

### **Service-learning is not the same as:**

**Volunteerism:** Volunteers engage in service for a variety of personal reasons. They do not necessarily link their service to academic studies nor do they receive academic credit for their efforts.

**Community Service:** People engage in community service for a variety of reasons. This is a broad term that can encompass court ordered, stipend or volunteer service. It also does not necessarily link to academic studies.

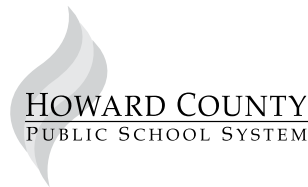
**Work Study Internship:** Student interns frequently work at for-profit businesses to benefit the financial standing of that business. They are not necessarily working to improve their communities through these internship experiences. There can be overlap between work-study internships and service learning. Students are engaged in service learning if through their internship experiences they work to improve the health or welfare of their community while linking this to their academic studies.

### **How the community can contribute**

Community members, agencies and organizations can support the student service learning program by forming partnerships with the school system, and by offering to support ongoing projects as determined by individual schools or classes.

### **Information and Resources**

Contact the principal of your local middle or high school or the Howard County Department of Education at 410-313-7193.



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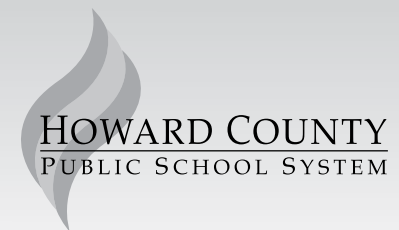
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IFAS 3950-2118

# Student Service Learning Requirement

*“Be the change  
you want to see  
in this world.”*

Mahatma Gandhi





All Maryland students must complete a student service requirement in order to earn a high school diploma. The Howard County Public School System believes that service learning fosters creativity, social consciousness and globally aware citizens. The Howard County Public School System believes it is critical that student service provides the opportunity for students to make the learning-to-life connection and to see first-hand the relevance of the skills they learn in school so that they can use these skills in real-life situations.

In Howard County, the student service requirement would be met as follows:

### **Core Program**

Most students will participate in a core program at the middle school level. A core program is a locally designated service experience coordinated through a class or grade level. Students must complete at least 75 hours of service. The experience will include preparation, action and reflection components. The unique structure of the middle school program provides the flexibility necessary to implement this approach. In addition, it is hoped that the middle school experience will lay the groundwork for students to continue service to the community throughout their remaining school years.

Service learning takes place in Grade 6 and is offered through Grade 8 as part of regular classroom learning activities. While in middle school, students will participate in a variety of service-learning projects to fulfill the requirement of at least 25 hours of service-learning projects each year. A high quality curriculum-based service-learning project will be conducted under the direction of designated school personnel who must certify that students have met the requirement.

### **Optional Programs**

#### **Option I - Transfer Students**

The following only applies to students who are transferring from an out of state school or private school. For transfer students, hours will be prorated for those entering HCPSS for the first time in grade 10. The graduation requirement is linked to the grade level of first enrollment into HCPSS. Students who have been/ remained in a Maryland public school are held to the same standards as Howard County students.

#### **Middle School**

- 6th-8th grade - a maximum of 75 hours

#### **High School**

- 9th grade - a maximum of 75 hours
- 10th grade - a maximum of 50 hours
- 11th grade - (first semester) 40 hours
- 11th grade - (second semester) 30 hours
- 12th grade (first semester) 15 hours
- 12th grade (second semester) 10 hours

#### **Option II - Approved Courses**

Students in Grade 10, 11 or 12 may fulfill their student service-learning requirement by successfully completing one of the following courses: Leadership II Community Service, Leadership I/II, Special Education Peer Assistant/Tutor Course or Student Services Office Assistant/Tutor Course.

#### **Option III: Structured High School Experience**

Under the direction of high school personnel, students could complete their service learning requirement by performing an independent project encompassing up to 75 hours (dependent upon entrance to HCPSS). This project would involve a school or community-based experience that will be certified by the designated school personnel as fulfilling the graduation requirement. Students completing this option must also complete the Individual Service Learning Project Form and submit it to the designated school personnel for approval before beginning their project.

All service learning must be documented using the HCPSS Student Service Validation Form. It will be the responsibility of designated school personnel to certify that students have met the requirement.

#### **Preparation, Action and Reflection**

To qualify, service-learning projects must include academic preparation, service activities, and structured reflection.

- **Preparation** - Equipping students with the knowledge and skills needed for service. This includes teaching students about their community and how to identify needs, as well as providing them with the specific skills needed to perform the service activity. It should include an exploration of why it is important to perform service and what it means to be an active citizen. Ideally, service learning should be used to teach curricular objectives, so preparation activities could be tied to classroom lessons.
- **Action** - Performing one or more of the following activities:

**Direct Service:** Students have face-to-face contact with the service recipients.

**Indirect Service:** Students perform a service without having face-to-face contact with the recipient. Usually resources are channeled to help alleviate a problem.

**Advocacy:** Students educate others about a particular issue with the goal being to eliminate the cause of a particular problem.

- **Reflection** - Thinking about the service performed and how it impacted the community. Considering what worked well and what could be changed to make the project better. This contemplation and evaluation should occur throughout the service experience, not just at the end of the project.