

THE SERVICE LEARNING CREDENTIAL

The Criterion: *The school supports a carefully planned, ongoing program that integrates service to the community into the academic curriculum. Regularly implemented projects engage students in meaningful activities designed to provide real life experiences for the skills, knowledge, and values found throughout the school's curriculum. Through a cycle of recognition of community need, action, reflection, and assessment, students are empowered to take educational risks. Civic responsibility and citizenship are goals of the program, along with the development of social, emotional, and cognitive learning and understanding. Critical thinking, problem solving, and collaborative skills are cornerstones of all projects. The service learning program effectively involves students as active participants in planning, implementing and evaluating projects that meet genuine needs of the community.*

The Indicators of Quality

Vision of the Service Learning Program

- SL1) The school ensures that the value and benefits of service learning are generally understood and accepted by the governance, staff, parents, and broader educational community.
- SL2) The school reflects a commitment to the integration of service within the curriculum rather than relying solely on extra-curricular activities to enhance the spirit of volunteerism and caring.
- SL3) The school supports service learning as an accepted instructional methodology in all disciplines.
- SL4) The integrated service learning program is broad-based, offering opportunities for students at different age and developmental levels to participate.
- SL5) The school takes advantage of local partnerships to enhance the educational opportunities of its students.
- SL6) Successes of the service learning program and its participants are celebrated publicly.
- SL7) Approved projects meet recognized needs in the community.

School Climate and Organization

- SL8) The school provides professional development opportunities that enable teachers to develop the skills and attitudes necessary to create effective service learning opportunities in their courses.
- SL9) Facilitators of service learning projects are encouraged to participate in activities sponsored by professional organizations with a focus on service learning.
- SL10) Implementation of service projects is observed, documented, and reviewed annually by the administration.
- SL11) Written procedures are implemented to address any liability issues that may arise from working with students outside the school.
- SL12) Student to teacher ratios are appropriate for the nature of the service projects.

SL13) The school supports service learning activities with flexibility of student and staff schedules for field trips or other group activities.

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment

SL14) The curricular objectives of service learning projects are clearly defined, approved by the governing body, and consistent with the philosophy and mission of the school.

SL15) Service tasks promote self-discovery and the acquisition and comprehension of civic values.

SL16) Service learning activities encourage high levels of thinking and the construction of knowledge.

SL17) Structured time for students to reflect by thinking, discussing and/or writing about their service experience is designed into the program.

SL18) The curricular design of service learning activities promotes skills associated with teamwork through a cooperative rather than competitive approach.

SL19) Communication of ideas and information is an integral part of service learning projects.

SL20) Students play a role as planners and collaborators in determining actual community needs.

SL21) Students are provided opportunities to demonstrate leadership and responsibility through the coordination and implementation of service projects.

SL22) Students are equipped with the knowledge and skill needed for the tasks required of the service project.

SL23) Assessment practices measure the attainment of the goals of the project for students and for the community.

SL24) Evaluations are conducted by external parties (other than student, teacher, or community participants) using best practice rubrics.

SL25) Opportunities for career exploration are built into the service learning program.

Resources

SL26) The school shows its commitment to service learning through the dedication of resources (financial, human, physical, time, etc.) that promote engaging and purposeful projects with meaningful results.

SL27) Each service learning project is accompanied by an appropriate and approved budget.

SL28) Transportation services meet the diverse needs of student participants for service projects within the community.

SL29) Substitute teachers are provided for facilitators during service activities.