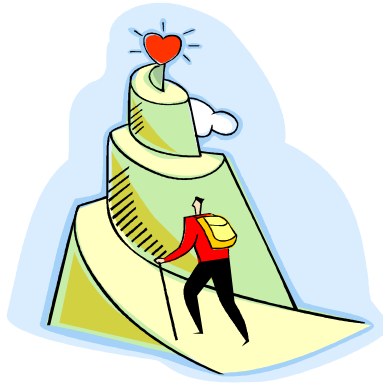


Creating High-Performing Schools Through Service-Learning



2004

A Service-Learning Trail Guide

A joint publication of



Colorado Department
of Education



National Center for Learning
and Citizenship



Education Commission
of the States

with support from:



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William J. Moloney
Commissioner of Education

Roscoe Davidson
Deputy Commissioner

Dear Reader:

Thank you for your support of Colorado's classrooms, schools and communities. The fact that you are reading this introductory letter tells me that you want to know more about how service-learning can be used to engage local communities and schools on behalf of our young people. Here is what you will find in the pages that follow:

1. A description of service-learning and a summary of the extensive research on the results of high-quality service-learning programs. This section also summarizes the links between service-learning and high-performing schools and explains how service-learning works as a strategy in accountability reform. It provides links to resources and more in-depth analyses of state requirements and the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001
2. Specific descriptions of how the service-learning process can best work at classroom, school, district and community levels. This section contains snapshots of service-learning in action at all of these levels for you to use as landmarks in your own service-learning implementation
3. An extensive resource listing of guidelines, curriculum and assessment materials, and other materials to help enhance young people's civic knowledge and skills through service-learning activities. This section includes worksheets and other tools that you can use to design and carry out service-learning efforts that are best suited for your local schools and community.

This is a challenging time for young people to grow up. We have high expectations for what all students must learn, and there are many complex issues to be resolved in every community. Service-learning is an effective and engaging way to enhance our young people's civic understanding and skills while closing the achievement gap.

Sincerely

William J. Moloney, Ph.D.
Colorado Commissioner of Education

How To Use This Service-Learning Trail Guide

This trail guide is written for educators, community members and youth who are interested in creating healthy schools and communities through service-learning.

Many Coloradoans are familiar with printed trail guides. Trail guides for hiking typically consist of:

- A **trail description**, which describes the hike's destination, its mileage, what its distance and difficulty level are, and the types of scenery and wildlife you can expect to encounter. Is the hike right for you, given your fitness level and your interests?
- **Maps and landmarks** to help you figure out where you are relative to your destination, and tell you how to get there. How do you know where you are? Which direction do you need to go?
- **Snapshots** of the surrounding terrain so you can recognize what it looks like.
- **Lists of supplies you'll need for the hike** and places where you can get **extra help**. Do you have the right kind of equipment for a given hike? If not, where can you get it?

This trail guide is organized around the same concepts. Our **trail description** defines service-learning, summarizes the research about it and examines how it works as a strategy to meet accountability requirements. Our **maps and landmarks** section describes common steps for implementing service-learning. It also customizes the view you might have depending on whether you are based in a **classroom**, a **school or district**, a **local community**, or at the **state or national level**. Each section provides **snapshots** as well, to illustrate service-learning in action. These are provided by service-learning practitioners throughout the state. Finally, we provide valuable **supplies** for putting service-learning into practice locally (like needs assessments), as well as a list of service-learning **resources**.

CHAPTER I – Trail Description



This chapter describes the terrain of service-learning.

- **What is service-learning?**
- **What does the research say about service-learning?**
- **How does service-learning support high performance?**
- **Who supports service-learning?**
- **How can service-learning encourage good citizenship?**
- **How does service-learning support accountability?**

What is service-learning?

Coloradoans, along with the rest of the country, want to ensure young people meet with academic and vocational success. Academic achievement and career readiness are only a part of the picture, however. It is clearer than ever that young people benefit from more than just academic opportunities from their schools and communities. Although they support high academic standards and clarity about results, most parents, political leaders and educators believe schools must attend to more than academics. This is where service-learning comes in. National polls show widespread support for the idea of involving students in community service (Roper Starch Worldwide, Inc. 2003), and service-learning is offered by schools in all 50 states (National Center for Education Statistics 2003).

Service-learning is several things:

- A ***philosophy*** that young people are a great community resource, and that it is the community's responsibility to help young people become democratic citizens who can contribute knowledgeably to community life.
- An ***education reform model*** that creates school and community partnerships. These partnerships both improve academic learning and help create safe and civil learning environments in and out of school.
- A form of ***contextual learning*** that bridges academics and citizenship. Students practice civic skills by applying what they have learned in school to real community needs. Service to the community is combined with in-depth student learning in a way that can really benefit students, schools and communities.

Since high-quality service-learning programs are based on authentic community needs, they are as diverse as the communities they serve. They can involve classrooms, entire schools or organize the work of whole school districts.

Service-learning can be used to enhance a particular discipline such as mathematics, writing, reading, social science and language. But its use requires careful planning. It may not be appropriate for all educational experiences – for example, when students are learning the basics of sentence structure or the rules of multiplication or division. But well-designed service-learning activities can deepen learning and foster higher-order thinking skills by providing students with opportunities to apply their learning to a challenging situation or problem in their community.

The table on the next page illustrates different ways in which service-learning can be integrated into school and district culture, and the resources required. Service-learning's uses range from single units in individual classrooms to an overarching expectation in school culture. Service-learning also can be used to support extracurricular and co-curricular activities.

Approach	Description	Resources Needed
Classroom-based	Service-learning is a part of learning in a particular classroom. The focus is on one or a few subjects, a teaching unit or a unit activity. When service-learning occurs in several different classrooms, classes may work individually or collaborate on projects, with each class taking on a different role.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trained teachers in service-learning methods • Project support for logistics and coordination • Adequate planning time for teachers and others involved • Tools and resources • Administrative support • Policy support • Public support
School-wide, curriculum-based	Service-learning is an intentionally planned part of the whole school curriculum. All teachers use service-learning as one of several teaching methods. There is a scope and sequence for service-learning that is integrated and aligned with the scope and sequence for all subject matter taught at the school.	
Part of school and district culture	Service-learning is a common expectation for all school participants – students, teachers, administrators, etc. “It is just what we do” is the way it is described. The notion of serving the community while applying academic knowledge is simply a natural part of completing the learning process.	
Student activities-based	Service-learning exists in opportunities for extra-curricular activities, student clubs, etc. The mechanisms to support student-initiated projects of small groups or individuals are generally outside the purview of classroom learning. Support is provided to help these students and/or small groups make relevant connections to their classroom subject matter.	
As a “targeted” strategy	Service-learning is used as a specific strategy to target various school needs and priorities. Such priorities might include drop-out prevention, literacy, character education, etc.	

Ideally, service-learning is a collaborative effort involving community members, educators and students. To improve the quality of service-learning implementation, it is important for the **community, the school and district, the classroom** and **youth** to organize and create meaningful experiences. The Venn diagram on the next page illustrates how the work of these different groups overlaps.

Quality service-learning

- Is standards-based and integrated into the curriculum
- Meets real community needs
- Is developed in collaboration with students and the community
- Allows students time to think, write, speak and reflect on what they are learning.



The power of service-learning is that students apply new academic skills and knowledge to problems in real-world settings. Service-learning, when done well, teaches students civic knowledge and skills, and enhances their civic engagement. It can help to develop good character and student responsibility.

Snapshots of service-learning in action

- In northwest Denver, service-learning personnel have coordinated a “Civic Dialogue” among participating service-learning Denver schools and a diverse coalition of area community groups that support education (among them Padres Unidos, Front Range Earth Force and the Regis University Center for Service-Learning). The groups are working together to improve education on multiple fronts.
- After extensive fires scoured the southwest corner of the state, students at Durango High School’s service-learning club developed a program for the local elementary students about the hazards of being in recent fire zones and about environmental regeneration.
- In the Poudre Valley, students found that homelessness was a problem. They participated in a 24-hour “alternative spring break” to fight homelessness. Students learned about the issue, raised funds for housing, spent the night outdoors and made policy recommendations on how local government could best meet housing needs. Some students have continued working with the city council to develop more comprehensive policies.
- As part of their Early Childhood Development unit, psychology students at Sterling High School observe small children in their homes or in preschools. Students apply what they have learned in class to what they have observed and share their reports with parents.
- In the Four Corners area of the state, students in an elementary classroom interviewed bilingual students and found they didn’t know what to do to have fun in the region. The class of 6- to 9-year-olds developed a bilingual guide of “Places to go in Cortez,” which was published by the Forest Service, filling a real community need and strengthening students’ reading and writing skills.

What does the research say about service-learning?

Even though its benefits are not easy to measure, research shows that service-learning can have a positive effect on students’ academic and civic learning. This holds true for students of different ages, cultural backgrounds and income levels.

Students report more satisfaction with their educational experiences when what they are learning in school allows them to address real-world problems. Parents and community partners in service projects report feeling reconnected to public education and to young people, and the community itself benefits directly from the service-learning project.

When putting service-learning into practice, educators, community members and school system leaders will often ask for more information on the research that supports service-learning.

Service-learning and academic achievement

Improving student performance on district assessments and the Colorado Student Assessment Program are important indicators of school and student progress. Researchers tracking the relationship between achievement and participation in service-learning programs show some good results.

Improved academic skills and knowledge have been traced to participation in service-learning programs. A number of studies in the 1990's found that students in high-quality service-learning programs either improved their performance or did better on a variety of measures than their peers who were not involved in service-learning (Weiler, LaGoy, Crane and Rovner 1998; O'Bannon 1999; Follman 1998). These measures include:

- Math and reading achievement
- Basic skills and problem-solving skills
- Grades and gradepoint averages
- Homework completion
- High school completion

Increased student motivation and school engagement were found to be related to service-learning participation. Students in service-learning programs tend to attend class more often, complete more classroom tasks and pose more questions than their traditionally educated peers (Dean and Murdock 1992).

Other benefits of service-learning

In addition to studies showing links to improved achievement, research clearly shows that service-learning has other positive effects that contribute to healthy and productive schools and communities.

Student social and civic responsibility is heightened through participation in service-learning. These students are more aware of community needs, committed to the idea of service, cognizant of political issues and capable of effecting social change than nonparticipants (Melchior 1999; Berkas 1997; Yates and Youniss 1996; Stephens 1995).

Student self-esteem and confidence are enhanced through service-learning's connections to peers, teachers, school and community. Students in service-learning programs have fewer behavioral problems and are less likely to engage in risky behavior than students in traditional programs (Stephens 1995; Yates and Youniss 1996; Follman 1998; Allen, Kuperminc, Philliber and Herre 1994).

Positive relationships between students and adults are enhanced through service-learning activities (Morgan and Streb 1999). Healthy school environments result from the trust that service-learning programs can build between students and teachers. This means **preventing school violence** is an

In Brief...

The emerging picture from the research on service-learning is students are:

- *More academically proficient*
- *More motivated to learn*
- *More committed to civic participation.*

They are more tolerant of themselves and others, and possess a strong sense of connection to their schools and communities.

Studies show they believe they can make a lasting and positive difference in the world and know the steps involved in doing so.

easier task when good service-learning programs are part of the equation (Education Commission of the States 1999).

Service-learning cultivates sensitivity and a corresponding **acceptance of cultural diversity**, especially when students have responsibility for all steps involved in projects, from planning through assessing the project's impact (Melchior 1999; Berkas 1997; Stephens 1995; Billig 2000a; Billig 2000b).

Student civic engagement over time is enhanced through participation. Students who participate in high school service-learning are more likely to vote and be engaged in community organizations than students without service-learning (Youniss, McClellan and Yates 1997; Yates and Youniss 1998).

Career preparedness is linked to service-learning experiences. Participating students acquire better job skills than nonparticipants. They also have more positive attitudes toward work.

Public engagement in education improves as partners in service projects become more involved in schools and more open to direct, purposeful contact with young people.

How does service-learning support high performance?

Research indicates that good service-learning programs have a positive effect on a number of factors related to student achievement. It is useful to examine the research on high-performing schools and districts to understand more about how service-learning programs can help to build high-performing systems.

Schools are typically considered high performing for the following reasons:

- They have high test scores on state and local assessments.
- They have high rates of student attendance, engagement and graduation.
- They have low dropout and retention rates.

Other indicators of school performance are the quality of teaching, learning and instruction, the quality of “special programs” such as art, music and theater, and the community’s satisfaction with the school.

Researchers have identified five core elements associated with high-performing schools. To improve school performance, it is important to have a shared understanding of how these elements work together in your own environment.

- **Student-centered learning**
This approach recognizes learning as **constructed, social, situated** and **context specific**. Each learner brings individual resources to the process of building his or her knowledge and understanding (Wilson and Peterson 1997). In high-performing schools, instruction is more student-centered (in which the student seeks solutions to problems without complete dependency upon an instructor) than teacher-centered (characterized by techniques such as teacher lecture and low-level cognitive tasks such as memorizing) (Scribner and Scribner 2001).
- **Learning-centered teaching**
The teacher’s **role is that of a coach**. He or she learns to inquire into students’ learning processes (Wilson and Peterson 1997). Schools support **ongoing professional development** on good instructional practice (Little 1997), and **staff development is organized around specific student and school needs**, based on analysis of student data.
- **Vision-based, collaborative leadership**
In high-performing schools, the central vision gives student learning the very highest priority (Clayton and Gomez 2001). The vision is widely shared, with different stakeholders

understanding their roles in achieving it. Leadership is collaborative and is effective in building support for the vision and working toward it.

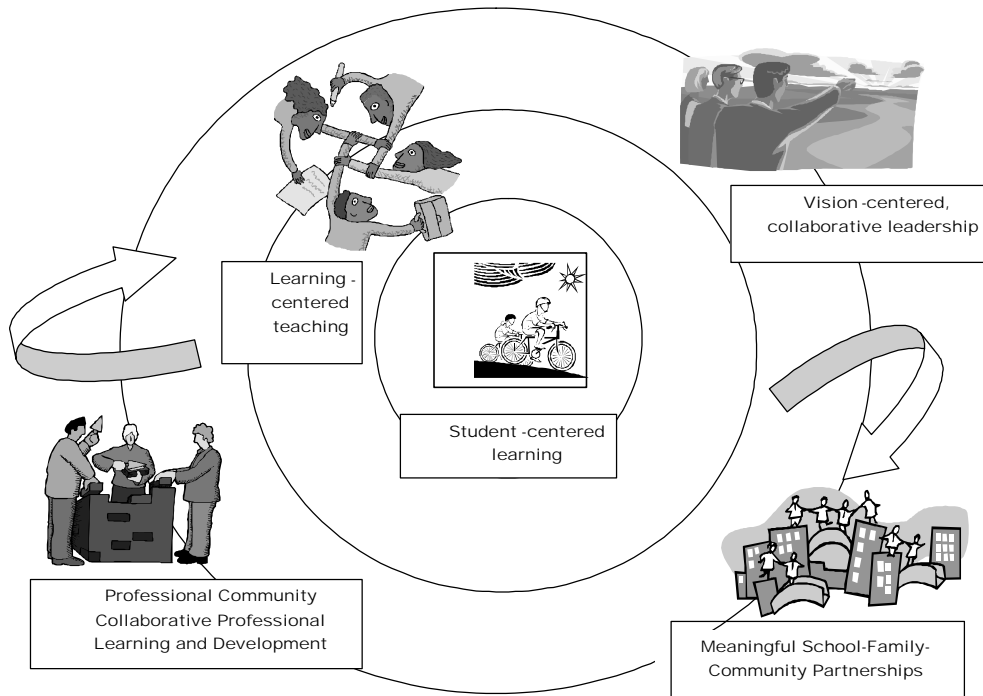
➤ **Collaborative learning and professional development**

Inquiry into student learning is the primary basis for professional development. Teachers are provided supports (such as common planning time and adequate in-service time) to work collaboratively around problems of practice. Staff development resources are used to provide feedback on strengths and weaknesses in school and student performance, and strategies for improvement (Little 1997).

➤ **Meaningful school, family and community partnerships**

Partnerships are focused on increasing student success in school and beyond. School-parent relationships are respectful of family cultural values, based on personal contact, foster communication and entail a welcoming environment for parents (Scribner and Scribner 2001). All stakeholders (parents, businesses, social service agencies, schools, community colleges and universities) acknowledge their responsibility for educating students and play a role in the effort.

CORE ELEMENTS OF HIGH PERFORMING SCHOOLS



Service-learning is a strategy you can use to help create high-performing schools. The research has shown service-learning's positive effect on a variety of school conditions. These conditions are directly related to the five elements of high performance. Below is a table showing specific common points between the research on service-learning and the research on high-performing schools and systems.

The multiple positive effects of service-learning can spark a sense of renewal throughout the school; in the community; and among students, teachers and other stakeholders. It can lead to a new sense of unity and purpose – a key element in a high-performing school (Billig 2000a; Billig 2000b).

Further, good service-learning practice can help to sustain each of the core elements of high-performing schools. For a detailed analysis of service-learning practices linked to each element, please reference Chapter 3, p. 65.

Additional resources on the research can be found in Chapter 3.

Service-learning programs and high-performing schools and districts

both are characterized by...

- High student motivation to learn and school engagement
- Positive and caring relationships among students – and between students and teachers
- Collaboration among teachers
- Leadership development for students, teachers, administrators and community members
- Positive parent-community relations
- Positive school-community relations and active partnership development
- Positive community perceptions about students, teachers and schools – and support for those students, teachers and schools.

How does service-learning support accountability?

The state and district policy emphasis today is on content standards, the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) and school accreditation. More than ever, educators are held accountable for student achievement. As important as the standards are in rethinking *what* students learn, service-learning provides important ways for schools and communities to rethink *how* students learn.

State-level education policies support service-learning as an instructional strategy in Colorado – for several reasons.

1. **Colorado school districts enjoy a great deal of *autonomy*.** Colorado's state constitution gives local school boards the authority to make most decisions about curriculum and instruction. This means schools and districts have the prerogative to determine when and if instructional strategies such as service-learning are appropriate for their own local communities.
2. **Colorado's academic standards focus on what students know and *are able to do*.** When service-learning is used as a teaching and learning method, it can address virtually any of the standards – and its power is it focuses on application of knowledge. The emphasis of Colorado's standards is on what students can do and not just what they know, so service-learning provides an especially good strategy for meeting Colorado's standards.
3. **Colorado's state assessment system *has open-ended items*.** The CSAP augments multiple-choice questions with constructed-response items. On some mathematics items, for example, students must both calculate an answer and explain how they arrived at their answer. Service-learning projects in which students must explain why they choose a particular solution to a community problem can help students develop the skills to address open-ended test questions.

Further, an important indicator of school and district quality in Colorado's accreditation system is "contextual learning." Service-learning is an example of contextual learning as provided by the Colorado State Board Regulations.

Given the clear connections between what we know service-learning does for schools and students and what research indicates is needed for improving school performance, there is strong support for using service-learning as a strategy for improving school and student performance.

For example:

- **At the classroom level**, service-learning activities based on content standards can provide students with authentic opportunities to apply their learning to real community needs. They also can include the community as an integral part of the learning process.
- **At the school level**, service-learning activities can be part of a strategy for meeting school-improvement goals, including better student performance on the CSAP, improved attendance and increased parent involvement. They also foster community partnerships and a safe, civil learning environment.
- **At the district level**, service-learning programs that support the district's academic standards and meet state accreditation requirements can help develop better relationships with the local community, while also supporting staff development and citizenship education.

A snapshot of standards-based service-learning in action

In 2003, the Poudre Valley School Board issued a formal resolution in support of standards-based service-learning. The resolution is reproduced in the box below. This resolution can serve as a useful model for other school districts that wish to implement service-learning in an accountable manner.

Resolution of the Poudre School District Board of Education, March 24, 2003

WHEREAS, service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy that connects youths to their school and communities by encouraging development and application of knowledge and skills through challenging tasks that meet real community needs while addressing academic content standards; and

WHEREAS, service-learning is a vehicle for delivering the standards-based curriculum in ways students find relevant and meaningful, motivates students to learn; and

WHEREAS, infusing service-learning instructional formats as an integral component of curriculum improves critical thinking, communication and planning skills, and helps students develop a strong sense of personal and social responsibility while enhancing instruction; and

WHEREAS, through service-learning experiences students begin to develop the kind of character values and skills that meet our communities' high expectations of public education, including knowledge of civics, government, and history; and

WHEREAS, service-learning has been shown to result in positive impacts on students' engagement in school community life, increases in academic achievement, increases in graduation rates, and enhanced youth civic responsibility and ethic of caring, and decreases in violent behaviors; and

WHEREAS, service-learning advances the District's mission to provide a safe learning environment while challenging all students to achieve the knowledge, skills and commitment to be fulfilled, productive members of society;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the Poudre School District Board of Education, hereby declare our support for service-learning as an integral strategy for meeting the educational goals of every school in the district and, we encourage the development of ongoing professional training, collaborative planning, leadership development among teachers and others, and strong administrative support of a district policy framework necessary to create and sustain a service-learning culture within the district and the community it serves.

Other resolutions modeled on this document also have been put in place in other Colorado school districts.

A number of educators express concern that if they incorporate service-learning into their teaching, it might not address the specific knowledge and skills on the state test. For a list of suggested reflection activities that support and reinforce specific skills tested on the CSAP, please reference Chapter 3, p. 58.

Service-learning is a strategy that can be used as states and districts work to comply with the provisions of the 2001 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act. For a summary of how service-learning relates to different sections of this legislation and a link to other, more detailed resources, please reference Chapter 3, p. 51.

Here are three frequently asked questions about standards, accountability and service-learning.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do I develop a service-learning curriculum that aligns with standards?

- Examine your current curricula and find areas that fit well with service-learning, using service-learning strategies where they make the most sense.
- Make sure everyone involved in developing curriculum has a basic understanding of the subject area and all appropriate teaching strategies, including service-learning.
- Implement service-learning gradually. Allow time for students to get used to the curriculum and learn from their discoveries. You will find that students learn much more by doing than by reading and studying alone.

How can I justify spending time on service-learning when I have so many content standards to cover?

- Learning is more profound when students are required to apply what they have learned to real-world situations (as in service-learning programs) than when many standards have been covered, often at a superficial level.
- Teachers can teach to multiple content standards through one service-learning experience.

Since the CSAP results are so important, aren't students better off staying in the classroom?

- Many of the CSAP items are performance-based, which means students need to apply their knowledge and explain their reasoning. These are skills that service-learning promotes.
- Educational outcomes other than CSAP scores also are important. Real-life learning experiences prepare students not only academically, but also socially for the world of work.

How can service-learning encourage good citizenship?

In 2003, over 50 respected civic education experts, policymakers and practitioners issued a national report titled *The Civic Mission of Schools* (Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, and Carnegie Corporation of New York). This report called for schools to reengage in preparing students for effective, principled citizenship. According to the report, American schools today offer far fewer opportunities for students to learn about their roles as citizens in a democracy than students received three decades ago. Limited budgets, fear of criticism or litigation among teachers for addressing controversial issues, and an increased emphasis on testing and accountability have contributed to this decline. At the same time, civic engagement, especially among young people, has declined significantly since the right to vote was given to 18-year-olds in the early 1970s. The report offers six recommended strategies to reinvigorate civic education, including service-learning:

- Provide instruction in government, history, law and democracy
- Incorporate discussion of current local, national and international issues and events in the classroom, particularly those that young people view as important to their lives
- Provide students with the opportunity to apply what they learn through performing community service that is linked to the formal curriculum and classroom instruction
- Offer extracurricular activities that provide opportunities for young people to get involved in their schools or communities
- Encourage student participation in school governance
- Encourage student participation in simulations of democratic processes and procedures.

Also in 2003, the Colorado Legislature passed a law requiring students to complete a course in U.S. and Colorado government for high school graduation. Section 22-1-104 of the Colorado Revised Statutes directs school districts to convene a community forum every 10 years to discuss adopted civics content standards, performance indicators and graduation requirements.

Colorado Statutes: Title 22, Education: General and Administrative: Article 1, General Provisions.

22-1-104. Teaching of history, culture, and civil government.

Statute text:

- (1) The history and civil government of the state of Colorado shall be taught in all the public schools of this state.
- (2) In addition, the history and civil government of the United States, which includes the history, culture, and contributions of minorities, including, but not limited to, the American Indians, the Hispanic Americans, and the African Americans, shall be taught in all the public schools of the state.
- (3) (a) Satisfactory completion of a course on the civil government of the United States and the state of Colorado, which includes the subjects described in subsection (2) of this section, shall be a condition of high school graduation in the public schools of this state.
(b) The condition of graduation described in paragraph (a) of this subsection (3) shall apply only to students entering their first year of high school on and after August 6, 2003.
- (4) (a) In an effort to increase civic participation among young people, each school district board of education shall convene a community forum on a periodic basis, but not less than once every ten years, for all interested persons to discuss adopted content standards in civics, including the subjects described in subsection (2) of this section, and in conformance with the plan to reexamine acceptable performance levels described in section 22-7-407 (2).
(b) Based upon input from this community forum, each school district board of education shall determine how the subject areas specified in this section are addressed when establishing graduation requirements.

Because the new statute does not specify the content of the required government course, it offers an opportunity for districts to use service-learning to help students understand how government works and how important public policy decisions are made.

In most civics courses, students learn about the structure of government, principles of democracy and the rights and responsibilities of citizens. But civics also should provide students with opportunities to learn how government provides services that meet citizens' needs, how citizens (including students) can influence the decisions public officials make and how they can take action when existing public policies do not meet citizens' needs. Service-learning is an ideal strategy for teaching these concepts.

Service-learning can involve students directly in addressing community problems and improving the community through activities such as community clean-ups, food drives, peer tutoring and other one-time projects. But if students wish to create lasting change in their communities, they will probably need to work with local officials, and they will need some understanding of how local public policy decisions are made. Students will need to learn who has responsibility for making rules or decisions about the issues with which they are concerned and how to access those officials. Students also will need to know how local public policy decisions are influenced by existing laws and decisions made at higher levels of government such as the state or federal government.

Service-Learning and Civics in Sterling

Sterling High School social studies teacher Joe Skerjanec worked with seniors in the class of 1999 to create a program called GETMAD (Get Everyone To Make A Difference) to improve school climate. GETMAD evolved into a service-learning program, and one of the first projects completed by students involved repainting the school's lockers.

According to Skerjanec, school-improvement projects like this one can be used to introduce students to school finance. The school finance discussion can, in turn, help students learn about the role of state government in supporting local schools and municipalities.

Service-learning and civic knowledge, skills and dispositions

Students can gain a great deal of content *knowledge* about civics and government through traditional classroom instruction, but *civic skills* must be practiced. Some of these skills, such as writing letters, debating issues or making presentations, can take place in the classroom. But the effectiveness of classroom exercises is limited because students know they are not real. In the classroom, for example, students do not have to worry much about making mistakes or having their arguments challenged by public officials or other citizens.

In contrast, when students are involved in projects that have real consequences for themselves, their families and friends, and when they know the community is watching, they work harder and learn more. Service-learning provides students with opportunities for “authentic learning” or problem-solving activities that incorporate “real-life questions and issues in a format that encourages collaborative effort, dialogue with informed expert sources, and generalization to broader ideas and application” (Christensen 1995).

Civic education should cultivate the knowledge, skills and dispositions (or attitudes) needed to be an effective, engaged citizen. Yet most civics and government classroom instruction emphasizes civic knowledge, with much less focus on skills and dispositions. Most state civics standards reflect a similar orientation.

Service-learning can provide a way to correct this unbalanced approach to civics instruction. In a recent review of the literature on service-learning, Billig (2004) concluded that when implemented properly, service-learning can have positive results for students, particularly in the domains of civic skills and dispositions.

Civic Knowledge, Skills and Dispositions

An effective citizen needs civic skills and dispositions, as well as civic content knowledge. Civic knowledge, skills and dispositions should build on and reinforce one another, beginning in early childhood, and be seen as approximately equal in importance. Many, but not all, of these competencies already exist in state and local standards for civics. They also can be fostered through both school-related and out-of-school experiences (in family or neighborhood). Therefore, it is important that schools and communities should work together to determine the civic competencies most important to them. Below are some examples of civic competencies a community might seek to cultivate among its citizens.

Civic-related knowledge (both historical and contemporary)

- Understanding of historical conflicts over the meaning of the constitution
- Understanding of the role of media and the press in a democracy
- Knowledge of the ways ordinary citizens can act and have acted in the past to create change
- Knowledge of local community assets, problems and important local actors and their connection to broader issues.

Cognitive and participative skills (and associated behaviors)

- Ability to understand, analyze and check the reliability of information about government from media sources and political communications
- Ability to articulate the meaning of abstract concepts such as democracy and patriotism
- Ability to express one’s opinion on a political or civic matter when contacting an elected official or media outlet
- Ability to envision a plan for action on community problems and to mobilize others.
- Dispositions (motivations for behavior and values/attitude)
- Patriotism and commitment to American democracy
- Support for justice, equality and other democratic values and procedures
- Respect for human rights and a willingness to search out and listen to others’ views
- Personal commitment to the well-being of others in the community and nation.

Service-learning and the Colorado Civics Standards

A service-learning project can be as simple as cleaning up a stream, visiting elderly residents in a nursing home or mentoring younger students. But limited projects like these, while certainly worthwhile, are unlikely to lead to any lasting change. An older student mentoring and tutoring a struggling younger student from a low-income neighborhood, for example, may serve as a role model for the youngster and may help him to do better in school. But without a teacher who seeks to help students understand the context of the problems they address, the older student may never understand the social and economic conditions that contribute to the academic difficulties of the younger student and others like him, or the public policies that allow such conditions to persist. If the student does not understand why the problem exists, he (and his teacher) cannot expect to solve the problem, nor to learn the skills necessary to solve other social problems.

Colorado Civics Standard 4 reads:

“Students understand how citizens exercise the roles, rights and responsibilities of participation in civic life at all levels – local, state and national.”

Standard 4.4 for grades 5-8 indicates that what students know and are able to do should include:

“explaining how participation in civic and political life can help to solve problems.”

One way to help students develop the ability to meet this standard is by providing opportunities to participate in civic and political life, and to try to solve real community problems. Service-learning can provide these opportunities.

On the other hand, a teacher could work with her class to study the lives of poor people, including historical figures and local community members who have overcome poverty. Students could learn about the effects and causes of poverty and the public policies and programs designed to assist poor people. Rather than tutor individual children on a short-term basis, students might work with the school district, local community members and government officials to establish a tutoring *program*, or to publicize and expand existing programs. This kind of service project would provide opportunities for students to apply and practice participatory and cognitive civic skills, and could help them develop the confidence they need to *continue* participating in public life and attempting to solve real social problems.

Following are a few examples of projects conducted by teachers working with Front Range Earth Force, a nonprofit environmental service-learning organization in Denver. These examples show how service-learning can help students develop civic skills and dispositions while reinforcing the lessons they learn in school.

Cole Middle School, Denver

Amy Winter's 7th-grade science class was studying water issues and decided to focus on non-point source pollution. The students stenciled storm drains with warnings about dumping household chemicals or car oil, conducted a household waste pick-up and educated residents about proper waste disposal. When the students learned that a state referendum dealing with water issues would be on the November ballot, they invited guest speakers to explain the issues. Based on what they learned, the students decided to work against the referendum.

A project such as this one could provide the context for a number of civics lessons. Students could learn the difference between referenda and initiatives, a distinction many adults do not understand. Students might study existing local ordinances against improper waste disposal. If they decide a particular ordinance is ineffective or too strong, they might attempt to have a new ordinance created or to repeal the existing one. This would require learning about local rulemaking and state programs and laws related to the issue, and might entail presentations to local officials, gathering signatures and more public education about the issues.

University Hills Elementary School, Boulder

Jeff Oliver's 4th- and 5th-grade class adopted a section of Skunk Creek, near their school. The students reported on bank erosion, nonnative vegetation, trash and development, organized a clean-up and maintained their section of the creek throughout the school year. Students monitored and recorded water quality and inventoried macro-invertebrates to develop a pollution index. Students researched existing local plans for a riparian corridor along the creek, as well as plans for development nearby, and made recommendations to the city regarding stream bank conditions and preservation.

This project provided opportunities for students to learn about how local agencies and community-based organizations work with one another and with state and federal regulatory agencies to protect natural resources. Because a nearby shopping center had plans to improve the area, students might have decided to learn more about how developers and property owners work with municipalities and community-based groups to determine land use, about the compromises that must be made among competing interests and about the roles individual citizens can play.

Below are some additional ideas for service-learning projects that could provide opportunities for civics lessons.

- ***Preventing tobacco or alcohol companies from placing billboards near schools***
Students may wish to support their campaign with public health statistics, so they must learn which agency or agencies keep such information. Students must study local ordinances regarding advertising and must determine which government agencies have responsibility for enforcing and/or changing these ordinances. Students also must learn about First Amendment rights to free speech and about protected speech. If they seek to change the law, they must learn how to propose such a change and how to gain public support for it.
- ***Ending child labor in developing countries***
Students compare child labor laws in the United States and developing nations, and study U.S. rules on imports. Such a campaign might lead students to try to limit demand for products produced by child labor through public education (which would require writing and public speaking skills) or by passing a local resolution (which would require an understanding of the workings of local government, petitions, initiatives and the ballot).

➤ **Preserving open space in Colorado**

Students learn about the amount of available public space in Colorado compared with that held privately, as well as how local, state and federal governments acquire and manage public lands through conservation easements and other means. Students learn about the environmental effects of different land uses and the rules that regulate such use. Students may learn the history of a particular tract of land by studying past uses, or they may study the origins of local, state and national public lands and parks programs. Students learn about the influence of different interest groups in utilizing or protecting land and how such groups are regulated.

In addition to the opportunity to learn about local, state, federal and international law and government, these examples provide students with opportunities to hone communication skills such as persuasive writing and public speaking, as well as research skills. These skills are useful not just in civics class, but in any academic discipline. These particular examples could provide students with opportunities to learn about advertising, public and personal health, international economics, property rights, conservation and the environment.

Many other lessons and disciplines could be linked to projects like these. In a project in Grantsburg, Wisconsin, for example, students wrote poetry and created artwork as they conducted water tests and cared for a nearby river. Similar curricular connections could be made to the open space project above. The child labor project might involve study of import and export figures, which could provide the basis for mathematics and statistics lessons. The billboard project could support lessons in media literacy.

A clear benefit of ambitious projects such as these, as opposed to simpler projects such as clean-ups or nursing home visits, is they provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate across disciplines and learn from one another. In addition, they offer many opportunities to meet state standards. Long-term projects offer opportunities for students and teachers at different grade levels to work together and reinforce lessons learned over time. Most importantly, by linking service-learning to civics, schools can help students develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions needed for effective citizenship.

Who supports service-learning?

Most decision making happens at the local level for service-learning initiatives. Many Colorado community leaders, students, parents, educators and school board members are outspoken advocates for service-learning. There are also important service-learning supports, however, at national and state levels.

The first federal service-learning legislation in 1990 created a commission to award grants to states, schools and community organizations to support service-learning. A 1993 law authorized funds for every state to incorporate service-learning into schools. In 2000, the Corporation for National and Community Service distributed over \$20 million through its Learn and Serve America program to support local service-learning efforts across the country.

The growth of service-learning in Colorado was marked in April 2001, when Colorado hosted the 12th Annual National Service-Learning Conference. Our state leaders, educators and youth joined Senator John Glenn and more than 3,500 other participants from around the country to exchange ideas and establish more solid networks among service-learning advocates.

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) provides statewide leadership in service-learning through its **Service-Learning Colorado** initiative. CDE provides service-learning resources, grants and networking opportunities for local educators, community members and students. Regional staff work with participating schools, districts and communities to develop commitment and investment in service-learning. See the acknowledgments page and chapter 3 for contact information of the regional service-learning representatives.

Vision and Goals for Service-Learning Colorado

Our vision is to have service-learning recognized and utilized by K-12 schools, community organizations and institutions of higher education throughout Colorado as:

- An effective method for meeting today's educational demands
- A force in education and community reform
- A vehicle for promoting civic responsibility and leadership among Colorado's youth.

To achieve this vision, we have developed the following goals and objectives, which represent an effort to simultaneously create top-down and bottom-up supports for Service-Learning in Colorado.

Goal #1. We will increase the impact of Service-Learning programs on youths, communities and schools in Colorado.

Objectives:

- 1.1 Increase the reach of Service-Learning programs
- 1.2 Improve the quality of Service-Learning programs

Goal #2: We will increase the impacts of Service-Learning on K-12 participants and their teachers.

Objectives:

- 2.1 Increase students' engagement in school (including academic achievement, attendance and graduation).
- 2.2 Increase students' civic competencies and skills in support of local and state academic content standards.
- 2.3 Increase curricular integration and assessment of student learning in support of local and state academic content standards.

Goal #3: We will create a climate of support for Service-Learning at the local and district levels.

Objectives:

- 3.1 Fund districts and schools to implement quality Service-Learning programs linked to state accreditation indicators.
- 3.2 Create Service-Learning Youth Councils.
- 3.3 Strengthen Community Partnerships.

In addition to direct support for service-learning programs and regions, Service-Learning Colorado offers a range of resources that can help you align your initiatives with state and local priorities. Links to these resources are provided in Chapter 3, along with a listing of recent recipients of Colorado service-learning grants.

Resources and events

- National Service-Learning Conference, www.nylc.org.
- Character Education Partnership's National Forum, www.character.org/eventsawards/forum.
- Global Youth Service Day, www.gysd.net.
- National Youth Service Day, www.ysa.org/nysd.

For a directory of national service-learning initiatives, please reference Chapter 3, p. 50.

Private and corporate foundations supporting service-learning efforts

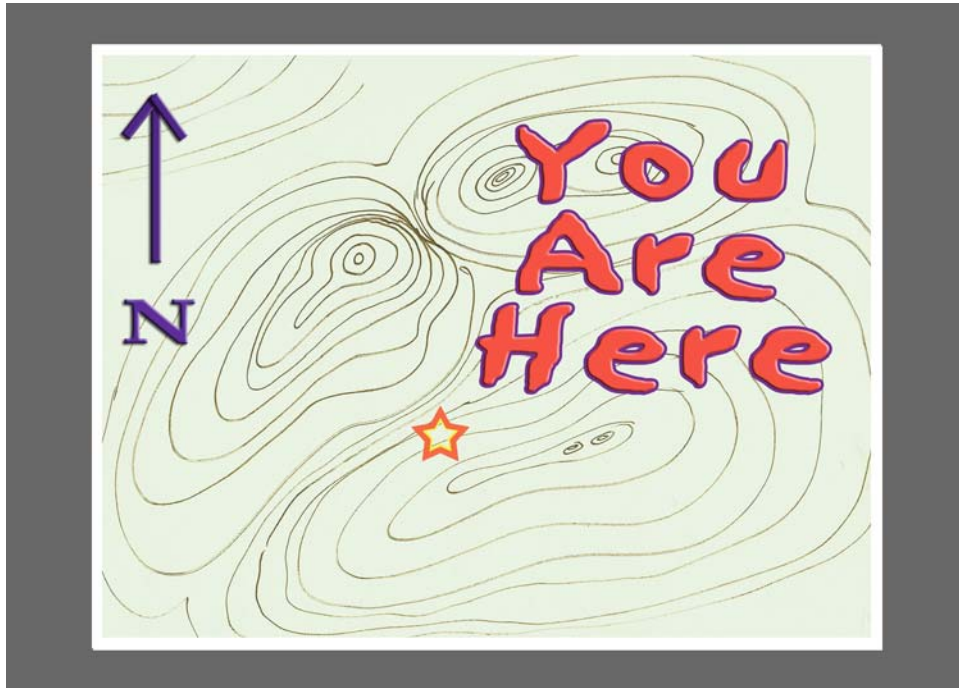
Nationwide:

- *The W.K. Kellogg Foundation*
- *Carnegie Corporation of New York*
- *DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund*
- *The Ford Foundation*
- *Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation*
- *Charles Stewart Mott Foundation*
- *Surdna Foundation*
- *State Farm Companies Foundation*

In Colorado:

- *The United Way of Grand Junction*
- *State Farm Insurance Companies (Good Neighbor Initiative)*
- *The Daniels Fund*

CHAPTER II – Maps and Landmarks



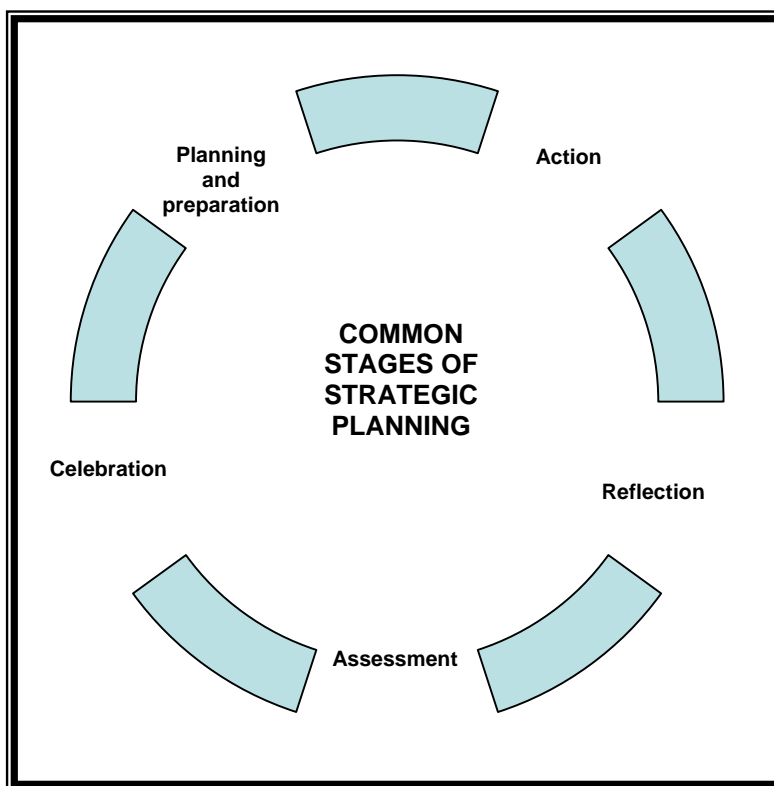
This chapter provides maps and landmarks. It is organized to help you recognize what service-learning looks like at different levels of the system – and as a guide to help you take action at each of those levels.

- **General processes**
- **Around your campfire: Your classroom**
- **The campground: Your school and district**
- **The environment around you: Your community**

General processes

Service-learning can be found in different sizes and shapes. It can look like a very small, short-term project in one classroom. Or it can provide an organizing principle for teaching and learning that plays out in clusters of classrooms, across several schools or even throughout an entire school district. Because every school and community is unique, local educators may initiate service-learning at a scale and in areas that make sense for their own situations.

There are common stages for project planning and implementation, however. These include **planning** (thinking it through), **preparation** (getting ready), **action** (getting things done), **reflection** (thinking, writing, talking about it), **assessment** (measuring what was gained) and **celebration** (spreading the word). These should take place from the classroom level on up to the district level.



This diagram is overly simplified; although they are portrayed cyclically here, many of the processes overlap and inform a number of the other processes – not just the ones that are next to them on the diagram.

For instance, one of the most important phases in this cycle is **assessment**, (which includes **evaluation**). The diagram shows assessment happening *after* the reflection phase and leads directly to dissemination of results. There are two important things to know about this, however:

- **Reflection** activities can play an important part in **assessing your progress**. For instance, your students' reflection assignments may do double-duty as assessments of how well they have

learned the content. Or reflection materials provided by teachers participating in an in-service on service-learning may be one piece of data used to evaluate the workshop's effectiveness. So reflection and assessment can – and often do – overlap.

- **Assessment** should take place throughout the process and should be incorporated into the planning process – whether that means a *teacher* planning how to assess what students have learned, or a district *superintendent* planning how to evaluate the implementation of a particular service-learning program. Assessment also should be included in the action phase; learning should be measured on an ongoing basis. Assessment results (including reflections) also can be used to celebrate the accomplishments of your service-learning initiative.

In a data-driven, self-adjusting system, assessment/reflection results also serve to inform ongoing planning and goal-setting strategies. Information garnered during these phases of the work help people to gauge what is working and what is not. This feedback also helps people understand how quickly they are making progress toward their goals and can therefore help groups reevaluate how attainable those goals are. If the group's goals need to be adjusted, assessment data help provide a valid basis for changing those goals.

Before discussing the five phases of service-learning, we should consider one very important aspect of service-learning that should be part of every phase: *student voice*.

Student voice

One of the distinguishing features of service-learning – and one of the most difficult for many teachers – is the central role of student voice in the learning process. Service-learning is a strategy for teaching *and* empowering young people. For this empowerment to happen, students must be given multiple opportunities to make decisions and take leadership, and to learn from the consequences of their choices and actions.

While no responsible educator would suggest that students be given complete autonomy in deciding what to learn and how to learn it, teachers can carefully guide the choices students make, making sure students clearly understand what they are expected to learn from their service experiences. As students move from choosing among a relatively narrow set of project options to more complex decisions about strategies, partners and trade-offs, they build skills that will help them to become sensible consumers, responsible family members and effective citizens.

Naturally, students will sometimes make mistakes. It is up to the teacher to prepare students for the possibility that some aspect of their service project may not succeed. And it is crucial that teachers help students consider decisions before they are made and reflect on the consequences – whether positive or negative – throughout the life of the project.

While it is often difficult for teachers who use traditional teacher-centered practice to relinquish some of their authority in the classroom, many teachers are surprised to find that allowing students some measure of choice spurs the students to take ownership of and responsibility for their own learning. Many examples can be found in which academically low-achieving students – who are often resentful of adult authority – have taken the opportunity to prove their own responsibility through service-learning very seriously. The chance to make decisions and take leadership roles (with the support of the teacher and other adults) may provide a rare sense of success and control that keeps such students engaged in school. And for high-achieving students who may be bored in the classroom, the opportunity to lead others can have a similar effect on school engagement.

Planning and preparation

Planning and preparation consist of four different steps:

1. **Goal-setting.** Generally, high-performing schools are characterized by shared goals that focus on improved student learning and achievement. Service-learning also should have student learning as

a goal, combined with the additional goal of addressing community needs. All stakeholders (community representatives, educators and students) need to be clear about the group's goals. They need to understand their roles in the process and be willing to fulfill those roles.

2. **Assessing current needs.** Groups should use some sort of needs assessment to determine goals and strategies. Several sample needs assessments are provided in Chapter 3, pp. 60. One place to start is within schools, and students often begin assessing community needs by surveying other students. Youth councils in some Colorado schools and districts have conducted numerous surveys to track ever-wider segments of the local population, and to assess changes over time. While service projects should be based on genuine needs, an extensive needs assessment may be difficult for some school systems. Teachers and students, however, should do enough research to be confident that their project activities will be of genuine value to the community.
3. **Strategic planning.** Based on an evaluation of the needs assessment (indicating where you are) and your goals (where you want to be), the next step is to develop a collaborative strategy about how to get there. Again, all stakeholders should be involved and specific benchmarks and actions set against a clear timeline. Evaluation and assessment measures that examine progress toward the goals should be included in the strategic plan.
4. **Thinking about the skills and knowledge the group will need to carry out the plan** – and working to make those accessible, either through training or bringing in outside partners and other resources.

Action

Action involves implementing the plan and depends on involvement by all stakeholders. This could mean the following types of things:

- **For teachers and students** – providing classroom instruction to ensure students have the requisite knowledge and skills; making assignments for project-related tasks and organizing student groups around tasks; helping students develop plans and a timeline for completing the project; and helping students develop products that meet the community needs and demonstrate their learning.
- **For administrators** – finding resources to support the service-learning project; rescheduling courses to support student time in the community; allocating professional development resources and offering in-services so teachers can improve their use of service-learning instructional strategies; coordinating a listserv or a Web page for local service-learning participants to facilitate communication.

Reflection and assessment

Reflection provides opportunities for students to clarify what they are learning beyond the academic goals of the project. All participants should engage in reflection, including teachers, community members and administrators. A few examples of reflection include:

- Students submit a feature to the local newspaper about a particular service-learning project. The story could include interviews with community members, students and teachers, and focus on what happened; its significance to the community; and what the next steps will be, based on the findings.
- Students work together in the classroom to prepare presentations to the school board and recommendations to the city council based on what they learned while conducting a project in the community.

Assessments of student learning can include student test scores, as well as results of teachers' pre- and post-project assessments; student portfolios; performance assessments; and other, more traditional pencil-and-paper assessments such as essays and reports.

Materials gathered in the assessment/reflection phases can be used both for dissemination about the program – and to inform ongoing planning – in case mid-course changes are needed.

Celebration

Celebration includes taking the evidence collected earlier in the process and using it to show the progress that has been made. This helps to build momentum for continuing the project. There are many ways to celebrate students' accomplishments, including:

- Recognition at public community meetings such as school board meetings or local business meetings
- Media coverage about service-learning projects
- Celebratory awards ceremonies, breakfasts or other events that, on their own, are newsworthy events.

Service-Learning Colorado has developed an implementation checklist that is helpful for service-learning programs whether they are designed for one classroom or many. A copy of this resource is on p. 52 in chapter 3.



Around your campfire: Your classroom

Service-learning is a *teaching and learning method*. It is *not* content, but as an instructional strategy, it can be used to teach many content areas and address different standards. It has specific phases that are put into place as a cycle, beginning with *planning and preparation*. In each phase, teachers have opportunities to connect instruction to state content standards.

Phase 1: Planning and preparation

Unit planning should focus on:

- The standards and content that students need to learn (the ***learning or curricular goals***) and
- The ways in which students can demonstrate mastery (the ***service goals***) – for example, by making and distributing children’s books to the local homeless shelter.

Teachers, students, community volunteers and service recipients all can participate in this process. Keeping learning focused on these sets of goals ensures service-learning is integrated into the curriculum.

Needs assessments might involve content measures such as pre-tests (which show where students are relative to the ***learning goals***) and surveys of the school and/or the community (to identify the most useful ***service goals***).

To ensure young people are well prepared for the service they perform, it is important to plan carefully. This might mean they have already learned the skills and knowledge necessary for the project – or that its instruction needs to be included in the unit. For instance, you might want to use a service-learning activity that involves testing the local water supply as a wrap-up activity for students who have already been taught specific mathematical and science skills. Or you might include instruction of those skills as part of the unit, with service-learning activities designed to reinforce that learning. Further, regular opportunities for assessing progress toward both the curricular goals and the service goals should be incorporated into the plan.

Excellent ideas for service-learning projects in specific content areas are provided in Chapter 3, p. 54. Additionally, the CDE Web site provides examples of units that are directly linked to the standards. At www.cde.state.co.us/action/index.htm you will find links to standards-based curriculum written by teachers from around the state in every content area. Looking at what others have done is an excellent way to get new ideas and get organized for a new service-learning project. You also can post your own service-learning lesson plans and curriculum on this site to help others link service-learning to standards. A collective effort to share high-quality curriculum helps establish service-learning’s value in meeting Colorado’s standards.

A variety of online data sources are available to help you identify community issues to address with students. For links to resources for local information, please reference Chapter 3, p. 50. These include data about Colorado water quality, pollution indicators, wildlife and environmental indicators, and information about how youth in Colorado are doing on indicators of health and well-being.

For other service-learning resources you can use in planning your instruction, (e.g., best practice guides and examples) please refer to Chapter 3.

Snapshot – Planning and Preparation

- At Skinner Middle School in Denver, one project was initiated by a policeman who noticed that traffic was going too fast outside the school. Teachers turned the issue over to the service-learning students, who conducted several needs assessments, including a survey of the student body about traffic violations. They also counted traffic violations that took place in the street outside the school. The students mounted a petition drive and recommended the city install a four-way stop and make the street one-way. The city did install the four-way stop but did not make the street one-way due to opposition from a church on the street.

Phase 2: Action

Youth leadership is a hallmark of effective service-learning. This means while teachers and community partners provide guidance, students identify community needs, brainstorm strategies for addressing the challenges they identify and evaluate the effectiveness of their efforts.

These actions need to challenge students. To meet the goals, students should have to develop in new ways. These could include learning to write their own work plans, learning to work in teams, and organizing their own jobs and materials – skills that are not necessarily strengthened in a traditional classroom setting.

Youth leadership does not happen by chance. Student-centered teaching practices are the key to building students' sense of ownership and investment. Structuring classroom and community activities in ways that strengthen youth leadership takes practice and support. But it is possible – and rewarding – for adults to rethink their roles and practice new ways of organizing teaching and learning activities.

Snapshot – Sample Actions that Require Students to “Stretch”

Learning goals: Science, Math and Technology Standards – Design and Technology

Designing Solutions: Students use technological/engineering processes to design solutions to problems.

Service goals: Design a product that improves the quality of life for students with intensive special needs (ISN); provide substantial contact between ISN and non-ISN students; increase awareness and appreciation for the challenges disabled people' face.

- 1) In groups, research problems ISN students face at our school: meet the two students and their caregivers, learn about their lives.
- 2) In the group, identify a problem to be addressed; agree on this problem definition.
- 3) Research scope of problem (how many others have the same need) using U.S. Census and ADA data via Internet.
- 4) Research existing solutions (what has already been done to address this problem) using print, electronic and interview sources: U.S. Patent Office Database, commercial Web sites and catalogs, ISN caregivers.
- 5) In the group, set “specifications” (things a good solution should have); identify “alternatives” (i.e., various possibilities); analyze information and choose best solution, using a problem-solving matrix.
- 6) Build and test at least 2-3 successive prototypes, starting with cardboard model and ending with full-scale prototype.
- 7) Present and defend prototype before community panel.

Source: *Instructional Best Practices Guide for Service-Learning*, Community Works Press, 2000.

Note: Whenever possible, service-learning projects should involve service recipients in assessing their own needs and finding solutions. This will help students avoid thinking of those they help as “charity cases” who are unable to help themselves. It also will increase the likelihood that students’ understanding of the problem and proposed solutions are appropriate. Finally, it will help students learn to interact respectfully with people whose lives are significantly different from their own.

Phase 3: Reflection

Reflection is the process of thinking, writing and speaking about our experiences and making meaning of them. Reflection occurs naturally for all human beings and is the key to learning new things. Different stakeholders participate in reflection, and it serves two main purposes in service-learning:

1. To support student learning by fostering the connection between the service and the curriculum. When students apply the curricular knowledge they gain, it is learned more effectively when they have the time to think, talk and write about what happened.
2. To evaluate how effective the service is and to make decisions about what might be done differently.

Reflection should be ongoing throughout the service-learning experience. Effective reflection helps ensure a powerful service-learning experience where students gain new knowledge, think critically and together solve problems.

Reflection means taking the time to think, talk and write about:

- *What is happening* during the project or program (**What?**)
- *What it means* and *how it connects* to school curricula and standards in-depth (**So What?**)
- How the knowledge and skills gained through service-learning can be *applied* to “real” local or global issues (**Now What?**).

When students are engaged in a meaningful reflection process that pushes them to make specific connections between what they know and what they are doing, opportunities for even more in-depth learning can occur. Further, school and community members learn more about how to improve their efforts by:

- Documenting what is happening (writing up the project or unit)
- Collecting people’s reactions (using surveys or interviews)
- Analyzing how well things are going (using other data such as student reflections and test scores).

Determining how much progress is being made by service-learning programs starts with asking questions and collecting data, which leads to the next phase: assessment.

Phase 4: Assessment

Students need a variety of opportunities to demonstrate they have mastered academic skills, acquired knowledge and made progress toward their service goals. Products generated through the reflection process play an important part in assessing progress.

To get started with the assessment process:

- Go back to the **learning goals** established during the planning phase and *think about the best ways to assess these goals*. Which goals can be assessed with a simple check sheet? Which require more elaborate measures?
- Take a look at **existing assignments**, tests, essays, etc. and *find ways to modify them* so they measure skills that link directly to the service-learning project.
- Develop or find **new assessments**, making sure students have authentic ways to *demonstrate their knowledge*. This means that assessments should be logically related to the project. If the project is developing an outreach program for a local community group, for example, one authentic assessment might be for students to design and publish a newsletter or brochure. If the project involves researching alternate highway routes, an authentic assessment might entail a written report and a presentation to county commissioners or the Colorado Department of Transportation. Rubrics should be developed for assessing student performance, so expectations are clear.

Assessment of the **service goals** can be very simple – deciding whether a project was completed or not – or it can involve surveys or other measures of satisfaction among service recipients or community partners. Teachers should help students decide whether they were successful in meeting their service goals and be ready to assist them if the goals need to be modified.

Students should demonstrate learning in a variety of ways. **Written assessments** can be balanced with **performance assessments**. Examples for each are shown below, and each can be tailored to specific service-learning projects.

Written Assessments

Research reports – reports on topics, handed in to teachers

Essays – opinion papers, interpretive essays

Tests – teacher-developed tests and external tests

Journals – on the **what?** the **so what?** and the **now what?**

Performance Assessments

Presentations – to community groups, school boards, etc. about the project

Performances – dramatic presentations and skits, original songs, concerts

News media – development of paper-and-pencil assessments into editorials, broadcasts and news articles suitable for a variety of media

Official documents – developing reports and other paper-and-pencil assessments into materials that can be used by external groups to inform decision making

Portfolios – of best student work, including reflection papers, presentations, etc.

A useful guide to designing content assessment for service-learning is *Service-Learning and Assessment: A Field Guide for Teachers* by the National Service-Learning and Assessment Study Group. For links to that and other assessment resources, including rubrics for evaluating performance assessments, please reference Chapter 3, p.48.

Service-Learning is a helpful teaching tool. It gives teachers a way to meet content standards and curricular objectives in innovative ways that engage students. For a rubric that evaluates specific dimensions of service-learning (how well a project actually meets community needs, is coordinated with the community, is integrated with academics, facilitates reflection, requires application, helps develop student caring and improves the quality of life for those served), please reference Chapter 3, p. 59.

Phase 5: Celebration and dissemination

It is important to celebrate accomplishments during a service-learning project, not just on completion of the project – especially for younger students. Students should be reminded of what they have learned and of the progress they have made in addressing an important issue or meeting a community need. Clearly articulating and reflecting on student growth and accomplishments can reinforce the importance of the work and increase the likelihood that students will continue to seek opportunities to serve their communities.

Publicizing student work and disseminating the results of the program shows the community that young people are valuable resources. When service-learning processes are made public, it helps more people understand how important school-community partnerships are for the personal, social and academic development of students who are, after all, community members and future leaders.

Snapshot – Celebrations of Service-Learning

- In Northwest Denver, community and school partners exhibit service-learning work at booths at the Northwest Coalition Fair. Projects get press in local newspapers (the editor is a big supporter of service-learning) and students coordinate other celebratory activities such as community nights at schools.
- In Larimer County, VC-First-Call sponsors National Youth Service Day in the community and has been recognized by Youth Service America as one of the top 10 sponsors of such activities. The local newspaper also publishes a biannual volunteer/civic engagement guide that highlights activities in the area.



The campground: Your school and district

At the school and district levels, service-learning can bring teachers, administrators, students and parents together around projects and common learning goals. Education leaders are looking to service-learning to help them meet their district and school-improvement goals – including better student performance on the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP), increased attendance and increased parent involvement.

When service-learning is adopted as a school-level strategy, it strengthens the efforts of individual teachers. This is partially because of the rich opportunities it provides for interdisciplinary work. With a team of teachers implementing a project, it is possible to address multiple content standards in an integrated, real-world manner. In the example provided in the following pages, you can see how the project on “food as a commodity” addressed activities in math, science, language arts, civics and other content areas.

When it is adopted at the district level, service-learning can foster a whole new set of cross-age work – utilizing high school students to tutor or mentor middle and elementary school students, for instance. A districtwide approach also can allow more district resources to be leveraged in support of service-learning. Districtwide in-services might be offered, or a district could adjust the master schedule to allow longer blocks of time for project-based learning, for example.

Systemwide service-learning programs (whether the system is defined as the **school** or the **district**) should include the following essential elements:

- Clearly articulated **service goals** that address a genuine community need
- **Learning goals** for youth that support the district’s academic standards
- **Structured reflection activities** that allow young people to talk, write and problem solve about their service-learning experiences
- **Assessments of student learning** that address both service goals and learning goals
- **Strong youth leadership** and youth voice in all aspects of the program
- **Organizational support and commitment** to service-learning, with explicit connections to the school and district mission and goals
- Articulation of the role service-learning will play in meeting **State Accreditation Requirements**
- **Professional development and training** that furthers the development of quality service-learning practices among staff, youth and community members.

About Professional Development for Service-Learning...

Professional development for teachers is key to support an ambitious standards-based service-learning program. According to experts in the state, schools and districts need to make the following investments in professional development for service-learning to be effectively implemented.

At the minimum, teachers need:

- Eight to 16 hours of professional development, which includes the philosophy of service-learning *and* opportunities to apply what they have learned
- Work in that time on how to facilitate student reflection
- Professional development that models the service-learning process – or that is as experiential as possible.

Ideally, teachers need:

- At least 2 to 5 days of professional development as described above
- Teacher compensation and education credit for the training
- Teacher participation in an authentic service-learning project – as a learner, which could be through an alternative spring break program or an add-on week prior to school in the fall
- An on-site (school-level) service-learning mentor for ongoing coaching and support throughout the school year
- Enough other teachers participating so the school can muster a “critical mass” of service-learning teachers to support a learning community.

Why is professional development important?

- Teachers and schools are facing accountability pressures that encourage them to focus primarily on literacy and math. In fact, in some districts, three-hour literacy blocks are mandated. For unprepared teachers, this can mean service-learning will be neglected. In Northwest Denver, service-learning coaches report that, where they have a relationship with the school literacy coach, teachers have a greater understanding of how to integrate service-learning into the literacy block. They are less likely to narrow the curriculum and more likely to teach civics, social studies and science in meaningful ways through service-learning.
- Youth leadership and ownership is an important part of service-learning. In this model, teachers provide resources and some structure, and students direct the work. But this type of model can be threatening to traditional teachers, particularly without adequate training. When service-learning is put into place as a *pro forma* requirement, it is generally unsuccessful. In Grand Junction, such a requirement led to a community service requirement that had little to do with education. Successful service-learning teachers report that, while letting go – and possibly letting kids’ projects fail – is frightening for the teacher, the payoffs in student learning and engagement are tremendous.

To examine how much support is available for school and district service-learning efforts, it is helpful to use a general checklist, provided on the next page.

School and District Checklist

- Is service-learning incorporated into the vision and goals of your school and/or district?
- Is service-learning included in your school or district accreditation plan?
- Is service-learning incorporated into your school or district professional development plan?
- Are teachers supported to do service-learning through ongoing training, technical assistance and planning time?
- Are funds allocated at the school or district level to support service-learning?
- Do hiring practices support the recruitment and retention of effective teachers that are trained in service-learning methodology?
- Does the school board support service-learning?

After you have assessed the general scene, there are a variety of other measures that you can use to focus your work. A sample of these are in Chapter 3. They include:

- **Shumer's self-assessment for service-learning** (a useful guide for evaluating purposes and goals on a variety of levels) – on p. 62.
- A **Principal Inventory and sample surveys** developed by the Northwest Denver Youth as School and Community Organizers Partnership (YASCO) office to assess school-level support and awareness of service-learning – on p. 63.
- A **district-level self- and peer-assessment tool** developed by Service-Learning Colorado on p. 60.

Snapshot – A Sample Service-Learning Project

Thematic unit: *Food as a Global and Local Commodity*

Inquiry question: “How does food affect human existence on a global and local level?”

Grades and students involved: 400 K-12 students

Description of unit:

In a small Colorado town, elementary, middle school and high school students explored the issue of “food as a global commodity.” The students examined the topic in an interdisciplinary way.

- In **social studies**, students explored the various types of food grown and eaten around the world. This led to an examination of economic, cultural and political forces that affect the availability and trade of various food crops.
- **Math** lessons involved students in calculating and graphing these food trends.
- **Science** classes studied habitats, plant science and the human digestive system – including how the food grown and eaten in various parts of the world affects the health of the people and land.
- Lessons in **geography** taught students to use maps, globes, and computers to interpret data on people, places, and environments, as well as concepts relating to how economic, political and social processes interact to shape and change human populations.

After examining food issues on a global level, students studied food as a local commodity. Students visited local farms, distribution warehouses, food cooperatives and soup kitchens, and studied questions such as:

- What types of food are produced locally, and how are they produced?
- How are crops distributed to local, national and international markets?
- What are the food consumption patterns in our community?
- What are the political and economic issues related to food in our community?

In order to address the most pressing issue identified – the inequitable distribution of food and the resulting inadequate nutrition among low-income people – the students decided to build a community garden behind the elementary school. A portion of the produce grown would be given to the local homeless shelter; the rest would be sold at the local farmers’ market with proceeds going toward maintenance of the garden and distribution of the food.

The garden was a community-wide project with local businesses donating materials, time and expertise. Parents and other community members (including residents of the homeless shelter) played an active role in building and maintaining the garden as well as assisting with the selling and distribution of food. Various teaching methods were employed by teachers and community members that included cross-age, cross-community tutoring and collaboration (e.g., high school students presenting information to younger grades as well as to the community at city planning meetings).

The unit included the following topics and activities (a partial list):

- **Math:** Measuring, calculating, etc., for building the garden; money management; business projections and predictions.
- **Science:** Analysis of constituents of local soil and most effective growing practices; use of garden as a “learning laboratory” for investigating hypotheses related to photosynthesis, plant growth; and so forth.
- **Language Arts:** Writing letters to procure donations from local business and to voice concerns to legislators about local water laws; writing newspaper articles to document and promote the garden across the community; drafting business proposals and reading literature relating to food, farming; and so forth.
- **Civics:** Exploring principles of democracy and how they affect food issues in the community; examining how functions of local governmental agencies and how water laws impact local food availability.
- **History:** Examining the history of farming in the area and the town’s transition from mining to agriculture.

Other activities addressed content in the visual and industrial arts, P.E., music, and foreign languages.

Service-Learning and Assessment: A Field Guide for Teachers

National Service-Learning and Assessment Study Group



The environment around you: Your community

For service-learning to thrive at the school or district level, teachers must be supported by their administration and the community. People of all ages are looking for opportunities to make a difference in their communities.

Maybe you have already done service-learning projects and want to build on them to have a broader impact in your community. School district and community members, youth and school faculty can broaden their service-learning initiatives if they are all willing to set aside time to focus on how to take long-term action together. A common approach is to use a structured process that allows all voices to be heard and that generates a common understanding of community issues that can be helped by service-learning.

As noted above, many projects get started using a survey or some other type of needs assessment. Talking about the survey and the results also helps to generate different ideas about how to proceed. The needs assessment also can be re-administered later to

see how much progress you have made. One resource is Operation Healthy Communities (OHC), a regional nonprofit that is partnering with the Service-Learning Initiative of Southwest Colorado (S-LISWC). OHC provides training and technical assistance in the areas of community needs assessment and asset mapping. A link to their project is provided in Chapter 3, p. 49.

Targeting Community Needs and Building Assets

In carrying out service-learning projects, it is important to ask these questions:

- How will this project or effort help the community?
- Will important community issues or challenges be addressed?
- Can assets in the community, of all kinds, be mobilized to help?

By answering these questions first, before starting the actual service-learning project, you can elevate your work from being an isolated act of service to one that has greater impact.

The Engagement Continuum (Chapter 3, p. 68) is another useful tool for developing strategies for moving the various groups (youth, educators, administrators, community and policymakers) from “awareness” of service-learning to “investment” in service-learning.

Every community is unique. Spend some classroom or school time specifically discussing what your community is like. Identify which individuals and organizations in the community have already established connections with particular schools and classrooms. Try to figure out what will be the most difficult tasks in your particular community.

- In a small community, sometimes it is easier to figure out what needs to be done and what is already being done (and by whom). The difficulties may be in trying to break with tradition or to

raise issues in a new way when people know one another well and have always interacted in certain patterns.

- In bigger towns and communities, the challenge may be choosing what needs to be done. There could be a number of challenges – and a variety of potential partners from which to choose. But because there are more agencies, it may be confusing to deal with their overlapping missions.

Regardless of community size and complexity, people are more willing to participate in service-learning when you can begin to show a track record of success. That means student academic success and satisfaction within the community.

When you are identifying partners, remember that, while community-based organizations are often delighted to have people call and offer to help, they may at first look upon the offer as a matter of free labor. They may not have considered the importance of building learning opportunities into the service. (For further information on community partners, see Abravenel 2003.)

Also, consider the culture and focus of potential community partners in service-learning. The U.S. Forest Service's Division of Wildlife, for instance, has an education program of its own and local staff may well already have some experience with service-learning. The staff at a local nonprofit, however, may worry more about how to get services to clients and may never have thought about service-learning before.

A cycle of successful and well-documented service-learning projects can help build the reputation of your program and lead to long-term partnerships and institutionalization. Service-learning programs become greatly strengthened when they become part of regular district progress reviews and planning processes.

CHAPTER III – Supplies and Resources



This chapter provides supplies and resources you can use in developing your service-learning projects. It is organized around three different types of resources:

- **Links** to online resources about service-learning, including:
 - **Resources for classrooms**
 - **Resources for schools and districts**
 - **Resources for communities**
 - **Other resources.**
- **Worksheets and other tools**, which include pre/post assessments, sample needs assessments, evaluation rubrics and more.
- **Research references** used in the report.

Links

Resources for classrooms

Descriptions of and ideas for service-learning projects:

Curriculum exemplars – Vermont Community Works Online Resource Center
<http://www.vermontcommunityworks.org/exemplars/index.html>

Ideas for service-learning projects K-12 – KIDS Consortium
http://www.kidsconsortium.org/project_ideas.html

Planning resources and guidelines:

Instructional best practices for service-learning – Vermont Community Works Online Resource Center
<http://www.vermontcommunityworks.org/cwresources/cwtools/s-ltools/slbpract/instructbp.html>

Instructional Planning Guide – Vermont Community Works Online Resource Center
<http://www.vermontcommunityworks.org/cwresources/cwtools/s-ltools/SLInsGuide.pdf>

Earth Force Community Action and Problem Solving program (CAPS) –
<http://www.earthforce.org/caps.htm>

Directory of Colorado online data sources for specific communities:

The Colorado Children's Campaign online statistics resource, CLIKS – County- City- Community-Level Information on Kids.

The site provides data on a variety of indicators including children's health, poverty, population and education.

<http://www.aecf.org/cgi-bin/cliiks.cgi>

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment – Air Pollution Control Division

This site includes resources and status checks on hundreds of issues related to weather and pollution.
<http://apcd.state.co.us>

The Natural Diversity Information Source

This site provides maps and information about wildlife conditions and other indicators related to conservation efforts, including population trends, types of land ownership and miles of roadway.

<http://ndis.nrel.colostate.edu>

The Colorado Department of Natural Resources

This site tracks river quality and posts results regularly. <http://wildlife.state.co.us/riverwatch>

Resources for assessment:

Service-learning Planning and Assessment Guide – Vermont Community Works Online Resource Center
<http://www.vermontcommunityworks.org/cwpublications/slassessguide/slassessguide.html>

Center for Performance Assessment <http://www.makingstandardswork.com/ResourceCtr/index.php>

PALS – Performance Assessment Links in Science

<http://pals.sri.com/>

Chicago Public Schools performance assessment ideas and rubrics

http://intranet.cps.k12.il.us/Assessments/Ideas_and_Rubrics/ideas_and_rubrics.html

Performance Assessment Clearinghouse at the Assessment Resource Center

<http://arc.missouri.edu/pa/intro.html>

Compendium of Assessment and Research Tools for Measuring Education and Youth Development Outcomes

<http://cart.rmcdenver.com/>

Resources for schools and districts

Service-Learning Colorado home page

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/servicelearning/>

Service-Learning Colorado list of currently funded programs

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/servicelearning/coprograms.htm>

Service-Learning Colorado resources (includes links to service-learning curriculum tools, self-assessment measures, training materials and many others)

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/servicelearning/resources.htm>

Service-Learning Colorado district self-assessment linking civics and service-learning

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/servicelearning/download/ICL-Framework%20for%20Self-Assessment.pdf>

Colorado Department of Education "Standards in Action" (unit samples linked to Colorado standards)

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/action/index.htm>

Vermont Community Works Online Resource Center: Site Level Best Practices for Service-Learning

<http://www.vermontcommunityworks.org/cwresources/cwtools/s-ltools/slbpract/sitelevelbp.html>

Colorado grant opportunities – Colorado Department of Education

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/servicelearning/NOFA.htm>

Compendium of Assessment and Research Tools for Measuring Education and Youth Development Outcomes

<http://cart.rmcdenver.com/>

Resources for communities

Pathways to Healthier Communities – Operation Healthy Communities

This group reports, monitors and tracks a number of indicators of a healthy community across five counties in Southwest Colorado. Indicators address economy, social, culture, education, housing, youth and families, and environment. For this group's 8-page report, including ideas, examples and resources for student-led community development projects, contact Marsha Porter-Norton, projects consultant, Operation Healthy Communities, 970-375-0753. porternorton@frontier.net

<http://www.operationhealthycommunities.org/path.html>

Other resources

Service-learning research and evaluation:

CDE Service-Learning Evaluation Report, 2001-2002 – RMC Research Corporation

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/servicelearning/download/Service-Learning%20CO%20Evaluation%202001-02.pdf>

Overview of Service-Learning Research – RMC Research Corporation
http://www.cde.state.co.us/servicelearning/download/Overview_of_Research.pdf

Colorado education policy:

Specifics about Colorado accreditation guidelines
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeedserv/download/pdf/AccredGuidelines.pdf>

Summaries of Colorado’s school accountability reports
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeassess/SAR/index.htm>

Guidelines to Colorado’s education policy systems
Leadership Essentials for Colorado School Board Members at the Colorado Association of School Boards (CASB) website: www.casb.org.

Colorado’s approach to NCLB
<http://www.cde.state.co.us/cdeunified/nclb.htm>

Colorado regional service-learning coordinators:

Region	Contact Names	Telephone	E-mail
Denver Public Schools NW Quadrant	Josh Lazaroff	303.455.3615	jlazarof@du.edu
Northeast Colorado	Don Crow	970.332.4347	dcrow@wrayschools.org
Larimer County	Maddie Snow	970.495.0953 x201	msnow@firstcall-vc.org
Western Slope	Hanneke Nelson	970.243.9653	hannekew@bresnan.net
Southwest/ Four Corners	Brad Finch	970.533.9816	finch@gobrainstorm.net

National service-learning organizations:

Learn and Serve America: www.learnandserve.org
Learn and Serve America supports service-learning programs across the country by providing funding and training. It is a program of the Corporation for National and Community Service – which is now a component of the USA Freedom Corps.

National Service-Learning Partnership: www.servicelearningpartnership.org
The partnership is a member organization whose purpose is to orchestrate a comprehensive and broad-based approach to making service-learning a standard part of students’ education across the United States.

National Service-Learning Clearinghouse: www.servicelearning.org
The Learn and Serve America National Service-Learning Clearinghouse (NSLC) supports the service-learning community in higher education, kindergarten through grade 12, community-based initiatives and tribal programs, as well as all others interested in strengthening schools and communities using service-learning techniques and methodologies.

National Youth Leadership Council: www.nylc.org
The National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC) has been a pioneer in youth leadership initiatives since it began in 1983. NYLC was the first organization to champion a meaningful new vision of learning that

addresses a dual purpose – educating America's K-12 and college-age students through thoughtful and practical service, while at the same time benefiting the communities in which those young people live.

PeaceJam: www.peacejam.org

PeaceJam is an international education program, headquartered in Colorado, which brings Nobel Peace Prize winners together with young people to inspire a new generation of peacemakers to transform their communities, themselves and the world.

National service-learning initiatives

National Commission on Service-Learning: www.learningindeed.org/slcommission/

Under the leadership of Senator John Glenn, the National Service-Learning Commission examined the potential of service-learning to engage young people in their own learning and in the civic life of their communities, and issued a final report in 2002 that offered recommendations to help make service-learning available to all K-12 students.

Service-learning and No Child Left Behind

The 2001 No Child Left Behind Act – National Service-Learning Clearinghouse

<http://www.servicelearning.org/article/archive/26/>

This site provides links to a series of papers outlining service-learning's relation to the No Child Left Behind Act and various "title programs."

Partial directory of resources on high-performing schools:

Criteria for the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award process

www.quality.nist.gov/PDF_files/2002_Education_Criteria.pdf

Research on high-performance learning communities – The Learning Research and Development Center
www.lrdc.pitt.edu/hplc/hplc.html

Just For the Kids best practices

www.just4kids.org/bestpractice/index.cfm?CFID=69428&CFTOKEN=5698620

Worksheets and other tools

Six Easy Steps to Implementing Your Service-Learning Program – Service-Learning Colorado

I. Planning: “Thinking It Through”

Phase 1

- Bring your group together and talk about the meaning of “community” and “citizen.” A “community” can be as big or small as you want it to be (classroom, school, neighborhood, city, nation).
- Investigate what types of “services” are needed in your community. (What are pressing issues, problems, or areas of interest?)
- Brainstorm possible ways for your group to help -- what knowledge, skills, materials do you have to offer?
- Talk about (and write down) what your group hopes to get out of this project in terms of specific *Learning* and *Service* goals (See Action Plan). See if you can link the project to State Content Standards.

Phase 2

- Meet with members of the community who will receive your services (students you will tutor, folks in your neighborhood, etc.) and talk about your plans.
- Get clear about their “needs” and how they match what your group has to offer.
- Write up an **Action Plan** together so that everyone is clear about what is going to happen, when, and by whom (See Action Plan attached).

II. Preparation: “Getting Ready”

- Think about what skills and knowledge your group will need in order to carry out your service-learning program. This could include information and training about...
- ❖ *Service-learning* (what it is and how it works)
- ❖ *Knowledge of the group you are working with* (have teacher/director tell you about their classroom/organization, its mission, its rules, dress code, etc.)
- ❖ *Presentation skills* (know how to present your ideas in exciting ways).
- ❖ *Specific content knowledge such as math, science, local government or child development* (e.g., for tutoring, you would want to know best ways to interact with young children; for a garden project, you would want to know what kinds of plants grow best in Colorado).

III. Action: “Getting Things Done”

- Have your group talk about the importance of showing up to all scheduled activities – on time and prepared. This is good training for future jobs.
- Keep track of all service-learning activities with a simple recording sheet (See Action Plan).

IV. Reflection: “Thinking, Writing, Talking about It”

- Hold meetings to talk about how the service and learning are going (issues that arise, things that could be done better, etc.). This could be done through e-mail. Remember to check in with folks you are working with for their feedback.
- Keep a journal of your experiences. This is an easy way to keep track of what you are learning – and what the youths or adults you are working with (or presenting for) are learning. Your experiences can be used to write papers, reports, etc. for classes such as English, Psychology, Computers, Mathematics, and Science.
- Reflect with the people you are providing the service for – how do they think things are going?.

These reflection questions can guide your group meetings and journal entries:

To “Reflect”... means taking time to talk, think, write and act out what we experience – that is how “*experience*” becomes “*learning*.”

- **What** did you learn today?
- **So What** does it mean?...in terms of what you learned before or what you know from other experiences? (How does it connect to Content Standards?)
- **Now What** are you going to do with this new knowledge? ...what actions can you take, what changes can you make?

V. Assessment: “Measuring What Was Gained”

- Create ways of measuring whether your group met its *Learning Goals* (those developed during the Planning Phase) such as presentations, journals, reflective papers or products such as brochures or videos.
- Create simple ways for assessing what the people you are working with, or presenting for, have learned (did you have impact?).

VI. Celebration: “Spreading the Word”

- Dream up ways to get the word out to the community about your Service-Learning program and to celebrate all that was accomplished!

ACTION PLAN – Service-Learning Colorado

Overview

1. What unit or content area will you integrate service-learning into? How will service-learning be used to teach content and skills? (List specific Content Standards and Grade-Level Benchmarks.)

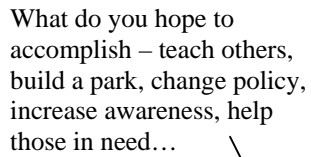
2. What “real” community need(s) are being addressed? (What process will you use to ensure needs are identified and not just assumed?)

3. How will you ensure that students take leadership roles in the project? What might some of those roles be?

4. What kinds of preparation will students need to carry out the project successfully? What skills and knowledge will they need?¹

¹ (e.g., specific math skills to build garden; firm grasp of literacy content in order to tutor younger children; knowledge of social, political, economic factors that contribute to homelessness)

What do you hope to accomplish – teach others, build a park, change policy, increase awareness, help those in need...



Outcomes

(what you hope will happen)

Service Goals	Proof
<p>What do you hope to accomplish?</p>	<p>What proof will you have of accomplishments?</p>
Learning Goals	Proof
<p>What do you want students to learn?</p> <p>I. Academic Goals (skills, content, standards)</p> <p>II. Social Learning Goals (e.g., collaboration, group problem solving, knowledge of community and your role as citizens)</p> <p>III. Personal Learning Goals (e.g., responsibility, job skills, self-esteem, better attendance at school, motivation)</p>	<p>How will you document what was learned? (Assessment)</p>

Timeline – Service-Learning Colorado

To help things go smoothly, be sure to plan what will actually happen, when, and by whom. This will avoid confusion later.

What? (What activities will take place?)	Who? (Who will organize and participate in them?)	When? (When will these activities take place?)

We, the undersigned agree to the tentative ACTION PLAN discussed above.

Signatures	Date

Service-Learning Recording Sheet
Service-Learning Colorado

Name of Service-Learning Group/Project: _____

Name (of person doing the service-learning)	Date	Time Spent (in hours)	Recipient(s) of services	What was accomplished?

Connecting Service-Learning and CSAP

Here are some suggested reflection activities that support and reinforce CSAP skills. While introducing these activities, it would be helpful to be explicit with your students about the activity and its connection to the CSAP.

1. **Putting things in sequential order:** Students take the elements of a story and arrange them in sequential order.

Possible activities: Put Earth Force's Community Action and Problem Solving Process in sequential order. List out all the things that need to happen in order to make your project successful. Create a list of the things that they need to do and then create a sequential timeline.

2. **Statement of Problem and Solution:** Students are able to identify the problem in the story and how it was resolved.

Possible activities: Ask students to talk about the problem that they were addressing and the solution that they came up with for their service-learning project.

3. **Similarities and Differences:** Identifying the similarities and differences between people, places, and things in a story.

Possible Activities: Ask students to reflect on how their service project was similar and different than what they expected. How was your elder partner similar and different from other elders that you know?

4. **The Characteristics of a Character:** Students choose one character in the story that is interesting to them, state what the person says or does, and then choose one word to describe the person.

Possible Activities: Students could choose one person that they worked with in the community and do the same type of activity.

5. **Making Predictions and Providing Support:** Student predicts what is going to happen in the story and provides support for her/his prediction.

Possible Activities: Students could be making predictions throughout the service-learning project.

6. **Writing a Story:** Students write a story using the writer's checklist.

Activity: Students could write a story about their service-learning experience using characters, setting, and story events.

7. **Describing a person, place or thing:** Students list facts from a story that demonstrate the characteristics of a person, place, or thing in the story.

Activity: Take an element from your service-learning project and have students practice this skill. For example, list two examples of what makes a xeriscape garden.

Service-Learning Rubric

Note to Students: Service-Learning is a teaching method that combines academic instruction, meaningful service, and critical reflective thinking to enhance student learning and civic responsibility. Use this rubric to evaluate your progress during your service-learning project, and once you've completed it.

	Strong Impact	Good Impact	Some Impact	Minimal Impact
1. Meet actual community needs	Determined by current research conducted or discovered by students with teacher assistance where appropriate	Determined by past research discovered by students with teacher assistance where appropriate	Determined by making a guess at what community needs may be	Community needs secondary to what a project teacher wants to do; project considers only student needs
2. Are coordinated in collaboration with community	Active, direct collaboration with community by the teacher and/or student	Community members act as consultants in the project development	Community members are informed of the project directly	Community members are coincidentally informed or not knowledgeable at all
3. Are integrated into academic curriculum	Service-learning as instructional strategy with content/service components integrated	Service-learning as a teaching technique with content/service components concurrent	Service-learning part of curriculum but sketchy connections, with emphasis on service	Service-learning supplemental to curriculum, in essence just a service project or good deed
4. Facilitate active student reflection	Students think, share, produce reflective products individually and as group members	Students think, share, produce group reflection only	Students share, with no individual reflective projects	Ran out of time for a true reflection; just provided a summary of events
5. Use new academic skill/ knowledge in real world settings	All students have direct application of new skill or knowledge in community service	All students have some active application of new skill or knowledge	Some students more involved than others or little community service involvement	Skill knowledge used mostly in the classroom; no active community service experience
6. Help develop sense of caring for and about others	Reflections show affective growth regarding self in community and the importance of service	Reflections show generic growth regarding the importance of community service	Reflections restricted to pros and cons of particular service project regarding the community	Reflections limited to self-centered pros and cons of the service project
7. Improve quality of life for person(s) served	Facilitate change or insight; help alleviate a suffering; solve a problem; meet a need or address an issue	Changes enhance an already good community situation	Changes mainly decorative, but new and unique benefits realized in community	Changes mainly decorative, but limited community benefit, or are not new and unique

Source: This rubric is taken from the Coverdell World Wise Schools publication, *Looking at Ourselves and Others* (Washington, DC: Peace Corps, 1998, p.6).

Service-Learning Pre/Post Assessment

Teachers: complete the top box before handing it out to students. Students complete the assessment before and after the service-learning unit (younger students may dictate answers).

Teacher: Class:	Unit:
Date:	Service-Learning Activity:
Skill or Concept:	Benchmark:

Student's Name:

What does _____ mean?

How do you know?

Can you draw it or write it with symbols?

Service-Learning Post-Assessment Reflection

Teachers: At end of unit or activity have students fill out page one again and then this page.

Look at what you wrote the first time you filled out this sheet.
How did your ideas about _____ change?

What activities did you do or what things did you read that helped you change your ideas about _____?

Did doing *service-learning* through the ___ project help you understand _____ better? Please explain.

PART I: Quick Assessment

Before turning to Part I, examine

Your Service-Learning Context

To better assess your initiative, please explain the context in which you do service-learning.

We define service-learning as: _____

The purpose of our service-learning initiative/program is: _____

Our primary goal(s) for service-learning is (are): _____

Typical activities performed by students doing service-learning include: _____

We typically assess student learning and impact of service by: _____

This self-assessment is focused on our district school other: _____

What aspect of our service-learning initiative do we especially want to evaluate? _____

SAMPLE NEEDS ASSESSMENT, developed by YASCO

Northwest Denver YASCO Principal Inventory

Date: _____
School: _____
Principal: _____
Contact Information: _____

Questions for Principal	Responses
Have they heard of service-learning? Have they heard of the YASCO initiative?	
What service-learning/contextual learning is taking place?	
What resources, programs, or grants are supporting service-learning activities?	
What is the interest level for working with YASCO?	
Is S-L specifically mentioned in your mission, goals, accreditation contracts, etc.?	
Would you provide s-l training/resources or support teachers to attend sl trainings offered elsewhere.	
Next Steps	
How will we distribute service-learning inventory (i.e. staff meeting, interested faculty, contact person, etc.)?	
How can we support service-learning? Where can we go from here? (Youth Council, trainings, resource materials, grant money, listserves, February kick off...)	


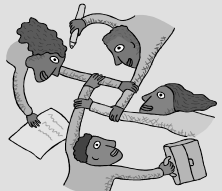
SAMPLE SURVEY, developed by YASCO


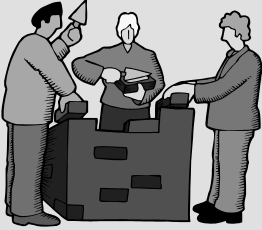
Youth As School and Community Organizers (YASCO) is a three year regional initiative supported by the Colorado Department of Education (CDE) to implement service-learning in Northwest Denver. We are in the process of assessing the involvement and level of service-learning already taking place within the region and your school. Please take the time to answer the following questions by checking the appropriate box; the numbers represent your level of interest or knowledge – 1 being “not at all” and 5 being “very/a lot.”


Question	1 not at all	2	3	4	5 very/ a lot
How familiar are you with service-learning?					
Have you used service-learning in your classroom?					
Have you done any other type of contextual/project based learning?					
Have your students participated in community service?					
What is your interest level for learning more about service-learning?					
Please rate your interest in integrating service-learning into your classroom?					

Comments or Questions:

How service-learning relates to the elements of high-performing schools

Element of high-performing schools	What Service-Learning Does
<p>1. Student-centered learning</p>  <p>Learning is individually constructed</p> <p>More student talk than teacher talk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centers on a community problem or social issue that students care about. • Helps students experience the relevance of the subject matter because content is used in solving real problems. • Students realize the importance of their efforts and care about the outcome, so are more motivated to achieve success. • Honors students as key decision makers in community projects or activities, empowers them and fosters responsibility for learning. • Provides reflection opportunities to help students understand what they have learned and to replicate applications for their learning. • Solves community problems using knowledge and skills, such as computation, reading, research or writing, and promotes cooperative learning, teamwork and problem-solving. • Facilitates rich discussions about the meaning of service, citizenship, civic institutions, character and other desired goals, which help students develop strong character and civic responsibility. • Permits “targeting” service activities of interest to students to meet their specific academic needs – to help address and overcome learning gaps among particular groups of students.
<p>2. Learning-centered teaching</p>  <p>Teacher as coach</p> <p>Instruction focused on student learning needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empowers students to make decisions, plan projects, identify learning relationships, reflect and evaluate their own success. • Encourages the role of the teacher as a “coach” for learning. • Enables teachers to participate in a role of learner along with students, and helps foster collaborative and positive relations between teachers and students. • Instruction and curriculum planning are more flexible and attuned to real-life situations, helping encourage teachers to become masters of instructional methodology, capable of tailoring learning opportunities for individual students as appropriate. • Focuses on students’ interests relative to the surrounding community, which helps teachers better understand their students, their families and the surrounding community in which they teach.

Element of high-performing schools	What Service-Learning Does (cont'd)
<p data-bbox="186 321 496 380">3. Vision-based, collaborative leadership</p>  <p data-bbox="186 611 492 638">Central vision on learning</p> <p data-bbox="186 669 428 728">Collaborative, broad leadership</p>	<ul data-bbox="618 375 1390 848" style="list-style-type: none"> • Builds a unified sense of purpose among students, staff and community, thus building a shared vision and mission. • Demonstrates continued and repeated success with “hard to reach” students, so helps stakeholders believe that achieving their shared vision is possible. • Engages all school stakeholders in projects or activities and helps foster a sense of collaborative leadership within the school, developing new school leaders. • Orients student and school learning toward community issues and concerns, which helps with navigating local politics, developing a clear direction and building a base of community support.
<p data-bbox="186 905 513 995">4. Collaborative professional learning and development</p>  <p data-bbox="186 1270 443 1329">Collaborative teacher planning</p> <p data-bbox="186 1360 496 1419">Focus on student learning guides staff development</p>	<ul data-bbox="607 1014 1380 1381" style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages collaborative planning, curriculum and professional development among teachers. • Opens new possibilities for multidisciplinary learning within community-based projects and activities, fosters collaboration among teachers, students and others within the school. • Fosters an environment for student leadership and student responsibility for learning, which helps lessen teacher attention on management and re-orientes teachers to specific and effective instructional strategies that can serve individual students’ needs.

Element of high-performing schools	What Service-Learning Does (cont'd)
<p data-bbox="186 321 462 411">5. Meaningful school-family-community partnerships</p>  <p data-bbox="186 680 479 737">Partnerships focused on student success</p> <p data-bbox="186 770 483 861">Relationships of respect and shared responsibility for student learning</p>	<ul data-bbox="589 342 1388 884" style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables students to work with agencies to solve community problems as part of their learning and helps promote positive community relations. • Helps establish an environment in which parents feel more comfortable participating in learning activities than they do during traditional classroom instruction time. • Encourages diverse forms of community-based parent or family involvement, and helps strengthen connections between the school and family, providing a common basis of support for parents to strengthen learning at home. • Creates the opportunity for an ongoing positive youth presence in the community and helps foster the community's improved perceptions of youth and the school. This can lead to increased public support for school programs, policies and funding proposals.

Continuum for Service-Learning Engagement

Service-Learning Colorado

Complete each box with strategies for moving each group from *awareness to investment* in service-learning.

	Awareness ← "heard it"	Understanding "get it"	Commitment "do it"	Investment → "spread it"
Defined	<i>Heard the term service-learning and have a basic concept of what it is; may be familiar with a specific service-learning project or program.</i>	<i>Understands the basic components of quality service-learning (e.g., curricular integration, meets real need, youth voice) and the steps it takes to implement it in school or out-of-school settings.</i>	<i>Strongly supports service-learning (e.g., principal allows teachers to do it; educator allows youth to do it), and may utilize service-learning already or have plans to use it.</i>	<i>Educated about, and dedicated to service-learning (sl) and supports it through direct means such as funding, time, resources, and educating others about it (e.g., youth train teachers; educators engage youth in quality sl on a regular basis; sl part of school goals).</i>
Youth				
Educators (teachers, staff, curriculum specialists, community educators)				
Administrators (principals, supers, school boards, agency directors and boards)				
Community (parents, business, agencies, gov.)				
Policy Makers (school board members, city council, etc.)				

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