the service experience. Several methods of reflection can be used to study the results of the service project and should occur throughout the activity.

1. Students may keep a journal, digital scrapbook or hardcopy scrapbook of activities performed.
2. Group discussions after the project to discuss the results of the project upon completion.
3. Write an essay that addresses how the Service Learning experience was completed, what was learned, and how the experience affected those persons involved, including the student.

VALIDATION/TRACKING FORM

MIDDLE SCHOOL:

Students may desire to perform individual projects in addition to curricular program. He/she must fill out validation/tracking forms to get credit for these hours. Forms may be submitted to Service Learning teachers or the main office. These additional hours will be sent to the high school with the student's records. These hours only count for meritorious recognition, not required hours.

HIGH SCHOOL:

At the high school level, students will complete curricular component and an additional fifteen hours of independent service that they select. Validation/tracking forms must be turned in within four months of the activity. Students should complete the form and then deliver the paperwork to the specified individuals/organizations. Parents and organization supervisors should never fill out the student portion of these forms. The individual signing off on the form should never do so if the form is not completed properly by the student.