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Growing to Greatness 2009

THE STATE OF SERVICE-LEARNING

A report from the
National Youth Leadership Council

WITH FUNDING PROVIDED BY

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Service-Learning by the Numbers: Bridging the Achievement Gap

21.9 Percentage of U.S. children living in poverty.[1]

83 Percentage of children whose parents have less than a high school diploma living in low-income families.[2]

78 Percentage of white parents who consider college to be very important.[3]

92 Percentage of African-American parents who consider college to be very important.[3]

1,200,000 Number of high school students dropping out annually.[4]

200 Annual cost in billions of dollars due to lost earnings and unrealized tax revenue from students who drop out.[5]

75 The percentage of America's state prison inmates that are high school dropouts.[6]

2:1 The likelihood of somebody without a high school diploma being unemployed versus somebody who graduated.[7]

81.5 Baltimore suburban districts high school graduation rate.[4]

34.6 Baltimore urban districts high school graduation rate.[4]

17 Number of the nation's 50 largest cities with less than half of high school students graduating.[4]

47 Percentage of high school dropouts saying they dropped out because classes were not interesting.[8]

75 Percentage of students who agree that service-learning classes are more interesting than other classes.[8]

64 Percentage of students who said that service-learning could have a big effect on keeping dropouts in school.[8]

16 Percentage of high school students saying their school has a service-learning program.[8]

74 Percentage of schools with no full-time or part-time service-learning coordinators.[9]

28 Percentage of principals who don't know if their district has a policy encouraging service-learning.[9]

83 Percentage of principals who said service-learning has a positive impact on academic achievement.[10]

27 Percentage of schools not in low-income areas that offer service-learning.[9]

20 Percentage of schools in low-income areas that offer service-learning.[9]

83 Percentage of students saying they'd enroll in service-learning if their school offered it.[8]

25 Percentage decrease in schools offering service-learning between 1999 and 2008.[9]

50 Number of annual service hours President Barack Obama wants all middle and high school students to do in his plan to "Expand Service-Learning in Our Nation's Schools."[11]

100 Percentage of Charles E. Shea High School service-learning program students accepted to higher education.[12]

1 UNICEF (2007). *Child poverty in perspective: An overview of child well-being in rich countries*. Florence: UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre.
2 National Center for Children in Poverty (2008). *Low-income children in the United States: National and state trend data, 1997-2007*. New York: NCCP.
3 Bridgeland, J. M. and Dilulio Jr., J. J. (2008). *One dream, two realities: Perspectives of parents on America's high schools*. Washington, DC: Civic Enterprises.
4 Swanson, C. (2008). *Cities in crisis: A special analytic report on high school graduation*. Bethesda, MD: EPE Research Center.
5 Catterall, J. S. (1985). *On the social costs of dropping out of schools*. (Report No. 86, Sept. 3). Stanford, CA: Stanford University, Center for Educational Research.
6 Harlow, C. W. (2003). *Education and correctional populations*. Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.
7 Wald, M., and Martinez, T. (2003). *Connected by 25: Improving life chances of the country's most vulnerable 14-24-year-olds*. William and Flora Hewlett Foundation Working Paper. Stanford, CA: Stanford University.
8 Bridgeland, J. M., Dilulio Jr., J. J., and Burke Morison, K. (2006). *The silent epidemic: Perspectives of high school dropouts*. Washington, DC: Civic Enterprises.
9 Corporation for National and Community Service (2008), *Community service and service-learning in America's schools, 2008*. Washington, DC: CNCS.
10 Scales, P., and Roehlkepartain, E. (2004). *Community service and service-learning in public schools, 2004: Findings from a national survey*. St. Paul: NYLC.
11 Obama, B. H. (2008). *Blueprint for Change: Obama and Biden's plan for America*. Available at http://www.barackobama.com/pdf/ObamaBlueprintForChange.pdf.
12 Read more about Charles E. Shea High School in Pawtucket, R.I., on page 105.

Growing to Greatness 2009

THE STATE OF SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT

A report from the National Youth Leadership Council

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national youth leadership council

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ISBN-13: 978-9793033-2-6
ISBN-10: 9793033-2X

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Cover photo: In the project *Healthy Neighborhoods/Healthy Kids*, elementary school students in Burlington, Vermont, collect data to index and assess the quality of life in their neighborhood. The tinted photograph on the left hand side shows an areal view of a section of downtown Burlington. Read more about this project on page 117.

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Growing to Greatness 2009

Everybody
can be great,
because
everybody
can serve.

– Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s
February 4, 1968, sermon at the
Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta

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Acknowledgments

Thank you to the authors of this volume, their respective organizations, and those who support their work.

Thanks to Peter Benson, Dale Blyth, Andy Furco, and Ann Lochner for their commitment to the working group on indicators of youth contribution. Their comprehensive knowledge of youth development and creative input have been invaluable in the development of the model for future research shared in this volume.

Amy Cohen at the Corporation for National and Community Service generously allowed publication of an abridged version of the recent report, *Community Service and Service-Learning in America's Schools, 2008*. This rigorous study will help readers accurately understand the scope and scale of school-based service and factors that influence it. Our thanks go to Don Helmstetter, Don Hill, Nur Ibrahim, Peter Levine, Alan Melchior, and Jon Schmidt for sharing their views about the meaning and possible implications of the prevalence study for the service-learning community.

Marybeth Neal and Thomas Leeper applied perceptive ideas and data analysis expertise to testing the validity of the K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice using data from the *The National Survey on Service-Learning and Transitioning to Adulthood*. Dana Markow of Harris Interactive and Suzanne Martin, authors of the survey, graciously agreed to read and provide input on different versions of this article.

NYLC has an ongoing interest in using service-learning to address the challenges of urban schools, including the achievement gap. Our thanks go to Paul Houston, Kathy Lee, Jackie Schmidt-Posner, Julia Sewell, and Andrea Yoder for very thoughtful contributions to a roundtable discussion of the achievement gap. We also express gratitude to Joseph Erickson and William Hughes for their analysis of how urban service-learning coordinators can improve their effectiveness through adopting multiple perspectives.

Bjørn Lyngstad and Thomas Leeper developed state profiles of service-learning with the assistance of State Educational Agency staff and staff of SEANet, particularly former executive director Anita Barret. Natalie Waters Seum interviewed service-learning practitioners and participants from across the United States in order to bring us lively examples that illustrate the capabilities of young people and what they've learned. Special thanks go to the NYLC editorial team, particularly Caryn Pernu, Bjørn Lyngstad, Maddy Wegner, and Wokie Weah, who have contributed their time, energy, and skills to the volume.

Most of all, we owe a debt of gratitude to the State Farm Companies Foundation for continued support of Growing to Greatness.

Susan Root, Ph.D.
Research Director
National Youth Leadership Council

State Farm Companies FOUNDATION

Dear Reader,

We are delighted to bring you *Growing to Greatness 2009*, an annual report on the state of service-learning from the National Youth Leadership Council. State Farm Companies Foundation has proudly supported NYLC's efforts to document the current state of service-learning research, policy, and practice since 2003. *Growing to Greatness* is essential to the advancement and sustainability of service-learning as pedagogy.

I have the great privilege of working with NYLC as a board member but also as a corporate sponsor. It allows me to see NYLC's work through a different lens and from a different perspective. State Farm works to sustain service-learning initiatives nationwide not only because service-learning fosters improvement in student achievement but because of the transformational effect it has on both students and learning.

We have many, many problems to solve in this country. The quality education of all of our children is paramount. But we also know that we aren't doing that well enough. We only graduate about 70 percent of our children from high school and significantly less children of color or in urban communities.

What an opportunity this provides for service-learning—and in particular for NYLC, the leader in school-based service-learning. Our schools, our communities, and our children are looking for new ways to reach and teach our youth. This could be the first generation not to do better than their parents if we don't fundamentally change how we educate them and help them be ready for the challenges of a global world.

For 25 years, NYLC has demonstrated that service-learning ties together all the best of what we believe about community: service, learning, collaboration, teamwork and a focus on excellence. NYLC and its many partners champion the cross-generational magic of young people and their elders working together to solve community problems. For 25 years, NYLC has grown beyond its own expectations to be a national and world model of excellence.

We salute those of you who do the hard work of practicing and promoting and researching service-learning and hope that this year's *Growing to Greatness* will inspire even more readers than previous volumes have.

Sincerely,

Kathy Payne
Senior Director – Education Leadership
State Farm Insurance

Introduction

JAMES C. KIELSMEIER
National Youth Leadership Council

NYLC's founder Jim Kielsmeier has committed his life to transforming the roles of young people in society – building youth-adult partnerships that help young people grow from recipients of information and resources to valuable, contributing members of a democratic society. Jim currently serves as co-chair of Service-Learning United, a national policy group. He has advised the Obama and Clinton administrations and three Minnesota governors, helped write state and federal service-learning legislation, and testified before the Minnesota House and Senate as well as the U.S. House of Representatives. He has written numerous articles, coauthored two books, and presented on youth and service issues in 16 countries and 27 U.S. states.

In thinking about the words of the Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr., that inspired NYLC's research initiative Growing to Greatness—*Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve*—I am struck anew about the series of questions we have been trying to answer over the years: What leads us from better to best, from goodness to greatness? How are young people and their communities different because of their service and service-learning?

How can we tap the power and hope of young people and better guide them in transforming themselves and their communities? This has led us to an emerging question: How can the combined communities of national service, civic education, youth development, and progressive education join together to make service-learning central to teaching and learning and to the healthy transition to adulthood for all young people?

In each volume of *Growing to Greatness*, we've focused on what research shows about high-quality service-learning practice and tried to build a comprehensive framework for that quality practice, looking at how service-learning is institutionalized and sustained, approaching new ways of measuring the scope, scale, and impact of service-learning by reporting on educational policies that support service-learning, gathering data on how it's funded, investigating its reach into our nation's K-12 schools and community organizations. In short, we've been telling the story of what young people are accomplishing across the United States and, using this evidence, advocating for a different kind of school, a new way of teaching, and a new breed of teacher who can embrace service-learning and how it can help students and communities prosper.

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Key Assumptions and Principles for the Growing to Greatness Initiative

- A major structural shift in human development has occurred and will continue, extending the period between childhood dependency and full adult responsibility.
- Transition into adulthood has become particularly problematic for young people and their communities, as reflected in extensive measurement surveys.
- Nearly all systematic collection of information on adolescents measures their deficits, not their positive participation in society.
- Most resources directed at this age group support traditional education, employment, and entertainment – with mixed results.
- Emerging approaches that authentically engage young people as citizens contributing to communities – especially when linked with well-designed learning and youth development content – are a credible structural response to issues of adolescent dissonance and community decline.
- The Growing to Greatness project is a systematic strategy for measuring engagement of young people in service-learning and youth development programs and defining the passage to adulthood as a period of engaged citizenship and active learning.

In the past year, we've honed in on the notion that contribution is something that distinguishes youth who are engaged in learning and life: Their lives matter, they recognize it, and we recognize it. Young people who contribute to their families, their schools, and their communities are purposefully engaging with the world, and this reaps positive consequences for themselves and those they touch with their service.

Young people have tremendous capacity now. When we think about educating our young people, we need to remember this. Education isn't necessarily only about the future, about what young people will accomplish in the future, but about what they are accomplishing now. Schools can instill knowledge that young people can use in the future through traditional methods of readings, lectures, and paper practice, but they can also offer so much more. Our schools can offer an in-school apprentice model of education centered on innovation and problem solving.

In Barack Obama's inaugural speech, he talked about responsibility and citizenship. He said:

What is required of us now is a new era of responsibility — a recognition, on the part of every American, that we have duties to ourselves, our nation, and the world, duties that we do not grudgingly accept but rather seize gladly, firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying to the spirit, so defining of our character, than giving our all to a difficult task. This is the price and the promise of citizenship.

Schools can be a place where young people can become engaged in not only service, but service-learning. By connecting the nation's renewed call to service with a renewed focus on engaged learning, we bring youthful resources to bear on some of our nation's most pressing problems, while employing the best insights of progressive, hands-on, community-based learning.

Young people repeatedly say that they want to be engaged and invested. When you read their comments in surveys on everything from why they leave school before graduating to how they spend their time, you discover that young people are willing to step up as responsible citizens. They simply need the opportunities and the invitation.

But as adults, as educators, we haven't been providing the necessary leadership. We have an incredible engaged civic learning asset in the public schools, yet we're only using a fraction of the schools' capacity for the country and the students. We seem to be increasingly satisfied with pressing young people to volunteer without helping them

make the most of that opportunity by connecting it to the knowledge and skills they will need to succeed in the future. We can do better.

There are many working for this vision of young people engaged in active service and learning, as reported in earlier editions of *Growing to Greatness*. America's Promise, for example, is working with State Farm Companies Foundation and the National Middle School Association to bring academic service-learning as a response to preventing people from leaving school before graduation and encouraging them to go on to further education. John Bridgeland and his colleagues at Civic Enterprises likewise are working to engage young people in authentic service-learning activities.

We want to create a generation of hope, to recognize that young people have a critical role to play in forging a better world for everyone. And in the process, they transition to active citizens as they grow to adulthood. It's become a platitude to say that the children are our future; it becomes too easy to forget that they are also our present, less the object of services and charity than service providers and leaders in shaping a better world. They have gifts and capacities that our society needs now.

With these thoughts in mind, this year's Growing to Greatness encompasses three distinct strands.

1. Indicators of youth contribution, community service, and service-learning

After literally decades of talking about the importance of looking at young people from an assets-based model rather than a deficit-based model, as a nation we are still measuring where they fail rather than where they succeed. Current measurements are inadequate and we need to create and collect new measures of youth contribution and engagement. In the lead article for this edition, Peter Benson, Dale Blyth, Ann Lochner, Andy Furco, James Kielsmeier, and Susan Root describe a collaborative effort by their organizations to develop a Youth Contribution Indicators System. We view youth contribution as an overarching concept that encompasses service-learning and community service, but also other activities through which young people make a difference to others' well-being, such as community leadership, formal political participation and informal assistance to families and neighbors. A Youth Contribution Indicators System would provide a tool for communities and organizations to measure the extent to which young people engage in prosocial activities and to evaluate

What is required of us now is a new era of responsibility—a recognition, on the part of every American, that we have duties to ourselves, our nation, and the world.

– BARACK OBAMA

President Obama's call for engagement of young people in service can drive service-learning deeper into the fabric of American schools and communities.

their own effectiveness at tapping into and strengthening young people's prosocial engagement. We invite your ideas about this important effort.

An abridged version of the Corporation for National and Community Service's report *Community Service and Service-Learning in America's Schools, 2008* continues the work of *Growing to Greatness 2004*, surveying school principals nationwide on how their schools are doing community service and service-learning. The report provides essential information on the prevalence and analyzes the types of schools offering school-based service and factors associated with strong service-learning programs. Considered in combination with two previous prevalence studies, it illuminates trends in the use of school-based service.

The report was a significant event for those in the field of service-learning and led us to ask how leaders in the field might view it. We asked a broad range of school-based practitioners and administrators, community-based service-learning advocates, and researchers to weigh in on the report. Don Helmstetter, Don Hill, Nur Ibrahim, Peter Levine, Alan Melchior, and Jon Schmidt offer their thoughts on what the data show and share insights on ways to reverse the decline in the incidence of service-learning while community service continues to build. We take a look at the continuum of community service to service-learning and why the distinctions are important in an attempt to create a bold definition of service-learning as a way of teaching and learning that isn't an add-on and doesn't depend on outside resources.

In 2006, NYLC commissioned Harris Interactive to conduct a study on service-learning and the transition to adulthood. The results of this nationally representative survey of young adults showed some of the powerful effects of both community service and service-learning. This year, Marybeth Neal, Thomas Leeper, and Susan Root reanalyzed that data in order to examine the validity of the K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice. They analyzed the relationships between standards-based attributes of participants' school service and outcomes, including young people's perceptions of the impact of service on adult life. The findings from this study confirm the importance of several service-learning standards.

2. Urban Matters: Service-Learning as a Strategy for Improving City Schools

Recent evidence showing that service-learning can reduce risks to academic and civic development and that urban youth have limited access to service-learning adds urgency to the task of building service-learning in urban settings.

NYLC has long supported service-learning as a solution to the challenges of urban schools and communities. In August, 2009 in Philadelphia, NYLC will sponsor its sixth Urban Service-Leaning Institute for practitioners and researchers. Much of the knowledge from this series of conversations about service-learning in urban areas informs the thinking in this section.

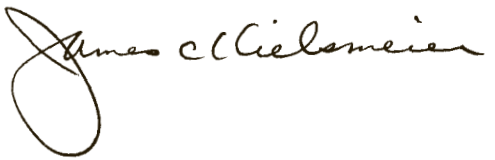
The first article by Wokie Weah discusses the rationale for urban service-learning and describes NYLC's current initiatives and plans. The next article presents the results of an online roundtable discussion among urban education leaders, examining how service-learning can be brought to bear on the achievement gap. Participants included

Paul Houston, former director of the American Association of School Administrators; Kathy Lee, Philadelphia teacher; Jackie Schmidt-Posner, Interim Executive Director of the Haas Center for Public Service at Stanford University; Julia Sewell, a student at Augsburg College and NYLC Youth Advisory Council member; and Andrea Yoder, a staff member of the Elementary Institute of Science in San Diego and Service-Learning Emerging Leader. In the final article in this section, Joseph Erickson and William Hughes report the results of an interview study of administrators in urban districts that have successfully institutionalized service-learning. Using Lee Bolman and Terrence Deal's frameworks approach, the authors analyzed how the administrators understood and brought about change involving service-learning.

3. State Service-Learning Policy Profiles

Over the years, Growing to Greatness has provided qualitative profiles of service-learning policies and practices in each of the states. This year, Bjørn Lyngstad introduces our updated profiles for 27 states, from Mississippi to Wyoming. These profiles offer a snapshot of service-learning in each of the states at state, district, and program levels, illustrated by a high-quality service-learning project in that state.

Similar to the impact of the 1990 and 1994 federal national service legislation on service-learning, President Obama's call for engagement of young people in service can drive service-learning deeper into the fabric of American schools and communities. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, a seasoned champion of service-learning while superintendant of the Chicago Public Schools, gives both credibility and possibility to the president's call. We stand now with the president to support this new chapter in the ongoing journey of encouraging all young people to "grow to greatness" as they serve, learn, and change the world.



James C. Kielsmeier, Ph.D.
President and CEO
National Youth Leadership Council

Advancing Research Through Partnerships

We are proud to announce that NYLC and the International Center for Research on Community Engagement at the University of Minnesota have formed a new partnership to develop research initiatives that explore key issues pertaining to youth development and community engagement.

NYLC and the ICRCE and have joined forces to collaborate on current youth community engagement research activities, as well as to develop new research opportunities. NYLC has had a strong affinity with the University of Minnesota. The University served as NYLC's first home, having provided initial support for some of NYLC's earliest activities. Over the years, NYLC and the University have continued to collaborate on a variety of service-learning programs and initiatives.

Today's partnership focuses on engaging the expertise at both organizations to advance research on service-learning and youth engagement from institutional and community perspectives. In addition, NYLC and the ICRCE will work to create opportunities for University undergraduate and graduate students to participate in various community-based engagement projects as research assistants and interns.

Together, NYLC and ICRCE will work to use active service as a means to advance research on service-learning and youth development as it pertains to participants' civic engagement, emotional development, and academic success.

Measuring Youth Contribution Indicators

A Conceptual Framework

PETER BENSON
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DALE BLYTH AND ANN LOCHNER
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ANDY FURCO
International Center for Research on Community Engagement, University of Minnesota
JAMES C. KIELSMEIER AND SUSAN ROOT
National Youth Leadership Council

Despite extensive research and decades of discussion on the importance of seeing youth as assets and contributors rather than viewing them through a deficit-based lens, we're still faced with an abundance of information on where youth and families and schools are disengaged and failing—and a dearth of data on how they are engaged, where they succeed, and how they contribute.

In 2008, NYLC convened a group of youth researchers in Minnesota to talk about common efforts to measure how young people are contributing to their schools, communities, families, and society. We shared examples of the challenges our organizations face in trying to gather the data to tell policymakers, educators, practitioners, researchers, and community members how young people are making a positive difference in the world.

In order to forge policies and practices that can support youth more effectively, we need reliable data on the current state of positive youth engagement. The information we do have presents a fragmented and probably distorted picture of youth today. We have especially limited data on the contributions of marginalized youth, and even on the multitude of ways youth contribute to their communities. Many of the ways young people engage are understudied or unrecognized in the literature because they take place outside familiar, formalized structures and youth initiatives. To pay more than lip service to the idea that young people are contributing forces to our world today, we need to collect a more comprehensive set of data that will give us a richer, more accurate picture. We

We believe that organizations and communities are strengthened when young people contribute by helping to meet genuine community needs.

need to measure what matters and make it visible, not only to researchers and policymakers, but to the wider public.

We left that initial meeting with an ambitious goal: to develop, disseminate, and support the widespread adoption of a system for measuring indicators of contribution among young people ages 8-21.

Why Youth Contribution?

We decided to look at youth contribution for a number of reasons. We started with the hypothesis that youth contribution has a positive impact on young people themselves, their personal health development and transition to adulthood, their academic engagement, and their civic engagement. In addition, we believe that organizations and communities are strengthened when young people contribute by helping to meet genuine community needs: communities gain not only human capital for solving immediate problems but also new cohorts of citizens committed to civic involvement. The result is stronger social capital and community well-being.

Subsequent meetings and discussions helped hone in on a definition of what we mean by youth contribution. The types of youth contribution we want to measure can be defined as behaviors in which youth are actively engaged; ways in which they offer their time, skills, and resources for the benefit of others; and actions that foster internal assets and promote the sustainability of neighborhoods, schools, communities, or civic institutions.

Investigating and measuring such youth contributions, then, will let us address a series of related questions: (1) What's different about young people because they are engaged in and contributing to their communities? (2) What's different about the world because young people are contributing? These questions lead us to ask (3) How can we better equip communities to gather information on the current status so we can monitor change and progress over time?

Supporting Research Fields

In developing the theoretical framework for a system of measurable youth contribution indicators, we draw heavily on research from many disciplines.

YOUTH CONTRIBUTION AND POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

The concept of youth contribution is consistent with the positive youth development (PYD) perspective in which young people are viewed as assets rather than simply consumers of social and other capital. Adolescent experts have traditionally identified five C's for healthy youth development: competence, confidence, connection, character, and

caring (Lerner, Fisher, & Weinberg, 2000; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). Recently, however, a sixth C has come to attention: contribution (Pittman, Irby, Tolman, Yohalem, & Ferber, 2005). The notion of contribution as an important component of healthy youth development recognizes not only that young people need to prepare in order to flourish as constructive adults, but that they must be fully engaged in the present in their schools and communities. Studies show that high-quality opportunities for young people to contribute yield important benefits to youth, such as a sense of mattering and efficacy, a sound moral and civic identity, and meaningful connections with adults and peers (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Yates & Youniss, 1996; Youniss & Yates, 1997; Youniss, Yates, & Su, 1997).

YOUTH CONTRIBUTION AND ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT

Research confirms that offering young people engaging structures, curricula, and learning activities in school can improve student achievement and reduce dropout rates (Davila & Mora, 2007; Meyer, Billig, & Hofschire, 2004; Laird & Black, Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Wulsin, 2008; Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Morisson, 2006). Offering students fulfilling opportunities to contribute at their current developmental level is one means of enhancing engagement in school. And increased academic engagement has powerful reverberations in student attendance, participation in class activities, perceptions of academic competence, and the development of educational goals (Melchior, 1998; Follman & Muldoon, 1997; Scales, Blyth, Berkas, & Kielsmeier, 2000; Furco, 2002; Billig & Klute, 2003).

YOUTH CONTRIBUTION AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Research demonstrates that young people who contribute through service-learning or community service develop greater civic engagement. One study showed that participating in high school service-learning significantly predicted frequency of voting and volunteering during early adulthood, even after controlling for youth characteristics and civic attitudes (Hart, Donnelly, Youniss, & Atkins, 2007). Another investigation found that service-learning and other civic learning opportunities were better predictors of civic commitment than other factors, including neighborhood and family context (Kahne & Sporte, 2008). And young adults who participated in service-learning during their K-12 years report being engaged in their communities by discussing politics or community issues, voting, volunteering, and playing leadership roles in community improvement significantly more often than peers who didn't participate in service-learning (Martin, Kielsmeier, Neal, & Crossley, 2006).

YOUTH CONTRIBUTION AND HEALTH

Studies indicate that opportunities to contribute by connecting to others and through community service encourage young people to make more positive health choices. Youth who feel more connected to their neighborhoods are less likely to become pregnant or engage in violent behavior (Libbey, Ireland, & Resnick, 2002; Widome, Sieving, Harpin, & Hearst, 2008). An extensive review of teen pregnancy prevention programs showed those including service-learning were the most effective at reducing risky sexual behavior and pregnancy (Kirby, 2001). In another study, youth who experienced a decision-making curriculum that included community service were more apt to view drugs as harmful and less apt to use alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs (Tebes et al., 2007).

YOUTH CONTRIBUTION AND OTHER THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS

In addition to the fields noted above, the concept of youth contribution draws on frameworks related to youth leadership, social capital, civil society, brain-based research, social work, and diversity, among others.

FIGURE 1
Youth Contribution Indicators System

Characteristics of Youth	Contexts for Contribution	Types of Youth Contribution	Aspects of Contribution
Examples: – Demographics – Family and personal contribution history – Baseline levels of internal assets (e.g., competence, confidence, etc.)	Examples: – Organizational or activity settings – Service-learning – Training received – Resources for contribution, including supervisors, participants, recipients, materials, equipment – Quality (e.g., opportunities for youth voice, feeling valued, reflection, feedback, perceived impact of contribution on recipients)	Examples: – Community service – Behaviors that bond youth with community or social institutions (e.g., attending community events) – Civic or political participation (e.g., voting, protest) – Behaviors that benefit family, peers – Community building – Youth leadership (e.g., serving on advisory boards)	Examples: – Continuum of engagement (high to low) – Continuum of support for development (degree to which youth contribution builds internal assets, e.g., competence, confidence, connection, caring)

Youth Contribution Indicators System

We based our efforts to develop a Youth Contribution Indicators System on the following assumptions.

- Constructive engagement by youth is key to healthy personal development and community and organizational well-being.
- Youth contribute in a variety of positive roles, such as student, peer, citizen.
- Measurement of the nature and extent of youth contribution is central to understanding and improving it.
- Schools, youth-serving organizations, and communities should be responsible for providing young people with meaningful opportunities for contribution.

Figure 1 represents a model of the major constructs to be assessed by the Youth Contribution Indicators System, along with examples of measurable variables in each construct.

Although our priority is the development of a Youth Contribution Indicators System, we envision that using this system broadly would allow researchers to address a broad range of questions and issues. (See Figure 2.)

National Research Council for Prosocial Youth Engagement

We propose the establishment of a National Research Council for Prosocial Youth Engagement to bring together experts in the various fields that inform prosocial, prodevelopmental youth contribution. The Research Council would spearhead and lead the work, giving the work visibility, legitimacy, and depth that will help secure buy-in and support from the field. The Research Council should be a select group of nationally (or internationally) recognized scholars and experts who can reach out to other groups to

FIGURE 2

Questions and Issues Addressed by a Youth Contribution Indicators System

1. State of youth contribution

a) What contributions do youth make?
b) Where and in what ways are youth involved?
c) For how long are youth involved?
d) Why do youth get involved?
e) When do youth get involved?

2. Support structures for youth contribution

a) Where do youth learn about opportunities for contribution?
b) Who supports youth?
c) What incentives to contribute are provided and by whom?
d) How are opportunities for contribution structured?
e) Who decides in which activities youth will engage?
f) What organizations and activity structures are most effective at inviting youth to contribute?
g) What organizations and activity structures are most effective at maintaining youth contribution and supporting a commitment to long-term contribution?

3. Youth characteristics

a) Which youth contribute?
b) When do youth first become involved?
c) What is the developmental trajectory of contribution as youth mature?
d) In which roles do youth get involved (for example, student, citizen, employee, member of religious organization)?
e) Are there defining characteristics of an individual who is broadly engaged in contributing? Who contributes in depth?

4. Culture and contribution

a) How do different cultures define contribution?
b) How do forms of contribution relate to cultural contexts?
c) How do language and languaging of opportunities affect youth contribution?

5. Effects on youth

a) How does engaged contribution affect youth?
b) When do program effects manifest (immediately, over time)?
c) How much contribution is needed before effects take hold?
d) Are certain kinds of contribution (or combinations of contributions) more powerful than others?
e) How individualized are the outcomes?
f) Are there patterns in outcomes or effects among particular groups of youth?

6. Effects on communities

a) What differences, if any, are youth making in the wellbeing of communities?
b) Do certain types of contribution have more positive impacts on communities than others?

7. Trends

a) What are the trends in youth contribution over time?
b) In which areas do we see the most and the least positive trends?

8. Practice

a) What program characteristics foster positive effects (both for youth and the community) and how can these characteristics be encouraged?
b) What training, support, etc., do youth workers (for example, teachers, service-learning coordinators, program directors) need to provide high-quality support for youth contribution?

9. Public policy

a) What policies promote or deter youth contribution?
b) What policies should be developed to enhance the experiences of youth?

gather additional input and information as the indicators are developed and refined. Along with developing the indicators, the Research Council will refine the key questions and establish areas of priorities for the indicators, ensuring that the youth contribution indicators build on prior knowledge and research.

Steps we will undertake in this work include:

1. Through a review of the literature (on youth service, service-learning, community leadership, civic engagement, etc.), draft a set of indicators to measure the nature and extent of young people's contribution.
2. Adapt the indicators to various units of analysis (individual, organizational, school, community) that will allow the data to be analyzed cross-sectionally so that conclusions about populations and subpopulations can be drawn.
3. Pilot and standardize the Youth Contribution Indicators System so it can be applied across different segments of society and be applicable to all types of community engagement initiatives that promote youth contribution.
4. Translate and disseminate information about the Youth Contribution Indicators System, including a user-friendly version, background information for potential users on the core concepts of youth contribution and rationales for assessing it, potential uses by communities and organizations, and steps in implementation.
5. Create a system of support for users to enable widespread adoption, such as, for example, training for communities in using the Indicators System and data analysis assistance.
6. Summarize the results from broad use of the indicators and observe trends over time. These data could be archived and mined by various researchers who could use the information to conduct secondary analyses that address a broad range of issues concerning youth community involvement, empowerment, and leadership.

With the rise of service-learning and other youth community engagement initiatives across the United States and abroad, the time is ripe to explore the ways in which young people are invested in their communities. Because positive youth contribution comes in many forms, the knowledge base in this field of study is diffuse and disparate. We will need to bridge the different conceptual and theoretical orientations to youth contribution and to arrive at definitions and broadly accepted measures that will allow us to assess the contexts, youth characteristics, and behaviors needed to understand accurately how youth contributions make a difference both for young people and for their communities. This is the first step in a broader agenda designed to create a common language among researchers, practitioners, and policy makers; establish expectations and norms of practice; and create the possibility of studying trends over time.

Invitation to Participate

We believe that uniting different types of youth engagement programs and activities under the umbrella of youth contribution will encourage dialogue and improve policy, programs, and practice across fields. If you are interested in issues involving youth contribution, we invite to you to participate in helping make this effort a reality. Comment on the strengths and weaknesses of our model. Pool your resources with ours to strengthen the effort. Join us at a future meeting to take the conversation further and let us together shape the indicators that we can measure.

To become involved or share your thoughts about this initiative, email us at indicators@nylc.org.

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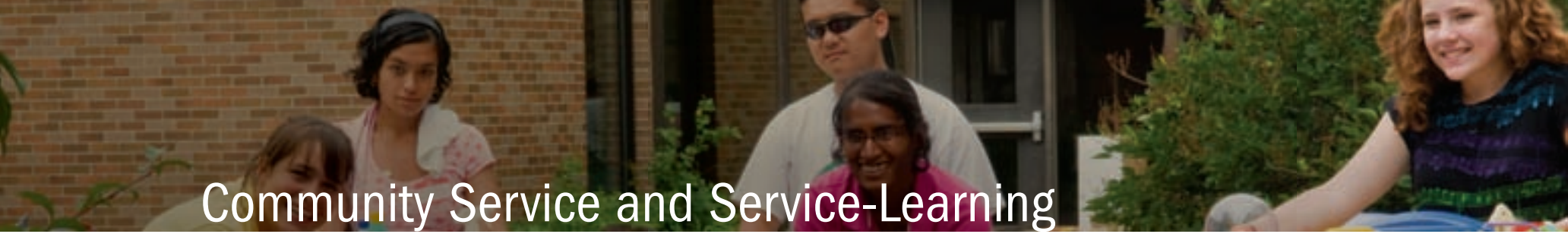

Community Service and Service-Learning

in America's Schools, 2008

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Alexis de Tocqueville noted that an ethic of service "prompts [Americans] to assist one another and inclines them willingly to sacrifice a portion of their time and property to the welfare of the state." One way in which the ethic of service has been passed on to younger generations is through the inclusion of community service and service-learning opportunities in our schools, where young people begin to develop their roles as active members of the community who make contributions to addressing community needs.

The 20th century witnessed a burgeoning of opportunities for youth service, as schools began to adopt community service requirements for their students and formally recognize and arrange community service activities. According to a 1979 study, 92 percent of secondary school principals reported that extracurricular community service activities were available to their students.[1] By 1999, 83 percent of secondary schools, and 64 percent of all K-12 schools, were actively recognizing or arranging these community service activities for their students.[2]

The development of service-learning as a pedagogical method that integrates community service into the course curriculum began to crystallize in the 1970s. In 1990, the National and Community Service Act created Serve America (now known as Learn and Serve America), a federal program dedicated to providing grants and other supports for service-learning activities in America's schools, higher education institutions, and community-based organizations. This and other federal policies were accompanied by the adoption by some states, school districts,

and individual schools of service-learning policies that either encourage or mandate the incorporation of service-learning into the course curriculum.

Research has shown that the prevalence of service-learning in America's schools grew considerably during the end of the 20th century. In 1979, only 15 percent of secondary schools offered curriculum-related community service programs. By 1999, service-learning was found in 46 percent of secondary schools and nearly one-third (32%) of all K-12 public schools. While comparisons between the 1979 and 1999 studies must be made with caution because of methodological differences, the findings suggest considerable growth in the prevalence of service-learning in public secondary schools over the 20-year period.[3]

A national study of community service and service-learning conducted in 2004 was the first sign of a downward trend in the prevalence of service-learning. According to the *National Survey of Service-Learning in K-12 Public Schools, 2003-04*, the percentage of K-12 public schools had fallen to 28 percent, while 44 percent of secondary school principals reported service-learning opportunities for their students. The possibility of a gradual decline in service-learning that was signaled by the 2004 survey has been confirmed by the 2008 *National Study of the Prevalence of Community Service and Service-Learning in K-12 Public Schools*. While the involvement of schools in recognizing student participation in community service remains robust, at 86 percent of secondary schools and 68 percent of all K-12 schools, only 24 percent of all K-12 public schools and 35 percent of secondary schools offer service-learning opportunities for their students.[4]

The Prevalence of Community Service

Through the 2008 *National Study of the Prevalence of Community Service and Service-Learning in K-12 Public Schools,* 1,847 public school principals reported on the extent to which they recognize student participation in community service and arrange community service opportunities for their students during the 2007-08 academic year. For the purposes of the survey, community service is defined as follows:

Community service may be carried out as school-wide events, separately organized school programs, or school-sponsored projects conducted by other organizations, such as the Boys and Girls Club and National Honor Society.

Examples of service activities could include cleaning up a local park, visiting the elderly, or collecting and distributing food to those in need. They:

- are non-curriculum-based;
- are recognized by the school;
- may be mandatory or voluntary;
- may be arranged by the school or other organizations;
- generally do not include explicit learning objectives or organized reflection or critical analysis activities; and
- may include activities that take place off of school grounds or may happen primarily within the school.

Based on the responses of school principals, we estimate that 14.6 million students in approximately 57,000 elementary, middle, and secondary schools participated in community service activities that were recognized by the school during the 2007-08 academic year. The percentage of schools that recognize student participation in community service activities shows a gradual increase since 1999, moving from 64 percent to 66 percent in 2004 and 68 percent today. (See Table 1.)

While not all schools that recognize student participation in community service are actively involved in arranging opportunities for students to participate in community service, the majority of these schools do arrange at least some of the activities.[5] According to the survey, of the 68 percent of schools that recognized student participation in community service, 85 percent were involved in arranging community service opportunities, which equates to 58 percent of all K-12 schools. (See Chart 1.)

The fact that the majority of schools with students participating in recognized community service activities also arrange at least some of these activities for students is one sign of the commitment of the nation's public schools to community service, as is the fact that 86 percent of schools incorporate these community service activities, at least in part, into school time.

Interestingly, less than a quarter of schools that recognize community service activities (23%) also have a requirement for all or some of their students to participate in these activities. Not surprisingly, community service requirements are most common among secondary schools (43%), followed by middle schools (30%) and elementary schools (11%).[6]

TABLE 1

Prevalence of Student Community Service Activities Recognized by Schools, 1999, 2004 and 2008*

Year	All Schools		Elementary		Middle		Secondary	
	Percent	SE**	Percent	SE**	Percent	SE**	Percent	SE**
1999	64	2.6	55	4.0	77	2.2	83	1.3
2004	66	––	60	––	69	––	81	––
2008	68	1.2	60	1.7	74	2.2	86	1.8

TABLE 2

Prevalence of Service-Learning in Public Schools, 1999, 2004 and 2008*

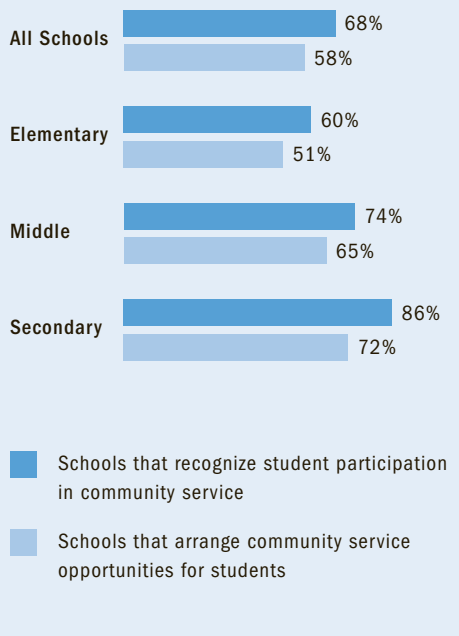
Year	All Schools		Elementary		Middle		Secondary	
	Percent	SE**	Percent	SE**	Percent	SE**	Percent	SE**
1999	32	2.0	25	2.9	38	2.6	46	1.9
2004	28	––	22	––	31	––	44	––
2008	24	1.0	20	1.4	25	2.1	35	2.3

* For data on the percentage of schools that recognize community service and service-learning, respectively, by various school characteristics, see the full report.

** SE, or Standard Error, provides an estimate of the possible error in how the data were weighted to represent all schools. When comparing percentages between years, it is necessary to take into account the standard error for each percentage. Standard errors are not available for 2004.

CHART 1

Schools that Recognize Student Participation in Community Service and Arrange Community Opportunities for Students, 2008



The Prevalence of Service-Learning

The school principals who responded to the 2008 *National Study of the Prevalence of Community Service and Service-Learning in K-12 Public Schools* provided information on the extent to which they offered service-learning opportunities to their students during the 2007-08 academic year and the types of practices and policies provided by and for the schools to support these service-learning activities. For the purposes of the survey, service-learning is defined as follows:

Service-learning is curriculum-based community service that integrates classroom instruction with community service activities.

Like community service, service-learning may be mandatory or voluntary, and may have service activities that take place outside of or within the school. However, service-learning also:

- is organized in relation to an academic course or curriculum;
- has clearly stated learning objectives;
- addresses real community needs; and
- involves students in drawing lessons from the service through regularly scheduled, organized reflection or critical analysis activities such as classroom discussions, presentations, or directed writing.

According to the study, 24 percent, or approximately 20,400 schools, have service-learning activities for their students, and it is estimated that over 4.2 million elementary, middle, and secondary school students have participated in their activities during the 2007-08 academic year. This indicates a gradual decrease between 1999 and 2008 in the percentage of schools that have service-learning activities, from 32 percent to 24 percent. Among middle and secondary schools, the decline exceeds 10 percentage points, while elementary schools have experienced a relatively mild drop from 25 percent to 20 percent. (See Table 2.)

On average, principals of schools with service-learning activities report that 36 percent of their students are involved in service-learning activities, while 32 percent of teachers use service-learning as part of their classroom instruction. Elementary schools with service-learning activities are more likely to involve a higher percentage of students (42%) than both middle schools (38%) and secondary schools (25%).

A sizable majority of the school principals reported that the percentage of students participating in service-learning activities at their school has either increased (55%) or remained steady (41%) during the previous five years. This finding indicates that among

schools that have service-learning programs today, there is a widespread commitment to maintaining or expanding service-learning opportunities for their students.

The most common subject areas in which service-learning takes place include social studies, science, and English language arts. (See Chart 2.)

Reasons Schools Do Not Have Service-Learning

Principals who indicate that their school does not have service-learning activities were asked why that is the case. The most common reasons they give for not having service-learning are:

- Lack of time because of state curriculum requirements (48%).
- Lack of funding or other resources (38%).
- The absence of someone to coordinate the activities (34%).

It is also notable that more than half of principals at elementary schools without service-learning activities (51%) believe that their students are too young for service-learning, thus indicating that there is a misconception that younger students are not capable of participating in quality service-learning activities.

CHART 2

Curriculum Subject Areas in Which Service-Learning Takes Place, 2008

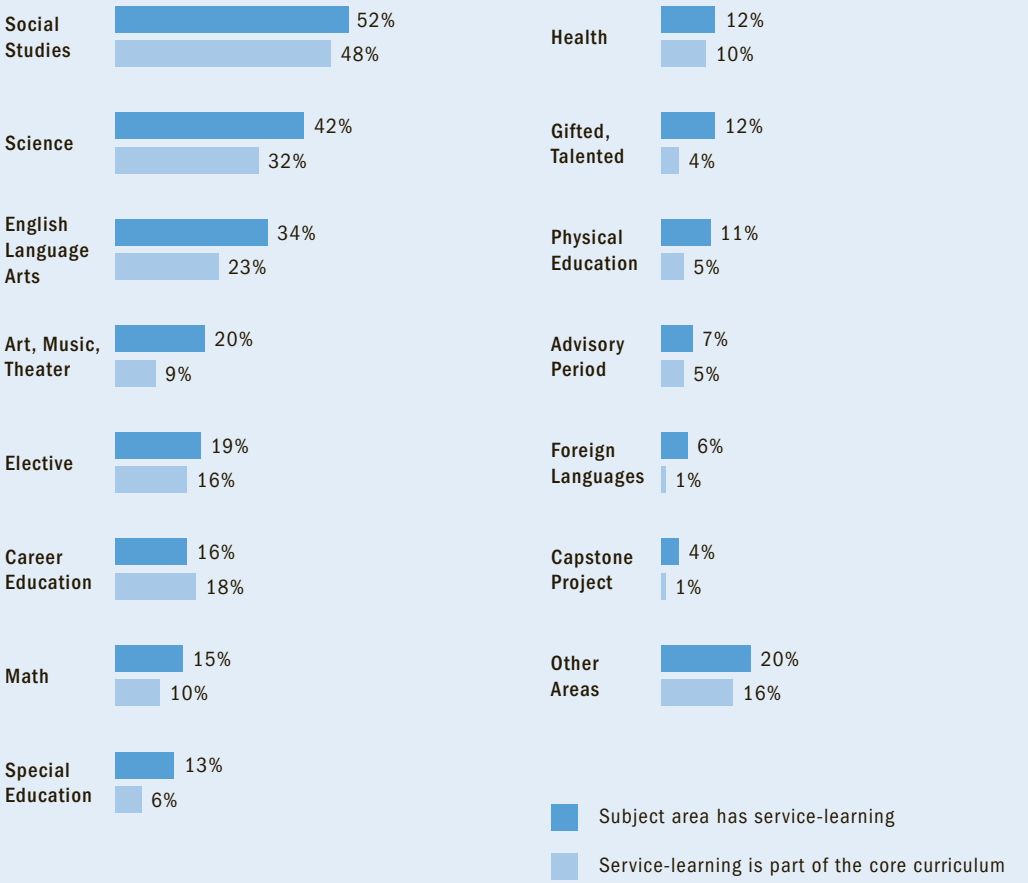


CHART 3

Presence of Service-Learning by District-Level Service-Learning Policy, 2008

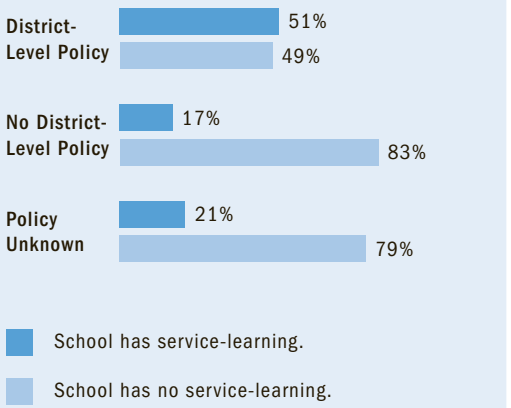


TABLE 3

Reasons Principals Give for Encouraging Service-Learning, 1999*

To help students become more active members of the community	53%
To increase student knowledge and understanding of the community	51%
To meet real community needs and/or foster relationships with the surrounding community	48%
To encourage student altruism or caring for others	46%
To improve student personal and social development	26%
To teach critical thinking and problem solving skills	19%
To increase career awareness and exposure among students	18%
To improve student participation in and attitudes toward school	16%
To improve student achievement in core academic courses	12%
To reduce student involvement in risk behaviors	10%

* SOURCE: Skinner, R. & Chapman, C. (1999). Respondents were asked to select the three most important reasons from the list provided.

While we do not deny that schools face real constraints, it is just as likely that schools with service-learning activities must also deal with state curriculum requirements and budget shortages, and the study shows that the majority of schools with service-learning (74%) operate without a service-learning coordinator. The findings from the 1999 study may provide some insight into causes for the decline in service-learning that go beyond financial and curricular constraints. According to the 1999 study, school principals are considerably more likely to think of service-learning as an important activity for improving students' civic and social engagement than their academic achievement. (See Table 3.) This helps to explain why a school might continue to arrange community service opportunities for their students, yet not maintain a service-learning program when faced with the need to ensure that their students achieve academic proficiency.

The Role of District-Level Service-Learning Policies

For the survey, school principals were asked whether their district has a formal policy encouraging the integration of service-learning into the course curriculum. Notably, 28 percent of school principals do not know if their district has such a policy, while only

19 percent indicate that their district has a policy that encourages the integration of service-learning.[7]

While it is important to recognize that a substantial portion of school principals are not aware of whether the district takes a position on service-learning, we do find that when a school principal knows of a district policy that encourages integration of service-learning, the school is three times more likely to have service-learning activities than a school where the principal reports that the district does not have such a policy. (See Chart 3.) When a school principal does not know if the district has a policy, there is a similar relationship. It may be the case that the principal of a school that has service-learning activities is more likely to look for the district's policy on service-learning; however, these findings suggest that a district emphasis on service-learning could have a positive effect on the adoption of service-learning at the school level.

TABLE 4
Prevalence of Service-Learning Policies, 2008

School-Level Policy	Yes	No	Don't Know
Service-learning is recognized by the school as an improvement strategy in its strategic or improvement plan.	47%	44%	9%
Service-learning is part of the board-approved course curriculum in at least one subject in at least one grade.	39%	48%	12%
Service-learning is included in new teacher and/or staff orientation.	24%	64%	12%
Service-learning is considered one of the criteria for teacher/staff evaluations.	15%	78%	7%

Note: Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

School-Level Policies and Supports for Service-Learning

Several school policies can be used as indicators of the institutionalization of service-learning, or of policies that help to ensure that service-learning is a standard practice and is likely to continue at the school. For example, we find that 39 percent of principals at schools with service-learning activities report that service-learning is a part of the board-approved course curriculum for at least one subject area in at least one grade level. Other policies include recognition of service-learning in the school improvement plan, inclusion of service-learning in teacher and staff orientation, and consideration of service-learning as a criterion for teacher and staff evaluation. (See Table 4.)

The majority of schools (64%) demonstrate at least some degree of institutionalization through the adoption of at least one of the policies; however, only 8 percent of schools have all four policies in place, or what could be considered the highest degree of policy-related institutionalization of service-learning.

TABLE 5
Supports Available for Teachers and Staff Involved with Service-Learning, 2008

Support for Service-Learning	Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Rarely	Never
Recognition for staff who provide high-quality service-learning	10%	20%	31%	17%	23%
Financial support for planning, training and/or implementation	6%	13%	33%	22%	26%
Technical assistance on planning or implementation	8%	13%	30%	22%	27%
Mini-grants for programs or curriculum development	5%	10%	35%	20%	30%
Reduction in teaching load for development or supervision	3%	5%	14%	26%	52%

Note: Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

School-Level Supports for Service-Learning

The institutionalization of service-learning can also be measured by the extent to which schools provide support for the implementation of service-learning. One key support for service-learning is the presence of a service-learning coordinator, who typically provides technical support to teachers and assists in coordinating activities with the community.

In some cases, the school has an individual whose primary task is to work as a service-learning coordinator; however, this is relatively rare, with only 8 percent of school principals reporting that the school has a full-time coordinator. It is more likely for a teacher or staff member to devote part of their time to coordinating service-learning activities beyond the scope of his or her own classroom, with 18 percent of school principals reporting that the school has a part-time coordinator. Nevertheless, the majority of schools with service-learning activities do not have any service-learning coordinator, indicating that most teachers and staff work independently to design and implement service-learning activities into their curriculum. (See Chart 4.)

In addition to a service-learning coordinator, schools with service-learning activities may provide other types of supports to teachers and staff for service-learning, such as financial resources for curriculum development, technical assistance for the planning of service-learning, and reduction in teaching load for teachers and staff who supervise service-learning. The majority of principals report that the school provides these other supports (with the exception of workload reduction) at least occasionally to the teachers and staff who implement service-learning activities. (See Table 5.) However, more than half (56%) of principals report

that the school does not consistently provide even one of these supports, and only 13 percent of school principals say that the school provides at least three of the five supports frequently or always, indicating that many teachers and staff who implement service-learning projects are doing so within their own resources.

In general, service-learning tends to be less institutionalized in elementary schools than middle or secondary schools. For example, only 19 percent of elementary schools have a full- or part-time service-learning coordinator, compared to 29 percent of middle schools and 34 percent of secondary schools. Secondary schools are also more likely to include service-learning as an improvement strategy in their strategic plan (60%) and to have service-learning as part of the board-approved course curriculum in at least one subject in at least one grade (59%) than elementary schools (39% and 28%) and middle schools (44% and 37%).

Service-Learning Requirements

Among schools that have service-learning activities, 41 percent of principals report that there are requirements for all or some of their students. (See Chart 5.) As we saw with community service requirements, secondary schools are most likely to have service-learning requirements (58%), followed by middle schools (45%) and elementary schools (27%).

Typically, schools implement service-learning requirements through mandating that students complete a certain number of service hours outside of the classroom or participate in a certain number of courses with service-learning. (See Table 6.) However, a small percentage of school principals report other types of service-learning requirements, which include special projects, such as a senior capstone project or character education project, or activities organized by student and community-based groups.[8]

Resources for Service-Learning

While the majority of principals (66%) at schools with service-learning activities report that they receive at least some funding for service-learning and community service activities, about one out of every five principals (21%) report that their school does not receive any funding to support their activities. An additional 13 percent of principals are uncertain about whether the school has received any funding for service-learning.

CHART 4

Prevalence of Service-Learning Coordinators, 2008

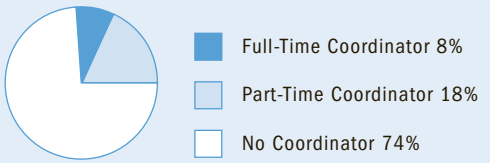


CHART 5

Prevalence of Service-Learning Requirements, 2008

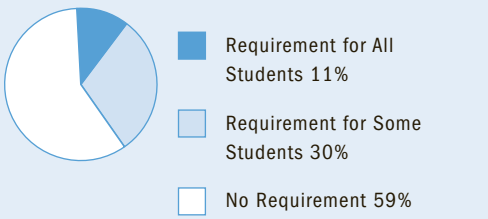


TABLE 6
Types of Service-Learning Requirements by Instructional Level, 2008

Type of School	Number of Hours	Number of Courses	Number of Hours & Courses	Other Requirement	Do Not Know
All Schools	33%	22%	25%	17%	3%
Elementary	25%	32%	8%	27%	8%
Middle	42%	21%	21%	14%	2%
Secondary	34%	16%	37%	13%	0%

TABLE 7
Sources of Funding for Service-Learning Activities, 2008

Funding Source	Yes	No	Don't Know
School or District Operating Funds	40%	45%	15%
Foundation Grants	20%	62%	18%
Corporate Grants	20%	64%	16%
State Grants	16%	66%	18%
Federal Grants	11%	71%	18%
AmeriCorps Grants	7%	77%	16%
Learn and Serve America Grants	7%	81%	13%

Note: Percentages may not total 100 percent due to rounding.

Principals of schools that receive funds are most likely to report that the funds come from school or district operating funds. (See Table 7.) However, a considerable portion of schools with service-learning (33%) received special grants or funding for service-learning activities during the 2007-08 year. The sources of these special funds for service-learning come from a variety of sources, including foundations, corporations, and state and federal programs, such as Learn and Serve America and AmeriCorps.

Only 7 percent of school principals report receiving Learn and Serve America funds during the 2007-08 academic year, which is slightly lower than in 1999, when 10 percent of school principals indicated that they had received a grant through Learn and Serve. The decrease is not significant, but would be expected given the decline in the amount of available Learn and Serve funds (adjusted and actual) between 1999 and 2008.

This finding is supported by data collected through Learn and Serve's annual reporting system (LASSIE), indicating that the financial support for service-learning has a broad base, of which Learn and Serve funds are one part. According to LASSIE, 741 schools and 506 districts received Learn and Serve funds during the 2007-08 program year, and we

estimate that Learn and Serve funds reach around 10 percent of the estimated 20,400 schools that have service-learning activities.[9] Nevertheless, Learn and Serve grants support approximately 1 million K-12 students, or about one-quarter of all K-12 service-learning participants nationally.[10]

Community Service and Service-Learning in Low-Income Areas

Schools in low-income areas, defined as schools with 50 percent or more of their students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, account for 40 percent of all K-12 public schools. We find that these schools are less likely than schools that are not in low-income areas to have opportunities for students to engage in community service and service-learning. (See Table 8.) This finding is supported by the data collected through the Corporation's 2005 Youth Volunteering and Civic Engagement Survey, which showed that youth from disadvantaged circumstances were nearly 40 percent less likely than youth from advantaged circumstances to report current or past participation in school-based service (CNCS, 2006).

Despite the fact that schools in low-income areas are less likely than other schools to have service-learning activities, a comparison with the data collected in 1999 indicates that the prevalence of service-learning in low-income schools has not experienced the same level of decline as schools that are not in low-income areas. That is to say, the gap in the availability of service-learning opportunities that has existed for youth based on their family's income is decreasing—in 2008, schools in low-income areas are 26 percent less likely to have service-learning (20% compared to 27% of schools not in low-income areas), while they were 36 percent less likely in 1999 (23% compared to 36% of schools not in low-income areas).

TABLE 8
Community Service and Service-Learning in Schools by Income Area, 2008

Type of School	Recognize Community Service	Arrange Community Service Opportunities	Have Service-Learning Activities
All Public Schools	68%	58%	24%
Schools Not in Low-Income Areas	72%	61%	27%
Schools in Low-Income Areas	62%	54%	20%

Conclusion

The 2008 *National Study of the Prevalence of Community Service and Service-Learning in K-12 Public Schools* has shown that K-12 public schools continue to value their role in educating young people to be active and committed citizens. They are opting to primarily support students' participation in community service activities, and over the past decade we have seen a decline in the percentage of schools that integrate the service into classroom curricula through service-learning. Those schools that have service-learning activities tend to have an environment that emphasizes the importance

of service, with 91 percent of these schools also arranging community service opportunities for their students. To understand better the decline in the prevalence of service-learning over the past decade, we would benefit from further research into the dynamics of those schools that have programs in both community service and service-learning and those schools that rely on community service alone to engage their students in the community. Such research could provide us with more information on the reasons why some schools give greater priority to service-learning than other schools.

Existing research has demonstrated that the quality elements of service-learning, such as active student participation in planning and implementing service activities, clear connections between the course learning objectives and the service projects, and structured reflection on the students' service experience, lead to greater impacts on students' academic and civic attitudes and behaviors than community service alone. As well, principals of schools with service-learning value the benefits of the activities for their students. However, there is a need for more research on the impacts of service-learning on students' academic outcomes, particularly if those teachers and administrators who are unfamiliar with the pedagogical method are to adopt service-learning programs. If service-learning is to be viewed as a method of drawing young people into a life-long cycle of engagement, it is also necessary to show that age is not a barrier to active citizenship and that elementary school students also benefit from service-learning.

While the findings from the *National Study of the Prevalence of Community Service and Service-Learning in K-12 Public Schools* raise a number of challenges for the expansion of service-learning, they also offer possibilities for constructively addressing those challenges. We recommend that further research be conducted, not just with those civic-minded schools that support both community service and service-learning, but also with schools that report that they lack the time and the funds to incorporate service-learning into their classrooms. By better understanding both these groups, it will be possible to be responsive to the goals of schools to see their students succeed.

For an unabridged copy of this report, go to www.nationalservice.org/about/role_impact/performance_research.asp#LSA_2008.

APPENDIX

TABLE 9

Characteristics of Schools that Recognize Student Participation in Community Service and Arrange Community Service Opportunities for Students, 1999 and 2008

School Characteristics*	Schools that Recognize Student Community Service		Schools that Arrange Community Service Opportunities		Schools with Service-Learning Activities	
	1999	2008	1999	2008	1999	2008
All Public Schools	64%	68%	57%	57%	32%	24%
By Instructional Level						
Elementary	55%	60%	49%	51%	25%	20%
Middle	77%	74%	71%	65%	38%	25%
Secondary	83%	86%	71%	72%	46%	35%
By School Enrollment Size						
Less than 300	59%	66%	53%	54%	27%	21%
300 - 999 65	65%	66%	57%	57%	31%	24%
1000 or more	77%	85%	69%	71%	48%	32%
By Local						
Urban	66%	64%	61%	58%	36%	27%
Suburban	63%	67%	57%	57%	27%	24%
Town	65%	69%	56%	59%	43%	25%
Rural	64%	72%	53%	60%	27%	22%
By Percentage of Minority Enrollment						
Less than 6%	67%	73%	58%	58%	31%	24%
6% to 20%	65%	69%	56%	59%	31%	26%
21% to 49%	72%	73%	67%	64%	36%	24%
50% or more	54%	60%	50%	53%	29%	23%
By Percentage of Students Qualifying for Free/Reduced Price Lunch						
Less than 50%	69%	72%	63%	61%	36%	27%
50% or higher	50%	62%	43%	54%	23%	20%

*The school characteristics were drawn from the Department of Education's Common Core Data (CCD). Characteristics for 1999 surveyed schools were pulled from the 1996-97 CCD; characteristics of the 2008 surveyed schools were drawn from the 2005-06 CCD. For more information on the definition of schools characteristics, see the methodology section.

ENDNOTES

1 Statistics on community service and service-learning in 1979 are based on the National Center for Service-Learning's National Survey of High School Student Community Service Programs. Findings are based on a survey of a sample of 1,800 schools across 46 states. See National Center for Service Learning (1980).

2 Statistics on community service and service-learning in 1999 are based on the National Student Service-Learning and Community Service Survey, sponsored by the Department of Education and the Corporation for National and Community Service. The survey of a nationally representative sample of 2,000 public elementary, middle and secondary schools was conducted through the National Center for Education Statistics' Fast Response Survey System in the spring of 1999. See Skinner & Chapman (1999).

3 For the 1979 study, service-learning was defined as "curriculum-related community service," or community service activities that are integrated into existing academic courses or are part of a special course oriented specifically for the community service activities. The 1999 survey utilized a more rigorous definition of service-learning, limiting service-learning activities to curriculum-based community service that has clearly stated learning objectives; addresses real community needs in a sustained manner over a period of time; and assists students in drawing lessons from the service through regularly scheduled, organized reflection or critical analysis. The fact that only 55.6 percent of the schools with service-learning in the 1979 survey indicated that teachers regularly met with students to help them learn from their community experiences suggests that the percent of schools in 1979 that had service-learning activities that met the definition used in 1999 was less than 15 percent.

4 Statistics on community service and service-learning in 2004 are based on the National Survey of Service-Learning in K-12 Public Schools, 2003-04. The study, sponsored by the National Youth Leadership Council and conducted by Westat, surveyed 1,799 public elementary, middle, and secondary schools and utilized the same methodology as the studies in 1999 and 2008, allowing for a midpoint comparison between 1999 and today. The weighted and adjusted percentage of schools with service-learning in 2004 was 28 percent. See Scales & Roehlkepartain (2004).

5 Respondents are initially asked whether they have students who participate in community service as defined in the box on page 15, which includes any community service that is recognized by the school and may or may not be arranged by the school. Those respondents who answer yes to this initial question are then asked if they actually arrange those activities or not. Those who answered yes to the initial question are presented in this report as those who "recognize student participation in community service." Those who answered yes to the follow-up question are a subset of the initial group and are presented in this report as those who "arrange community service opportunities for their students."

6 The presence of community service requirements does not appear to make schools more likely to arrange community service opportunities for their students, although it should be noted that the vast majority already do arrange those opportunities.

7 The percentage of schools that report that their district has a formal policy encouraging the integration of service-learning in 2008 is roughly equal to the percentage of schools (18%) that reported the same district-level policy in 1999; it should also be noted that a larger portion of schools reported that they did not know in 2008 than in 1999 (28% to 21%). Given the rather large percentage of 'Don't Knows' for both years, the responses should not be taken as a reliable measure of the actual percentage of districts that have a formal policy for service-learning; however, for the purposes of this analysis, the extent to which schools are aware of a formal district policy can serve as a meaningful variable.

8 In a small number of cases, schools reported that they had other service-learning requirements in addition to a number of hours and/or courses; in those cases, schools were classified according to their hours or courses requirement.

9 For more on Learn and Serve's annual program and performance survey, visit the LASSIE website at www.lsareports.org. The site provides copies of the survey instrument and a public-use data set for the general public.

10 Due to the nature of Learn and Serve's three-year grant cycle, there is some fluctuation in the number of K-12 participants in Learn and Serve-funded projects. Over the past three years, an annual average of 1.3 million K-12 students participated in Learn and Serve funded service-learning activities (1.3 million in 2005-06; 1.5 million in 2006-07; and 1 million in 2007-08).

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Notes from the Movement

Analyzing *Community Service and Service-Learning in America's Schools, 2008*

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Given the importance of the report *Community Service and Service-Learning in America's Schools, 2008* from the Corporation for National and Community Service, we were intrigued to learn how leaders in the service-learning field responded to its findings, particularly the idea that service-learning has been declining in K-12 schools. We asked six well-known experts, including educators, program directors, and researchers, to share their insights into the report, including their interpretations of the results, hypotheses about the decline in the use of service-learning, and recommendations for the future.

Service-Learning: A Movement Whose Time Is Now

DON HELMSTETTER, SUPERINTENDENT, SPRING LAKE PARK (MINN.) SCHOOLS

When CNCS released its 2008 report revealing that community service in America's schools has reached a new high point, America's citizens and schools should have had reason for satisfaction. On the other hand, the report, which replicates a CNCS survey of principals that was also done in 1999 and again in 2004, shows that while 68 percent of America's schools offer community service opportunities for students, the more effective service-learning methodology is embraced by just 24 percent, and that number is declining. That is unfortunate. The use of service-learning in our schools should be increasing. David Eisner, CEO of CNCS, agrees. He laments that despite the "epidemic proportions" of students who do not graduate, "many schools are missing a key opportunity to use

this proven strategy to help their students become more motivated and engaged both in and out of the classroom."

The results of the survey reflect many school leaders' lack of knowledge and appreciation of service-learning as an activity that can actively engage participants in meaningful and personally relevant service activities. As an instructional strategy, it can be used to meet learning goals and specific contents standards. When used effectively, it provides reflection activities that can become ongoing and prompt deep thinking and analysis about oneself and one's relationship to society. If this sounds like a perfect way to teach students, to help students, it is. As a school leader who, for over 30 years, has observed and often participated with students engaged in service-learning, I know that the experience can be life-changing.

I could share countless stories. I recall Terry D., a disengaged near-dropout, who was assigned to complete a research/service project in a special education classroom. In time, she frequently became so involved with these multiply disabled students that she found it hard to leave them and had to be directed to go to her next class. At the time, Terry was a sophomore and behind in her credits. But she went on to graduate with her class and then worked as a paraprofessional with special education students while she earned her bachelor's degree and began a career teaching students with disabilities.

Yet the impact of service-learning is even bigger than that.

There is growing evidence, particularly with low-income students, that service-learning can help reduce the achievement gap. Using service-learning as part of the instructional methodology enables all students to start from the same place and to participate in activities with one another and with members of the community.

In their efforts to identify the gaps in learning and to accelerate efforts to reduce the achievement gap, state and federal governments have apparently placed a greater value on group test data than on an individual's academic growth over time; they have privileged quantitative data, rather than including qualitative as well. In doing so, they have failed to acknowledge the multiple methods of learning and multiple measures of achievement.

For those who would question the rigor of service-learning, it's important to emphasize that high-quality service-learning has clearly articulated goals and is aligned with academic and programmatic curriculum. Quality service-learning helps participants learn how to transfer knowledge and skills from one setting to another, and is—and has been for some time—producing quality results for students, as well as having a positive impact on communities.

Most educators would welcome expert assistance to embed core subjects with 21st century skills. Service-learning can effectively synthesize the 21st century skills of critical thinking and problem-solving with communication skills, collaboration skills, and active citizenship and civic participation. Most educators would welcome, even more, a curriculum and methodology that ensures the enthusiasm and engagement of the learners. All this can be theirs, with little or no additional financial investment.

What it does take, however, is an investment of time through professional development and a willingness to modify present instructional practices. In this time of scarce resources, coupled with multiple languages and cultures in our classrooms, educational leaders cannot afford to ignore the benefits of service-learning for themselves and for their students. As educators, why would we not more fully and enthusiastically embrace service-learning? It does make a difference. It's clearly a movement whose time is now.

Death of a Dream: Revisited

DON HILL, DIRECTOR OF SERVICE-LEARNING PROGRAMS, YOUTH SERVICE CALIFORNIA

From Death of a Dream:

1994 *Interest in service-learning was spreading like wildflowers in early spring. Stories of young people applying classroom learning to real problems stirred body and soul. Government, foundation, and corporate money seeded service-learning projects across the land. Schools were starting to dump rust-encrusted schedules and provide blocks of time to enable students to get out and serve in the community during the regular school day. Teachers and community agencies were reaching out to each other and forming a maze of promising collaborations. Service-learning was nudging fundamental school reform. We felt we were really on to something!*

2010 *Service-learning is now unofficially dead. You can still find traces in scattered classrooms, but it has followed in the footsteps of so many other promising reforms in the history of American education. How sad to recall those wonderful moments of hope and commitment. Where did we go wrong? Were our dreams hopelessly naive from day one? Does the ebb and flow of American political life doom efforts to really change schools? Were we nothing more than Don Quixotes tilting at windmills?*

In 1994, while working at the Stanford School of Education, I wrote an essay called *Death of a Dream, Service-Learning 1994-2010: A Historical Analysis by One of the Dreamers.* The essay identified 11 reasons why the optimism for service-learning expansion felt in 1994 by many leaders was destined for future disappointment. We have not quite reached 2010, but seeds of disappointment are definitely in the air. *Community Service and Service-Learning in America's Schools* reports an alarming decline in the use of service-learning, from 32 percent in 1999 to 24 percent in 2008. This suggests ill health if not impending death.

I thought it might be insightful to revisit the 11 reasons predicted in 1994 to lead to the ultimate death of service-learning and assess them for relevance in 2009.

1. **Service-learning never became an appealing or possible classroom strategy to "mainstream" teachers.** Few can deny the accuracy of this judgment. Teachers today may know more about service-learning and often applaud its potential, but most do not think they have the time, freedom, and resources to implement it in their classrooms.

2. **Service-learning remained an ambiguous or fuzzy concept to the majority of teachers.** While service-learning is still confused with community service by many teachers, it has become far better understood. It is disturbing and sad to learn from the new report, however, that the majority of elementary school principals think that elementary school students are too young for service-learning.

3. **Service-learning success stories were almost always individual teacher success stories.** During the last nine years an incredible number of inspiring service-learning stories have come out of almost all P-12 curriculum areas. But there have been few new examples of schools and school districts developing institutionalized service-learning programs. Service-learning remains largely an inspirational realm of individual teacher commitment and excellence.

4. **Plans to create a system for effective service-learning teachers to share their knowledge and experience with colleagues never gelled.** This prediction was too pessimistic and wrongly focused. There has been impressive success in organizing professional development resources for service-learning. The National Service-Learning Partnership created The Providers

Network to connect teachers and consultants across the nation. California developed a cadre of certified service-learning trainers that offer training in all 12 service-learning regions. The problem, however, turned out to be demand rather than supply. A high-quality professional development resource was developed, but it largely sits idle.

5. **Service-learning grew too quickly.** The predicted fast growth did not happen. There were, however, examples of school districts and schools starting programs without providing adequate professional development and resources. This led to poor quality and gave service-learning a bad name.

6. **Service-learning moved from being a nonpolitical school-community reform movement to a partisan, ideological battleground.** Fortunately, this potential ideological war never broke out. Modest support for service-learning continued on both sides of the aisle.

7. **Many service-learning programs began as partnerships seeking to connect organizations that were previously separate.** Few, however, went much beyond being partners in name and money. Although there are many amazing service-learning partnerships, they remain the exception rather than the rule. Community organizations and schools continue to find it difficult to overcome their different cultures, time schedules, and values.

8. **Service-learning never shook its image as a largely white, middle-class movement.** Alas, all too true. There are certainly impressive examples of service-learning leadership by youth and adults of color, but white middle-class leaders continue to dominate, even in highly diverse states like California and Texas.

9. **There was a destructive conflict between policy-expectation timelines and school-change timelines.** Research continues to confirm that sustainable, high-quality service-learning programs require major changes in behavior and institutional culture at the school and district level, taking five or more years to accomplish. Resources to support this kind of change proved to be in very short supply.

10. **The Corporation for National and Community Service built its political agenda on the AmeriCorps program,** a program that was sometimes managed poorly and appeared to be very expensive. Learn and Serve America remains the stepchild of CNCS. Funding support in real dollars has continually decreased. Political support has been threatened by mismanagement and political attack from the right wing, but CNCS and AmeriCorps have survived.

11. **Efforts of K-12 educators and teacher educators to collaborate on service-learning were sporadic and inconsequential.** Unfortunately, this prediction rings only too true. Because teacher training institutions view service-learning as an add-on to already overloaded curriculum, or a strategy more appropriate for experienced teachers, they seldom give it more than a passing comment or an isolated reading assignment. Service-learning continues to struggle to get a toe-hold in teacher education. Whether one looks at teacher-education course descriptions or skims a teacher-education conference program, service-learning has only a marginal presence.

I give *Death of a Dream* a C for predictive wisdom. Service-learning will not be dead in 2010, but it will certainly be ailing.

If the educational establishment will learn to listen to students, service-learning will emerge as a leading resource for motivating students to graduate from high school.

Looking ahead to 2025, I have a new dream. I believe there are seven reasons for cautious optimism that service-learning will return to health and penetrate mainstream American education.

1. The prevalence of service-learning has only dropped slightly, despite a national accountability and high-stakes test mania that has threatened to cripple creative teaching. It is hard to conceive of a more hostile environment for service-learning than what has prevailed in the last 14 years.
2. Service-learning research has started to become an asset rather than a liability as illustrated by presentations such as Using Research to Make the Case for Service-Learning (2009) by Shelley Billig from RMC Research Corporation.
3. The growing school dropout crisis offers an enormous opportunity for service-learning growth, because service-learning is a teaching strategy that works especially well with at-risk learners. If the educational establishment will learn to listen to students, service-learning will emerge as a leading resource for motivating students to graduate from high school.
4. Elementary schools could become a major catalyst for service-learning growth because it is only administration ignorance that keeps it out of this potentially receptive educational environment.
5. School site time has expanded dramatically to meet the childcare needs of families, and policymakers now judge that more time will improve test scores. So far, this added time is used primarily for afterschool programs that mimic regular classrooms or to provide supervision for homework and sports. Service-learning could, however, thrive during this time by engaging youth in meaningful activities.
6. There is encouraging evidence that President Barack Obama and Education Secretary Arne Duncan both understand and value service-learning as a teaching strategy. Building an effective political constituency for K-12 service-learning has proved to be extraordinarily difficult. Enthusiastic leadership and support from the Obama administration could overcome this frustrating challenge and spark growth across the nation.
7. The current prevailing view—that to improve schools, teachers must spend class time training students to do well on high-stakes tests—will, one must hope, begin to fade. When the pendulum switches to a more rational direction and policymakers focus on encouraging teaching practices that engage students in challenging and relevant learning experiences, service-learning will become a transformational hero.

May this new dream bury *Death of a Dream*.

Growing Service-Learning Step by Step

NUR IBRAHIM, RESEARCH ASSOCIATE,
AND TEDDY GROSS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
COMMON CENTS

Community Service and Service-Learning in America's Schools sounds the alarm for declining rates of service-learning. The researchers attribute the downturn to multiple factors, including the increasing popularity of community service projects, budget restrictions that threaten service-learning infrastructure, and negative perceptions of youth and their capacities.

While we at Common Cents share the general alarm and agree on the whole with the analysis, our field experience over 17 years suggests a somewhat different perspective on several points.

First, with respect to the relationship between service-learning and community service, we have learned that it is anything but in opposition. For example, the Penny Harvest, our best-known program, may at first glance appear to promote community service. The program deliberately builds on a massive community service activity, namely, a campaign to gather idle pennies to help the community. But its purposeful design—to train existing school staff as coaches, and provide off-site support, tools, and a flexible curriculum—encourages coaches to take ownership of the program and integrate the activities creatively into their academic curriculum. From our experience, we have concluded that, within a gradual and intentional training model, community service becomes an indicator of readiness for service-learning, rather than an indication that teachers are falling short.

Another contributor to the decline in service-learning, according to the report, is that budget cuts have often done away with service-learning infrastructure within schools. While this certainly happens, we have also seen the opposite effect. For example, sometimes explicitly (and expensively) budgeted infrastructure devoted to service-learning can marginalize the practice within a school. An expert who is focused on a single teaching method can produce great outcomes while she or he is faculty, but the practices dry up upon his or her departure. The report's authors indicate a distinct preference for hiring full-time service-learning coordinators (p. 20). We, on the other hand, have found that service-learning can take off without additional infrastructure when schools invest in programs with built-in measures of quality and when they explicitly recognize and reward levels of deeper practice with proper incentives. Until steady funding is available for service-learning, such creative use of resources must be encouraged.

Finally, the report cites an attitudinal barrier to the growth of service-learning within elementary schools. According to the data, 51 percent of elementary principals in schools without service-learning feel their students are too young to participate (p. 17). We encounter this attitude all the time and find it both ironic and shocking, since elementary schools turn out to be the ideal entry point for service-learning. Primary schools have a more flexible curriculum and less emphasis on testing. Younger students are most receptive to new activities, especially service experiences that involve the expression of empathy and belonging. Their enthusiasm can have a decidedly positive effect on teachers, which can influence the entire school. If we are to see elementary schools adopt service-learning programs, the first barrier to overcome is the negative perception of youth capacities. It must become an initiative of the service-learning community to challenge adults who have low expectations and to encourage schools and government to rethink who can participate in service-learning.

Schools with a fully integrated service curriculum—one that includes community service and service-learning programs—won't be born overnight. The critical question in our view is this: Given that community service is an indicator that teachers and students have an interest in civic action, how can we use their spontaneous interest in service and community impact to build a bridge to service-learning and engage them in deep critical study and reasoning? Given that some successful models now appear to accomplish that, perhaps a key to increased service-learning will be a closer study of program models that move schools from conducting community service projects to practicing service-learning. Then, once we have findings of effectiveness, our results must be communicated effectively to apprehensive school leaders. Simultaneously, we must encourage engaged school leaders to challenge their colleagues to get on board. Perhaps the greatest obstacle to the spread of service-learning is our tendency to regard its existence as a product rather than a process.

How can we use their spontaneous interest in service and community impact to build a bridge to service-learning and engage them in deep critical study and reasoning?

I will ask for your service and your active citizenship when I am President of the United States. This will not be a call issued in one speech or one program — this will be a central cause of my presidency.

– BARACK OBAMA

Making Room for Service-Learning

PETER LEVINE
DIRECTOR, CIRCLE

The service-learning movement has built a remarkable array of programs and networks for our children. The movement has learned from experience and research and it has improved practice. Many impressive people and organizations have been part of it. But service-learning has not, for the most part, been institutionalized in laws or policies. There is not much money for it; it isn't part of accountability systems; it is rarely mandated; and the mandates that exist rarely ensure quality.

Educational reform movements tend to crest and then wash away unless they are institutionalized. The election of Barack Obama provides a great opportunity to institutionalize service-learning. On July 2, 2008, he said, "I will ask for your service and your active citizenship when I am President of the United States. This will not be a call issued in one speech or one program — this will be a central cause of my presidency." Of course, active citizenship is broader than service-learning, but service-learning should be an important component.

Our first task must be to decide how we want to institutionalize service-learning. We must be able to defend that choice. A mandate might be popular; according to the 2008 survey of the National Conference on Citizenship, 75.5 percent of Americans favored a service-learning requirement for all students. Seventy-seven percent of Republicans and 76 percent of Democrats backed the idea in that poll. More than half of respondents supported it "strongly." Yet it is not at all clear that a mandate would produce good experiences for most children. More money might help: In the new CNCS study, 38 percent of principals whose schools did not offer service-learning blamed a lack of funds, and another 34 percent cited a lack of someone to coordinate activities. (More money could allow them to hire coordinators.) But almost half of principals said that they lacked instructional time for service-learning because of curriculum requirements. By "requirements," they probably meant aspects of the curriculum that are tested. It is up to us to show that service-learning is a good way to help kids succeed with existing tests, or else we must change the testing regime so that there is more room for service-learning.

A Wake-Up Call for Service-Learning

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Community Service and Service-Learning in America's Schools represents an important resource for the service-learning field. As the third in a series of national surveys assessing the scope of community service and service-learning in public schools, it provides critical data on the extent to which they have integrated service-learning into their curriculum and an invaluable opportunity to explore the trends in the prevalence of service-learning over time.

The first of the prevalence surveys, conducted by the U.S. Department of Education in 1999, provided an important boost for service-learning, documenting a significant expansion of service-learning from approximately 9 percent of public schools in 1984 to 32 percent of all schools in 1999 (Skinner & Chapman, 1999). The study results suggested that service-learning had made a substantial shift, from a relatively marginal practice in public schools to one that was relatively widespread. For many of us, the results appeared to validate the importance of the 1990 and 1993 National and Community Service Act legislation that established the Serve-America and Learn and Serve America programs. As a result of that legislation, not only were a thousand or more schools and districts receiving grants for service-learning programs each year, but most state Departments of Education identified service-learning coordinators whose jobs included providing support for schools interested in service-learning.

Under the National and Community Service Act, states began sponsoring annual service-learning conferences, organizing professional development activities, developing curriculum materials, and promoting best practice exchanges among practitioners. The 1999 survey findings seemed to suggest that those investments in a service-learning infrastructure had begun to pay off.

In contrast, the 2008 study should serve as a wake-up call to the service-learning field, particularly when combined with the results of the 2004 study conducted by NYLC, which used a similar survey and methodology (Scales & Roehlkepartain, 2004). Both the 2004 and 2008 studies show declines in the proportion of public schools with service-learning, despite the fact that support for noncurricular-based community service activity grew slightly during the same period. Together, the reports suggest that the gains of the early 90s are beginning to slip away.

There are a number of possible explanations for this reversal. Many practitioners point to the impact of the No Child Left Behind legislation and its emphasis on improving test scores in reading and math. The new study provides some reinforcement for this, noting that 48 percent of the principals in schools with no service-learning cited "lack of time because of state curriculum requirements" as the major reason for its absence. Service-learning programs may be particularly vulnerable to the pressures of high-stakes testing, since they are most commonly found in the social studies curriculum (52 percent of the schools with service-learning reported that it took place in social studies classes, see p. 17), an area that has been squeezed as schools shift time and resources to focus on subjects addressed in state tests.

The impact of NCLB may also have been exacerbated by the gradual decline in funding for service-learning through the Learn and Serve America program. While Learn and Serve funding was stable at approximately $43 million per year from 1996 through 2005, it was cut to $37.5 million in 2006 and has since remained at that level. Those cuts have not only reduced the funds available for direct grants to schools and districts, but also funding for state coordinators, state conferences, profes-

Research without advocacy rarely leads to real change in public policy.

sional development, and other activities that served over the past decade to promote service-learning among educators at all levels. While we do not yet have any research directly linking the drop in service-learning to the decrease in the Learn and Serve America budget, it seems reasonable to speculate that the cuts have weakened the infrastructure that supports service-learning and the degree to which states could support and encourage the growth of service-learning in public schools.

But the data in the report also suggest that service-learning practitioners need to pay more attention to building support for service-learning into district policy and practice. There is a growing body of evidence, including the results of the 2008 survey, that points to the importance of district policy and to the presence of supports for quality practice—including a service-learning coordinator and technical assistance programs—in maintaining and expanding service-learning at the local level.

The 2008 report, for example, finds that schools were more than three times as likely to have service-learning activities when the principal was aware of supportive district policies than in districts with no policy or where the principal was unaware of local policies. Similarly, schools were substantially more likely to have service-learning in districts with service-learning coordinators, with professional development activities, technical assistance materials, and forums for exchanging best practices.

These findings parallel those of other studies that found that district policies and practices, including the inclusion of support for service-learning in district improvement plans, hiring criteria, teacher evaluations, and new staff orientations were strongly associated with increased involvement of students and teachers in service-learning.

At the same time, the 2008 report makes clear that only a minority of districts with service-learning have established the policy and practice supports needed to grow and sustain service-learning as a common educational practice. Without these local supports in place, service-learning efforts are particularly vulnerable to funding cuts, pressures from state testing, and other external influences.

How should we, as service-learning practitioners, respond to these findings? Clearly there is a need for continued efforts at the national level to strengthen the Learn and Serve program and rebuild support for civic education as a core part of the public school mission. As suggested by the report, investments in research will help, but research without advocacy rarely leads to real change in public policy.

But there is also work to be done at the school and district level. One of the clear messages from this and other studies is that local policy and practice supports matter. In that regard, service-learning practitioners need to pay greater attention to the importance of building local policy support for service-learning among district administrators, school board members, teachers, parents and community members; of integrating service-learning into district improvement plans and curriculum; and of integrating support for service-learning into core district practices so that it becomes an integral part of the local educational process. Perhaps by strengthening the foundation for service-learning at the local level we can help to sustain it and grow it more effectively nationally.

A Call for Comprehensive Service-Learning Strategies

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Community Service and Service-Learning in America's Schools seems to indicate that community service as a community engagement strategy is either holding steady or increasing as service-learning as pedagogy is starting to recede. If we accept the findings of the study, we need to understand why the drop in commitment to service-learning is taking place. Simply put, I believe it is more challenging for a school or school district to implement service-learning. A community service program or requirement is, in contrast, fairly simple.

A community service program places the full burden of completion on the students. Students, with some help from adults, are responsible for finding an acceptable service opportunity and then completing the requisite number of hours. Essentially, all the school must do is provide a mechanism for students to record their hours. It is as if an English teacher told her students to be ready to take the test at the end of the year and then provided no instruction. We would not find that to be an acceptable educational strategy.

I question why schools should be in the business of voluntarism.

What we know about young people is that they come to school with a vast and diverse set of experiences that can serve to enrich the educational process. We also know that they may not have the experiences or resources required to participate in effective and meaningful service. Young people often offer resistance to the service experience at first. On the other end, however, we know that they are typically grateful for the opportunity to participate and make a difference. Civic participation is a learned behavior. Students need structure, organization, and support to participate in quality service and to make the critical learning links that help them make sense of the experience.

So what do we need to do to provide the appropriate structures and support so that young people will participate in their community and deepen and enhance their academic skills? A full-fledged service-learning program requires that teachers receive professional development and access to quality curricular resources. An effective service-learning program requires that community partners are fully engaged and working with schools to develop quality service projects. An excellent service-learning program requires that a solid infrastructure of organizational support—starting with the principal—is in place.

A community service program requires none of these. There is nothing wrong with community service. Individuals and communities can derive much value from it. I only question why schools would be in the business of voluntarism. Schools are centers of teaching and learning, and service-learning is one of the most promising pedagogies for engaging students. There are many, many voluntary organizations that can connect individuals to volunteer experiences. Schools provide the important academic linkages that elevate service-learning to a proven educational strategy.

In Chicago, we see important student gains in academic success, civic engagement, and social or emotional development as a result of service-learning. Working with their teachers and adults in the community as an enhancement of their classroom learning brings profound gains for students. In my estimation, students who learn academic material at a deeper level through service, who gain important civic skills and build stronger relationships with teachers, peers, and others in the community are better prepared for the world.

Perhaps the commitment to service-learning is slipping. If true, it is a troubling sign. It seems to signal an increased reliance on standardization of education and less commitment to progressive educational strategies. Service-learning, though challenging to implement, is well worth the effort as we seek to develop knowledgeable citizens for American democracy.

How can we go about reversing this trend among educational institutions? There are important roles for stakeholders to play here: Foundations and other grant-giving institutions should provide funding to support schools and districts—not necessarily individual teachers—where a commitment to implementing a schoolwide or districtwide service-learning strategy exists. CNCS should also direct its funding and supports to schools and districts where a comprehensive implementation plan is in place. A priority should be placed on professional development and strategic implementation. Providers of professional development might address both the micro and macro levels of service-learning, that is, continuing to teach teachers how to use service-learning as a quality pedagogy, but also providing schools and districts with tools on how to move service-learning to scale from the outset. Researchers can continue to demonstrate how project-oriented service-learning of sustained duration and intensity is far more likely to help students achieve important academic, social, and civic gains than disconnected service.

With an increased emphasis on school- and districtwide implementation, we stand a much better chance across the country of moving to scale with service-learning.

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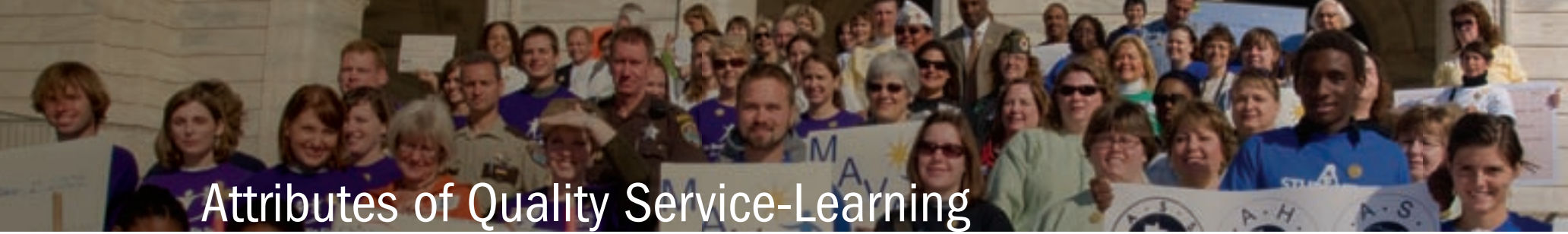

Attributes of Quality Service-Learning

Findings from NYLC's Transitioning To Adulthood Survey

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How well do the K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice align with what young people believe constitutes a high quality service experience? How does quality, as captured by the standards, affect what they gain from service? While the evidence base for the service-learning standards rested on research gathered in cross-disciplinary literature reviews of what makes for effective practice, the standards themselves are now undergoing rigorous research and testing to make sure that they produce the intended outcomes for student academic and civic achievement.

In this study, we used data from the *National Survey on Service-Learning and Transitioning to Adulthood* (Markow et al., 2006) to test the validity of the K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice (NYLC, 2008). We explored how standards-based attributes of service were associated with respondents' perceptions of how school-based service had an impact on their adult lives and the perceived quality of their experiences.

The National Survey on Service-Learning and Transitioning to Adulthood, conducted by Harris Interactive, Inc., asked a nationally representative sample of 3,123 young adults ages 18 to 28 whether they had participated in community service before age 18 and, if so, whether their service had taken place in a school, a community organization, or on their own. For this study, we analyzed the 2,132 respondents (68.3%) who had engaged in school-based service.

In addition to demographic questions, the survey asked participants to identify their "most meaningful" school service experience, and then asked whether 15 different quality attributes had been present in the

How does service-learning quality, as captured by the standards, affect what young people gain from service?

experience. Drawn from the Essential Elements of Service-Learning (National Service-Learning Cooperative, 1999) these quality attribute items included, for example, *I helped design or plan the service project* and *I did research or read articles or books to prepare for the experience.*

The survey also asked respondents to rate their service experience (from poor to excellent) and to describe the experience in writing. Finally, one item asked respondents what effects (negative, not much, positive) their school-based service had had on aspects of life associated with a successful transition to adulthood, such as friendships and family life, ability to meet goals, and citizenship.

Analyzing the Data

Our analysis of the data was guided by three questions:

1. Is the presence of standards in respondents' most meaningful school-based service experience positively associated with their ratings of the quality of the experience?
2. Does the presence of standards in respondents' most meaningful school-based service experience predict more positive perceptions of the impacts of school-based service on life?
3. Do the reasons respondents cite for assigning high ratings to the quality of their school-based service align with the standards?

Before analyzing the data, we aligned the 15 attribute items with the K-12 Quality Standards for Service-Learning Practice. While the attributes did not map exactly onto the standards, they were consistent with seven of eight standards, as indicated in Table 1. We added one additional standard to our analysis, adult roles, to incorporate attributes of service that offered opportunities for meaningful interaction with adults.

TABLE 1

Alignment of Standards to Quality Attributes in the Transitioning to Adulthood Survey

K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice	Service experience attributes from items in the survey
Link to Curriculum Service-learning is intentionally used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or content standards.	– I received a grade for the project or it was related to my class grade. – I did research, read articles or books to prepare for the project.
Meaningful Service Service-learning actively engages participants in meaningful and personally relevant service activities.	– I worked directly with the people in the community (a "hands-on" project). – I learned a lot. – The project was important for the group it served.
Progress Monitoring Service-learning engages participants in an ongoing process to assess the quality of implementation and progress toward meeting specified goals, and uses results for improvement and sustainability.	– I analyzed or evaluated whether the project was a success.
Youth Voice Service-learning provides youth with a strong voice in planning implementing, and evaluating service-learning experiences with guidance from adults.	– I chose or helped to choose the type of project I worked on. – I helped design or plan the service project.
Diversity Service-learning promotes understanding of diversity and mutual respect among all participants.	– I met people from different economic, racial, or cultural backgrounds from my own.
Partnerships Service-learning partnerships are collaborative, mutually beneficial, and address community needs.	– (No attributes addressed Partnerships.)
Duration and Intensity Service-learning has sufficient duration and intensity to address community needs and meet specified outcomes.	– For how long did you regularly participate in this project?
Reflection Service-learning incorporates multiple challenging reflection activities that are ongoing and that prompt deep thinking and analysis about one's self and one's relationship to society.	– I was required to write about or reflect on my service experience for the class or group. – I had in-class discussions about the project.
Adult Roles* (*Not represented in the standards, but considered in our analysis as a quasi-standard.)	– The teachers or adult leaders set high expectations. – I met adults I would go to if I were in trouble or needed help.

CHART 1

Frequencies of Quality Attributes by Student-Reported Service Rating

Standard	Quality Attribute	Excellent	Poor
Meaningful Service	Project important for group served	90.2%	8.8%
	Learned a lot	89%	5.3%
	Worked directly with people in the community	81.9%	26.8%
Adult Roles	Teachers/adult leaders set high expectations	75.7%	0%
	Met adults I'd go to in trouble	48.6%	18.8%
Youth Voice	Chose or helped choose project	75.2%	40.4%
	Helped design or plan project	51.7%	14.3%
Duration and Intensity	Duration > month	72.6%	42.1%
Diversity	Met people with different backgrounds	68.7%	17.5%
Reflection	Had discussions about project	60.1%	10.7%
	Required to write about/reflect on service experience	47.5%	26.3%
Progress Monitoring	Analyzed/evaluated whether project a success	59.5%	10.5%
Link to Curriculum	Received a grade or project related to class grade	44.3%	32.1%
	Did research, read articles/books	33.9%	22.8%

Chart 1 illustrates the link between each quality attribute and how respondents rated the quality of their most meaningful service experience. Attributes connected to meaningful service, such as *I worked directly with people in the community* and *I learned a lot*, were most likely to be associated with an excellent rating. In contrast, attributes associated with a link to curriculum, including *I received a grade …* and *I did research …* were least strongly associated with an excellent rating.

Relating Standards to Respondents' Ratings of Their Experience

Given the observed associations between the quality attributes and participants' overall rating of their service experience, we performed chi-square tests to look at these relationships. The results (see Table 2) indicate that the ratings were not evenly distributed: across attributes, those who assigned high (excellent or very good) ratings to their service experience were significantly more apt to report having experienced quality attributes than those who assigned low ratings.

TABLE 2
Chi-Square Tests of Ratings by Attributes

Standard	Quality Attribute	N	X^2	df	P
Meaningful Service	I worked directly with people in community.	2131	173.53	4	.000
	I learned a lot	2132	522.61	4	.000
	The project was important for group served.	2131	307.27	4	.000
Link to Curriculum	I received a grade or project related to class grade.	2131	18.58	4	.001
	I did research, read articles/books to prepare for the project.	2133	87.44	4	.000
Reflection	I was required to write about/reflect on service experience.	2133	65.91	4	.000
	I had in-class discussions about project.	2132	121.29	4	.000
Diversity	I met people from different backgrounds	2134	163.06	4	.000
Youth Voice	I chose or helped choose the type of project.	2131	170.09	4	.000
	I helped design/plan project	2131	138.42	4	.000
Progress Monitoring	I analyzed/evaluated whether the project was a success.	2133	196.34	4	.000
Duration and Intensity	Duration > month.				
Adult Roles	Teachers/adult leaders set high expectations.	2133	300.86	4	.000
	I met adults I would go to if in trouble or needed help.	2131	156	4	.000

Relating Standards to Outcomes Through Logistic Regression Analysis

For a second analysis, we averaged the quality attribute scores for each standard. We then used logistic regression to analyze how well the standards predicted participants' perceptions of the long-term impacts of service on life. (See Table 3.)

We conducted two sets of logistic regressions: one that tested how well student characteristics such as gender and how students were involved in service predicted positive life outcomes (Model 1), and one that tested how the attributes of quality service-learning predicted positive life outcomes (Model 2). We then compared the findings. We found that Model 2 was a better fit; in other words, the attributes of quality service-learning were stronger predictors of positive life outcomes than student characteristics alone.

As shown in Table 3, meaningful service, progress monitoring, and adult roles were the most robust predictors of outcomes, meaning that these attributes were most strongly associated with the positive life outcomes reported by participants. The adult roles variable was strongly positively associated with perceived impacts on all aspects of life, except the ability to help others. Meaningful service and progress monitoring also significantly predicted perception of impact of

The process of learning from experience is dynamic; it requires methods of reflection and feedback to continually monitor its flow and direction.

service on all aspects of life, except ability to avoid difficulty with the law and being responsible financially. Diversity significantly predicted ability to help others, respect for others, and ability to see the world from someone else's perspective.

Some results of the analyses ran counter to what we expected. For example, reflection was not significantly associated with the majority of outcomes. Youth voice and duration, two standards with broad research support, were found to be positively associated at a significant level only with career development or advancement, while link to curriculum was a significant predictor only of the ability to avoid difficulty with the law.

In addition to demonstrating the explanatory power of the standards, the analyses also showed which outcomes were not well explained by the standards. Most notably, being financially responsible had only one significant predictor—that of adult roles.

In a third approach to testing the standards, we analyzed why respondents rated their school-based service experience as excellent or very good. The top six responses they provided to explain their ratings are listed in Table 4.

The relatively large percentages of respondents who selected *I made a difference in my community* and *It helped me enjoy learning* as reasons for their ratings indicate the significance of meaningful service. Diversity was supported by respondents' emphasis on *I met people whose lives were very different*. Two responses, *I developed better relationships with adults* and *Because of the efforts of an adult leader*, confirmed the importance of adult roles. *It made me realize what I wanted to do with my life* also suggests that career exploration may be an important feature of service-learning.

Results: Association of the Standards with Desired Outcomes

Results from our three analyses showed that meaningful service was the strongest predictor of impacts of service on life, in terms of the number of positive outcomes young people reported. Further, the specific quality attributes associated with meaningful service were among the indicators most often found in service experiences that respondents rated as excellent. These findings provide support for the meaningful service standard and for recommendations that service-learning projects be relevant and important to learners and meet authentic community needs. The findings are also in accordance with recommendations from Positive Youth Development psychologists, such as Eccles and Gootman (2002) that young people need to have an array of experiences to successfully transition to adulthood including "to make a difference in their community" (p. 299).

Progress monitoring emerged as another important predictor of perceived impacts of service on adult life. In addition, attributes linked to this standard were significantly positively associated with participants' ratings of the quality of their school-based service. Monitoring progress using a variety of methods throughout the entire service-learning process can provide teachers and students with evidence on the impacts of the project on both the community and students. Findings regarding the importance of progress monitoring are congruent with the results of numerous investigations showing that feedback is one of the most important determiners of learning (Hattie, 1992; Marzano et al., 2001).

TABLE 3
Binary Logistic Regression Results

	Friendships and Family Life	Ability to Work Well with Others	Ability to Avoid Difficulty with Law	Career Development or Advancement	Ability to Accomplish Goals	Ability to Help Others
Demographic Characteristics						
Gender (Male = 1)	-.185 (1.05)	-.269* (.124)	-.182 (.114)	-.289** (.105)	-.385*** (.110)	-.433** (.127)
Age	-.141* (.068)	-.128 (.080)	-.131 (.073)	-.182** (.067)	-.147* (.071)	-.066 (.080)
Ethnicity	-.045 (.109)	-.091 (.130)	-.205 (.117)	.175 (.109)	-.161 (.114)	-.160 (.132)
Residence Locale	-.267*** (.070)	-.213** (.082)	-.024 (.075)	-.126 (.070)	-.042 (.073)	-.148 (.084)
Service Involvement						
Also Performed Service in a Community Organization	.647*** (.140)	.404** (.148)	.135 (.154)	.160 (.140)	.316* (.137)	.625*** (.147)
Did Service on Own	.118 (.110)	.540*** (.136)	.338** (.119)	.485*** (.108)	.383** (.116)	.311* (.135)
Total Number of Service Classes	.012 (.030)	.017 (.039)	-.040 (.032)	.027 (.030)	.007 (.033)	-.026 (.036)
Standards-Based Quality Attributes						
Link to Curriculum	.307 (.179)	.011 (.218)	.914*** (.192)	.231 (.174)	.008 (.186)	-.197 (.223)
Meaningful Service	.539** (.192)	1.414*** (.212)	.394 (.209)	-.058 (.196)	.874*** (.191)	1.447*** (.216)
Progress Monitoring	.483*** (.128)	.659*** (.162)	.096 (.141)	.407** (.125)	.672*** (.135)	.320* (.162)
Youth Voice	.198 (.150)	.079 (.183)	.040 (.166)	.440** (.148)	.291 (.157)	.316 (.186)
Diversity	-.018 (.120)	.205 (.139)	.071 (.134)	-.055 (.122)	.005 (.124)	.478** (.172)
Duration	.013 (.110)	.181 (.128)	.190 (.119)	.333** (.109)	.116 (.114)	.160 (.130)
Reflection	-.456** (.164)	-.288 (.200)	-.402* (.178)	-.222 (.166)	-.335 (.172)	-.165 (.206)
Adult Roles	.986*** (.163)	.745*** (.200)	.832*** (.177)	.909*** (.161)	1.015*** (.173)	-.165 (.206)
Constant	.061 (.364)	.370 (.421)	-.451 (.388)	-.326 (.359)	.012 (.378)	.256 (.423)

Note: *p < .05, ** p < .01, and ***p < .001.

TABLE 3 (CONTINUED)

Binary Logistic Regression Results

	Being a Good Citizen	Self-Confidence	Being Responsible Financially	Respect for Others	Leadership Ability	Ability to See World from Someone Else's Perspective
Demographic Characteristics						
Gender (Male = 1)	-.344** (.118)	-.257* (.108)	.056 (.112)	-.457*** (.122)	-.353** (.107)	-.594*** (.116)
Age	-.085 (.075)	-.052 (.070)	-.228** (.071)	-.050 (.417)	-.090 (.069)	.031 (.074)
Ethnicity	.340** (.122)	-.203 (.113)	.039 (.117)	.160 (.127)	.216 (.110)	-.020 (.121)
Residence Locale	-.275*** (.078)	-.012 (.072)	-.019 (.073)	-.279 (.081)	-.018 (.071)	-.070 (.077)
Service Involvement						
Also Performed Service in a Community Organization	.625*** (.139)	.516*** (.135)	.270 (.156)	.737*** (.145)	.602*** (.134)	.554*** (.141)
Did Service on Own	.511*** (.128)	.392** (.115)	.468*** (.116)	.416** (.131)	.419*** (.113)	.468*** (.125)
Total Number of Service Classes	-.032 (.034)	.023 (.033)	-.047 (.03)	.032 (.038)	-.001 (.031)	-.094** (.032)
Standards-Based Quality Attributes						
Link to Curriculum	-.064 (.207)	.416* (.188)	.330 (.192)	-.288 (.213)	.022 (.183)	-.098 (.200)
Meaningful Service	1.027*** (.205)	.927*** (.191)	-.141 (.214)	1.100*** (.208)	.507** (.189)	1.151*** (.202)
Progress Monitoring	.395** (.151)	.710*** (.134)	.360 (.139)	.259 (.156)	.568*** (.132)	.334* (.144)
Youth Voice	.250 (.173)	-.011 (.157)	.092 (.163)	-.156 (.180)	.154 (.153)	.090 (.167)
Diversity	.007 (.135)	.150 (.123)	-.102 (.132)	.511*** (.136)	.050 (.121)	.573*** (.129)
Duration	.210 (.121)	.056 (.113)	-.003 (.117)	.185 (.126)	.096 (.111)	.161 (.119)
Reflection	-.144 (.189)	-.598** (.172)	-.065 (.178)	-.052 (.197)	-.099 (.168)	-.147 (.185)
Adult Roles	.687*** (.189)	.879*** (.170)	.794*** (.175)	1.138*** (.200)	1.012*** (.167)	.661*** (.183)
Constant	.206 (.397)	-.617 (.374)	-.227 (.367)	-.108 (.414)	-.589 (.368)	-.616 (.395)

TABLE 4

Why were these experiences good/very good or excellent? (N=1898)

Reasons	Percentages
I made a difference in my community.	68.6%
I met people whose lives were very different.	45.9%
It helped me enjoy learning.	37.8%
I developed better relationships with adults.	27.0%
It made me realize what I wanted to do with my life.	17.4%
Because of the efforts of an adult leader.	16.8%

Shumer also suggests that feedback is critical in experiential forms for education: "The process of learning from experience is dynamic; it requires methods of reflection and feedback to continually monitor its flow and direction" (1997, 36).

The analyses revealed that the adult roles attributes — *The teachers or adult leaders set high expectations* and *I met adults I would go to if I were in trouble or needed help* — positively predicted impacts of service on most areas of adult life. Furthermore, respondents who assigned a high rating to their service experience cited relationships with adults and leadership as reasons for their ratings.

These findings align with evidence from throughout fields related to youth development. The need for relationships with supportive adults is a key feature of Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets, and caring adults are one of the Five Promises (the developmental resources young people need for success in life) put forth by America's Promise (Blum & Rinehart, 1998; Benson, Leffert, Scales, & Blyth, 1998; Eccles & Gootman, 2002). The strength of these findings concerning adults roles suggests that adult roles attributes should be included in future iterations of service-learning standards.

One of the most perplexing results of the study was the lack of pronounced effects for reflection. The survey question on reflection mentioned writing and in-class discussions and so may not have encompassed the full diversity of reflection activities experienced by respondents. In addition, the question about writing used the term reflection, which may not have been a comprehensible concept for respondents.

Conclusions

The findings from this study confirm the importance of several of the K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice (notably meaningful service and progress monitoring), while not supporting others (such as reflection). In addition, the results suggest the importance of exploring a new standard on adult roles.

While this study was limited by its inability to measure the presence of the standards in young people's service-learning experiences directly, it points the way for further research. The service-learning community should work together to create measures based on the new standards, as well as logic models that define the relationships between the standards and desired outcomes of service-learning. These efforts will contribute to the clarity and utility of the standards for researchers, as well as practitioners and policymakers.

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Urban Matters

Service-Learning as a Strategy for Improving City Schools

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Wokie Weah is NYLC's vice president. She oversees the annual National Urban Service-Learning Institute, HIV/AIDS prevention initiatives, and new service-learning program development. A past UNICEF project officer for education, she has written and spoken on service-learning and diversity throughout the United States and Africa.

In its 25-year history of commitment to service-learning, NYLC has been deeply invested in advancing service-learning as a strategy for reforming urban schools. This section of *Growing to Greatness 2009* captures some of the current thinking on service-learning in urban contexts that has been explored at the annual National Urban Service-Learning Institute and in the work of service-learning leaders nationwide.

In this section, researchers, teachers and other service-learning practitioners, administrators, and students come together to look at the promise of service-learning in urban areas from each of their perspectives to document what we know about what works, where we are now, and what practices have potential for the future.

Despite service-learning's proven record of improving academic, civic, and community outcomes, recent evidence from *Leveling the Path to Participation: Volunteering and Civic Engagement Among Youth from Disadvantaged Circumstances* shows that urban youth often have limited access to service-learning. This is especially troubling because urban communities are rich in opportunities for service-learning, and young people are important resources for urban improvement.

Building a foundation for quality service-learning in urban contexts—based on dialogue and consensus around key issues and rigorous research—is one of NYLC's central goals for the next several years. Through research we can devise suggestions for educators, advocates, and policymakers on how to improve service-learning practices to ensure that young people in urban areas have access to service learning and the academic and civic outcomes it can foster.

As we seek to go forward, several questions will guide our work:

1. What are the unique capacities and needs of urban youth (for example, for academic and civic support, efficacy, or empowerment) and how should these capacities and needs shape service-learning curriculum, professional development, and recommendations for service-learning practice in urban settings? How can service-learning be used to support urban students?
2. Do the K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice adequately describe the requirements for high-quality service-learning in urban schools? Are additional standards, indicators, or examples of quality practice needed to challenge the "missionary ideology" that often characterizes urban service-learning and to help teachers adequately tap into the concerns and strengths of students with very different backgrounds from their own?
3. How can we encourage urban students, teachers, and schools to use service-learning to engage with their surrounding neighborhoods and communities in ways that will rebuild or improve them?

As a means of beginning to explore these questions, we bring you a pair of articles on service-learning in urban contexts. A group of service-learning advocates from a broad range of perspectives holds a lively roundtable discussion on how service-learning can help address the achievement gap for urban students. Joseph Erickson and William Hughes present compelling case studies from urban school administrators on how they support the implementation of service-learning and the factors that seem to elicit successful institutionalization.

NYLC Initiatives to Improve Service-Learning in Urban Areas

Since 1982, NYLC has engaged in a variety of strategies to bring service-learning to urban communities. From our roots in service-learning programming in cities such as St. Louis, Minneapolis, and Chicago, and continuing on to the annual National Urban Service-Learning Institute and current efforts to create urban service-learning hubs as part of the Generator School Network, NYLC has been deeply committed to improving urban education and urban communities harnessing the power of service-learning.

NATIONAL URBAN SERVICE-LEARNING INSTITUTE

Implementing model service-learning programs in city schools revealed an urgent need to create an urban education commons, a place where urban educators could come together to learn and teach, share resources, and create new knowledge and understandings about how service-learning can help students achieve academic excellence. Since 2003, NYLC has sponsored the National Urban Service-Learning Institute. These annual two-day events explore the opportunities and challenges in applying service-learning to urban settings and attract practitioners, students, and researchers nationwide. Keynote speakers have raised awareness about the ability of service-learning to build capacity and revitalize urban communities, but have also cautioned against viewing urban service-learning through a monocultural lens or as projects in which urban settings serve as mere "laboratories" for service by those from outside a community.

SERVICE-LEARNING EMERGING LEADERS INITIATIVE

Funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and drawing on the earlier work of the Service-Learning Diversity/Equity Project, the Service-Learning Emerging Leaders Initiative

is a collaborative project of NYLC and the National Service-Learning Partnership. The Emerging Leaders Initiative seeks to diversify the service-learning field by developing leaders from communities of color. Emerging Leaders are selected based on their desire to use service-learning to improve schools and communities and to address issues of equity, inclusion, and justice. An additional goal is to strengthen service-learning practice through professional development, policy advocacy, constituency building, and enhancing the communication and visibility of service-learning. In 2007, 22 promising teachers, community organizers, youth workers, and other professionals and organizations were selected to participate in the initiative. Each leader is now directing a substantive project in policy development, research, professional development or other areas in order to advance the goals of the initiative. For further information visit *www.nylc.org/eli*.

Y-RISE

Y-RISE (Youth Replicating Innovative Strategies and Excellence in HIV/AIDS prevention) is NYLC's multifaceted effort to mobilize young people in the fight against AIDS. Launched in April 2003, it combines research, training, peer education, and the arts to bridge the gap between knowledge and behavior. Implementing Y-RISE has involved several strategies, including convening global experts to compile data and identify best practices for fighting the pandemic; building a network of service-learning professionals to train educators in the use of service-learning and Y-RISE curricula; and empowering and training young people to educate their peers in HIV/AIDS prevention.

NATIONAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP TRAINING

A core strategy for NYLC is to equip urban youth to reinvest in their communities as leaders. One way to accomplish that is the National Youth Leadership Training. High school students from across the United States gather in Minnesota each year for the event: a life-changing week of adventure, self-discovery, friendship, cultural exchange, leadership-building, and service. In response to alarming patterns of segregation and inequality in urban schools, young people participating in the NYLT have taken on narrowing the achievement gap as a key area for channeling their efforts in their home communities.

Service-Learning and Redefining Achievement

A Roundtable Discussion Among Urban Service-Learning Leaders

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In fall 2008, Growing to Greatness invited experts in service-learning, education, and youth leadership to participate in an online roundtable discussion on the achievement gap in urban areas. Specifically, they were asked to discuss how they defined achievement and the achievement gap, understood the causes and consequences of the gap for young people and communities in urban areas, and viewed the potential of service-learning to address the gap.

Moderator: *Please begin the discussion by offering your own definition of student achievement and some commentary on what you believe are some of the cultural, historical, and structural factors contributing to the observed disparity between the performance of different groups of students.*

Andrea Yoder: What does it mean to achieve? Merriam-Webster's defines it as "to attain a desired end or aim; to become successful," or in the language of education, achievement is mastery of a standard. This leads me to ask, who gets to define success or the goals to be strived toward? Who decides what standard is important to master in order to become one who has "achieved"?

Unfortunately, for many students in urban schools, people who perceive the world from the students' lens are often not those creating the standards. How do the people who sit on the committees determining what is appropriate to learn and how long it will take to "master" the topic know what my students are capable of achieving and how long it will take them? Additionally, is it really realistic to expect that all students will learn the same thing in the same way in the same amount of time?

Paul Houston: Andrea has hit on the core of why the current reform efforts fly off the track—the people making the decisions for

others have no real connection to those for whom they are deciding. The notion that she is laying out—that there is a disconnect between those who set the standards and those who have to meet them—is key. Students bring many strengths to the table, but we spend so much time telling them what they can't do and what they don't know, that we rarely figure out what they can do. Meanwhile they are turned off and tune out.

Julia Sewell: I absolutely agree. Often the people who sit on education boards have never been through the types of things that "at-risk" children have. If you don't have that experience or at least the voices of these children, you are missing the mark. And when we miss the mark, children suffer. We need to begin to listen, and to incorporate the voices of our affected youth, so that not only can they be heard, but effective change can take place.

Andrea Yoder: A holistic definition of achievement recognizes cultural worldviews that differ from those of dominant middle-class America and the needs of people beyond the need for intellectual development. Often, non-Western cultures tend to value relationships and connection to community as much or more than striving for markers of success. These more affective qualities are absent in most standards documents. Recognizing that many cultures view the process and goals of achievement differently, and incorporating this into our educational perspectives and policy, is important.

Researchers in the achievement motivation literature are increasingly recognizing the importance of attending to affective factors within the educational experience. I would argue that the affective elements of the educational experience are of primary importance in creating safe spaces for all students, without which, deep learning cannot take place. Based on my own experience creating communities around learning, my opinion is that if affective factors were given attention in a process model of achievement the inherent need within students to connect with others, their community and the natural world would be satisfied. This, in turn, would encourage most students to enjoy the learning process, thereby causing students to act from places of internal, intrinsic motivation to achieve. It is for this reason that I say achievement occurs when attention is given to affective needs.

A key psychological need is the need to feel we have choice, and a large part of choice is the feeling that you can impact and improve your world. Encouraging this belief is difficult in cultures of poverty, where choice has been nonexistent or extremely limited due to limited resources. And our current back-to-basics, No Child Left Behind, scripted classroom climate, in which creativity and freedom of expression are stifled at the expense of "getting through all the standards," tends to discourage this drive. But students need to understand that they can, with much work and struggle, transform their own reality. And I believe achievement will naturally follow if students know they have options within the classroom experience to demonstrate what they have learned in multiple ways, to learn information through multiple pathways, and then to apply this learning to improve their world. Therefore, a more transformative definition of achievement should be student- driven.

Finally, achievement must be considered in context. Students are achieving all the time, encouraged or limited by opportunities in their environment. Yet, often, in today's climate, students are recognized as achieving only if they are "at grade level." This does a disservice to our students. It does not recognize the effort they put forth, the growth they achieved, or the obstacles they overcame.

From this argument, my definition of achievement can be synthesized as follows: Achievement is a student-driven process, not a goal to be reached, which gives attention to the context, both psychological and environ-

mental, that students operate within in order to reach a goal, determined, in part, by the person striving to achieve it.

Paul Houston: First, it is my strong feeling that student achievement cannot be measured by a single test. Unfortunately, in this country, we have come to equate the two, to our great detriment. I hear superintendents tell me all the time about how they "raised" student achievement when, in fact, all they raised were scores on the state tests.

Student achievement must be grounded in the rich sense that there are many aspects to achieving. Students achieve when they have a sense of personal responsibility, when they know the advantage of helping others, when they can use their skills to solve various problems. None of these are tested for. As a nation, we are worried about our place in the international market, but while America's international advantage has been its innovation and creativity, neither of these is measured on achievement tests. To be innovative and creative, you need to ask the "dumb" questions and to challenge authority-characteristics. These are not tested for either. The point I am making is that we must view student achievement through a much broader lens.

This takes me to the so-called achievement gap. There is a gap in current test results, in part, because those tests were designed for a certain segment of our student population. I am not suggesting that there are not basic concepts and skills that all students should have, and clearly, we have a segment of our population that has difficulty meeting those expectations. Much of this low performance is school-based and grows from low expectations, inadequate learning opportunities (often driven by an inequitable system of funding schools), overexposure to the least experienced teachers, etc. No doubt, much of the problem is created outside the school setting and stems from inadequate support within the family and community. Most of those who are at the low end of the "gap" are not just minority children—they are poor children. Poverty has an enormous impact on children's opportunity to learn.

However, as long as we only reward certain kinds of "knowing" and work off a deficit model, we will always have a gap. Schooling and, subsequently, testing to measure the results of schooling have been aimed at those who are skilled at linear, sequential processing. I would argue that a significant proportion of our students don't use a linear approach to their work. The point here is that our

Most of those who are at the low end of the "gap" are not just minority children—they are poor children.

students—all of them—come to schools with a richness of ability. But we keep telling them what they don't know and what they can't do and that must change.

Kathleen Lee: I agree with almost everything that you both have said, but how do we make this happen in traditional school settings? How do we change the minds of those who want test scores and who run our school systems? How do we prove that our way of thinking is best for our learners and our schools? How do we create more democratic schools that work for all learners regardless of backgrounds?

Jackie Schmidt-Posner: I am struck by how all of us believe that the definition of achievement needs to be broadened considerably. And we all feel that the measures most often used—test scores and grades—are woefully inadequate. I wonder who is doing the research to specify and assess other kinds of abilities, so they can be used as standards, and what we as practitioners can do to assist in the development of such measures. In the interim, perhaps a combination of more standardized measures (for broader comparability) could be combined with locally developed assessments (at the level of the school or teacher), such as portfolios or more qualitative measures of student success.

Kathleen Lee: I have been teaching at-risk youth for the Philadelphia School District for a little over 20 years. When I started teaching, I taught a traditional curriculum the traditional way. Here is what I observed: disconnected learners, disenchanted learners, delinquent learners, "don't give a damn" learners, and finally "don't do any work" learners. I would assign what I believed were interesting topics based on the curriculum and out of more than 100 students, I would receive maybe 20 assignments. I saw a drop in attendance and a rise in disruptive behavior.

So I began to experiment on my own. I asked myself questions like, what made school fun for me? I remembered that my fondest memories of learning were at the laboratory school I attended, which provided flexibility, hands-on learning, and lots of support. Many

I remembered that my fondest memories of learning were at the laboratory school I attended, which provided flexibility, hands-on learning, and lots of support.

of the lessons there were self-discovery ones. I also loved scouting. I asked myself how I could combine these two elements in my classes to encourage my students to become lifelong, engaged learners.

One day, West Philadelphia Improvement Corps entered Turner Middle School and I was asked to work with them. We had a pull-out program then, and I noticed that the kids who went out into the community and performed community service were doing better than the ones who stayed in class all day. I wanted to know how we could involve all of the kids in service-learning. So we came up with the idea of writing our own curriculum and designing community history projects. Somehow I evolved from teaching through projects and performing community service into service-learning. With the demand for standards-driven instruction, I learned how to infuse community service with academics. What I saw were engaged students, increased attendance, more work than I could grade, and parental involvement. Even grades improved, along with student attitudes towards life, school, and community. So I know that teaching using service-learning as a vehicle works.

Paul Houston: At their core, students want work that is meaningful and engaging. This work tends to be in the real world, not the reflected world of the classroom. I was once talking with a professor whose observation hit me directly. He said that if a basketball coach taught basketball the way we do school, the players would get together everyday and read about basketball, write papers about basketball, and discuss basketball, but they would never play it. The only way you learn basketball is to do it. Likewise for so much of what we want children to learn.

Julia Sewell: Kathleen makes an amazing point! From the perspective of someone who is still a student, I can vividly remember being in high school and feeling uninterested much of the time. In my experience, when teachers put forth an effort to engage students via their perspectives, interests, ways of learning, and language, success follows. There is a quote that, I think, embodies the change that is needed by teachers in this effort to eliminate the achievement gap. It reads, "If they can't learn the way you teach, teach the way they learn."

Jackie Schmidt-Posner: For me, student achievement involves a broad notion of how each individual can work towards the most effective and satisfying use of his or her unique talents, interests, and intelligence in a way that promises a future. To be able to do this, young people need to build specific competencies—some that are necessary to live in society (e.g., literacy, understanding of basic science and math, historical context), and others that are more focused on unique interests and talents (e.g., developing vocal or instrumental music capabilities, learning tools for quantitative analysis, developing carpentry skills). In order to realize their potential, young people need to build the skill and content foundations that allow them to pursue individual interests. But they also need to know that opportunities exist for them and to believe that if they work hard and persistently develop their skills, they can create their future.

Though young people can be supported by their families in achieving their potential, it is schools that our society charges with providing a consistent, coherent program of

> Service-learning allows students to discover their own power and their own potential gifts. It is a real-world experience that gives them the chance to be engaged in meaningful activity.

study and environment for learning. While there are certainly individual differences among students that come into play when accounting for different levels of achievement, it is the structural conditions of schools that I am persuaded are responsible for much of the disparity. In her chapter of *What Together We Can Do: A Forty Year Update Of The National Advisory Commission On Civil Disorders*, Linda Darling-Hammond makes a clear argument for looking at changes to the core practices of schooling rather than layering on special programs to serve the needs of at-risk students—a strategy that has not been particularly successful in reducing the achievement gap.

Kathleen Lee: Jackie's comments resonate with me a lot. I think they offer some insightful ways to change the systems and infuse what the others have said. I like the shared approach among school, learners and parents.

Andrea Yoder: In my opinion, the most authentic approach to achieve success with all of our students is a long-term, sustainable strategy to change the underlying structural conditions of schools to better address a holistic vision of achievement. This is a necessary first step in shifting the perception of achievement from standards, tests, and grades to a process-oriented, contextual model. A more holistic vision of achievement, one that links student success to the development of the psychological, affective and intellectual capacities of the child within the context of students' culture and community, could lead to schooling that offers connection and nurtures hope.

Jackie Schmidt-Posner: What seems to make the biggest difference in achievement is having well-prepared teachers and adequate and appropriate instructional materials —textbooks, laboratory materials, and so on. Recent research reported by Darling-Hammond suggests that the focus of school improvement, particularly for those students currently achieving at lower levels, should be on recruitment, training, and support of quality teachers.

Andrea Yoder: I think that teacher recruitment, training, and support must also go through a revitalization process. More attention in teacher education should be given to how to develop authentic relationships with parents and the community. Some insights could be borrowed from community organizing literature. It might also be beneficial to consider immersion experiences in urban environments during teacher education. This experience along with sustained investigation into cultural differences could help new teachers construct different definitions of success. It would help new teachers understand the daily context of students' lives, their challenges, their strengths and how they approach the learning process.

Julia Sewell: In my definition, achievement is measured by a student's ability to fully understand and comprehend material presented in an educational context. Achievement is obtained via resources, proper, effective training, and through proper education and involvement. Things that contribute to achievement are having the opportunities and resources that other schools have. Historically, minorities, specifically African-American and Latino students, have "achieved" less than their

white counterparts. However, I attribute this gap to the lack of resources, opportunities, and chances that are given to these specified target groups. There is typically less money given to the urban schools, less *effective* programs are offered to them, and oftentimes, they represent a "forgotten people."

Moderator: *What is the potential for service-learning to increase achievement, in the sense in which you mean it, and how can it address observed disparities in performance?*

Paul Houston: Quite simply, service-learning allows students to discover their own power and their own potential gifts. It is a real-world experience that gives them the chance to be engaged in meaningful activity, rather than the abstract or tangential activity that they find in the classroom. They are working with real people, addressing real problems, and what they do can be very important. And, to be effective, they have to draw on all their skills and talents. This allows them to see what they might be and it also lets them know, without judgment, where they might be deficient and need to work to strengthen their skills.

Andrea Yoder: Service-learning's ability to offer students the opportunity to discover their own power is what makes it unique and why service-learning is crucial to a new vision of urban education. The current structure of education tends to take power away from students. Service-learning would work well within a restructuring of school systems that focuses on the school's role within communities, and the role of students in improving their communities. Service-learning, as a pedagogy, has the flexibility to be adapted to many subjects, community environments, and needs. Proper training, with a focus on inherent power dynamics, is crucial to using service-learning as a tool to facilitate students' discovery of their most powerful selves.

Julia Sewell: Service-learning is phenomenal because it has no face and is available to everyone who wants it! I think that service-learning can help solve the gap in achievement, because youth are able to see that no matter what their situation, they have something to contribute.

Service-learning allows for differentiated instruction to take place, while challenging all students.

Paul Houston: I like Julia's notion that service has no face. It takes everyone at the same place and doesn't have the inequities we currently face in so much of our schooling.

Julia Sewell: Service-learning allows youth to give of themselves, to learn in a hands-on environment, and to become educated about the major issues around them. It can address the differences in performances, because it has the power to engage and to educate. It can help to truly introduce community issues to these young people and show them the power of being aware and the power in being educated. It encourages young people to be inquisitive, to ask questions, and to work that much harder to be cognizant of their present and also, of their future.

Kathleen Lee: As far as disparities are concerned, service-learning allows for differentiated instruction to take place, while challenging all students. I form groups and set them up to buffer the weaker learner. Students then work collaboratively to solve problems they face in the community. All kids want success, and service-learning allows them to experience success in a way that can change the world in which they live.

Jackie Schmidt-Posner: Since my experience with service-learning comes primarily from working with university students, I will leave it to others to comment on how service-learning with K-12 students can increase engagement and achievement. What is it that college students can do to help? As an example, I will use our Stanford College Prep Program (formerly Upward Bound) in which Stanford students are serving as tutors and mentors to first generation, low-income, high school students in a nearby community. In the summer, Stanford student Education and Youth Development Fellows live and interact with the high school students, teach skills and enrichment workshops, and facilitate various formal and informal group activities. Certainly the relationships that the high school students develop with the Stanford students are motivational. The high school students see university students, many of whom come from backgrounds similar to theirs, who have been successful, and can thus imagine that possibility for themselves too. This kind of personal example, along with the specific support that Stanford students provide through tutoring in specific subjects or academic support skills, helps to keep the high school students motivated to stay in school. But without other larger structural changes, this kind of individual, direct work with youth will mostly be insufficient.

Moderator: *Is it realistic and appropriate in this era of increased accountability to expect schools to serve a civic mission of improving communities, as well as fostering student achievement? If our ultimate goal is to "Urban Up!" and start engaging young people in ways that represent promise for community improvement as well as personal achievement, where should we start? Can you provide an example of a project that achieved both promises?*

Kathleen Lee: Fostering civic responsibility is the nation's job, and that includes teachers. If we want a society that we can live in, the civic mission of schools is critical. Without this, we will all fall. My Census 2000 project is an example of a project that achieved both community improvement and civic engagement. With my teammate, I designed a project with the U.S. Census Bureau. Our goal was to educate the community, and to reach hard-to-enumerate folks to increase federal funding to a long-neglected community. We launched a grassroots campaign to accomplish this.

I taught U.S. history through 10-year increments using primary source documents and text books. We visited local graveyards, did block canvassing, appeared on Wade Cable Television and the Gallery in costumes of famous people who dared to stand up and be counted. In addition, we read books about famous people who dared to stand up and be counted in this country and around the world. The writing focused on commercials, flyers, and letters to parents and community people. Math involved population statistics gathered from census data and the graveyards. Science involved human effects on the environment. We put out thousands of flyers and brochures about why participating in Census 2000 was important. We also helped people fill our census forms. The result was an increase in community participation in the census from 20 percent to 60 percent. For this project, we were filmed by the Kellogg Foundation, we won the NBA Team-up Award for Service Learning, and we spoke at the First Commission on Service-Learning, and at the White House. The learners who participated in this project still keep in touch.

Paul Houston: It is hard to know if it is realistic in today's climate [to expect schools to serve a civic mission of improving communities, as well as fostering student achievement], but it is certainly appropriate and I would argue, necessary. Most Americans don't know that the original mission of public education was "civic virtue"—the creation of citizens who were responsible to each other and to their community. Learning and achievement have to be done for a reason, not just to pass a test. The word *educate* came from the Latin word *educare*, to draw forth. You can't bludgeon people into greatness; it has to be drawn forth. Engaging students in activities in which they are responsible to others gives them evidence of why improving their learning is so important. Holding the testing sword over their heads might lead to higher scores—but it probably won't lead to better citizens. I like to remind people that the folks at Enron (or perhaps now AIG) probably had pretty good test scores, but there were vital gaps in their learning experiences that led them to be incomplete citizens.

I harken back to a project I was involved with 30 years ago. It was a citywide gifted program in a deeply urban setting. We brought students together for a period of time. We required a service-learning project from each of them. They complained mightily about having to waste their valuable time helping others when there were so many more important things they needed to do. But we stuck to our guns with the requirement, and follow-up studies showed that when students

Most Americans don't know that the original mission of public education was "civic virtue"—the creation of citizens who were responsible to each other and to their community.

left the program and went back to their various schools, over 90 percent continued their service projects even though they were no longer required. When asked why, they all had about the same answer—I learned how good it felt to help others.

Andrea Yoder: Is it a necessary and worthwhile goal for urban students to expect schools to serve a civic mission of improving communities, as well as fostering student achievement? Absolutely, and one that I am passionately committed to. However, this goal cannot be forced upon people and it often creates more harm than good when students are forced to work toward it as a result of institutional mandates. In order to be most effective, schools that work toward improving their communities must be explicit in their intention and must hire those that share their commitment.

A first step toward engaging youth in community improvement could be to issue a national call for administrative and teacher leaders in the K-12 field who have demonstrated commitment to the civic mission of schools, especially those in major urban centers such as Los Angeles and New York. These leaders could be gathered together to build new models of schools in urban environments that use service-learning as a tool to enhance urban student achievement through collaboration with communities. It is important to recognize that all urban communities are different; thus, the models should emphasize principles inherent to successful service-learning in urban communities, rather than a single approach to be repackaged and transplanted into other communities. An important component of the models would be involving youth and other community members in the creation of a school. Young people and the larger community should be involved in establishing the goals of the school, how to meet them, and how achievement should be measured. Additionally, these schools should create governing bodies that have significant and meaningful roles for youth and community members, including voting rights. Finally, youth and community members should have meaningful voting rights on local school boards, district decision-making bodies, state and federal boards of education.

Jackie Schmidt-Posner: The best example I know of a program that strives to strengthen both youth achievement and community is the Youth Engaged in Leadership and Learning (YELL) program, developed by the John Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities at Stanford University, in partnership with Kennedy Middle School in Redwood City and McClymonds Educational Complex in West Oakland. The goals of the program are to provide youth research and leadership training, to connect communities to information on effective youth development practices, and to support communities to develop meaningful involvement opportunities for and with youth.

Youth go through a curriculum about communities and how change occurs, and then receive training to do community research. They develop research projects—

> Achievement shouldn't be measured only by grades and test scores, but by the ability of our urban youth to have the same opportunities to achieve and to be involved as their white counterparts.

primarily concerned with youth issues—which they carry out, and then present the results to community decision makers. Research by the John Gardner Center suggests that YELL promotes youth leadership skills by strengthening communication and analytic skills, and by creating opportunities for positive community involvement. Communities benefit from stronger adult–youth relationships and youth-driven data and recommendations for decision making.

Moderator: *How can we engage the public and policymakers in constructing a definition of achievement that is expansive rather than narrow, inclusive, rather than divisive, and that reflects our best hopes for youth and communities, and what they should become? Where should we start?*

Julia Sewell: We can engage them through proper education! A lot of times, policymakers and the public are using a definition of achievement that is either misinformed or incorrect. The way in which our society measures achievement tends to be the way our schools measure achievement. This is partially where the problem lies. Achievement shouldn't be measured only by grades and test scores, but by the ability of our urban youth to have the same opportunities to achieve and to be involved as their white counterparts. We need to have people who have seen the effects of the achievement gap firsthand, people who were victims of it, make the definitions that are so widely spread. When this happens, the voices of those who have been silenced will be heard. And when these voices are heard, people will have to listen.

Kathleen Lee: If we provide concrete examples of fantastic projects with student data, complete with oral histories of learners involved in service-learning, we can do it.

Paul Houston: It has to be tied to the broader context, to the goal of building a citizenry that is better able to compete on a global stage and is more responsible here at home. The current economic crisis provides an opportunity for refocusing us on what is really important—being more responsible to ourselves and others. In a world of tough times, we truly are our brothers' keepers.

Jackie Schmidt-Posner: Coming from a university perspective, I first think about how we can affect the pipeline of decision makers in the future. Educating college students to think differently, to have on-the-ground experience, to understand the implications of policy, and to know how to be actors in the policy arena could make a difference in the way decisions are made about what constitutes achievement and other important social issues. Engaging students in service-learning experiences, when done in true partnership with community organizations, can fundamentally impact how organizations see issues, and can develop a commitment to engaging a wider group of stakeholders in thinking about complex social issues.

What constitutes achievement is a complex question. We will begin to address it in its richest and most nuanced fullness only when varied perspectives are offered. But those diverse perspectives must be grounded in a shared commitment to using our collective experience to ensure that all youth have the tools and the motivation to create a bright future.

Andrea Yoder: The voices of urban communities and their youth should be highlighted through focus groups, interviews, and documentaries. These voices should be put before policymakers before they attempt to make decisions on all-important educational and social issues. These opinions should be crystallized into themes that emerged from opinion-gathering. Proposed policy should then be returned to the communities and youth groups for comment before it is finalized. Policymakers can then concern themselves with funding and implementation of the people's visions.

From Program to Policy

Institutionalizing Urban Service-Learning from an Administrator's Perspective

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Urban service-learning administrators have to maneuver between learner and community needs on one side and government and district mandates on the other. Despite the demands they face, many succeed in promoting districtwide service-learning programs. What strategies do they use to encourage service-learning, and what factors lead to successful institutionalization?

Service-learning is a teaching strategy that affirms our commitment to service and prepares children for the tests of life, and not just a life of academic examinations. Service-learning can also strengthen students' career-related skills and aspirations and increase their self efficacy, confidence, collaborative skills and avoidance of risk behaviors (Pickeral, Lennon, & Piscatelli, 2008).

Even though the benefits are impressive, promoting service-learning in urban districts is a daunting challenge. Wedged between the overwhelming forces of learner and community needs on one side and government and district mandates on the other, urban service-learning administrators require a complicated repertoire of personal and professional skills. They need to be talented problem solvers, savvy politicians, and sophisticated educational theorists.

There are many reasons for the unique challenges faced by service-learning administrators in urban districts. Urban districts have high numbers of students with social and health-related problems and persistent concerns about academics. In addition, No Child Left Behind brought unprecedented pressure on schools for results and accountability. NCLB not only requires schools to raise performance but also calls on school

leaders to assess positive impacts on student achievement before adopting any educational strategy. All the while, funding for innovative approaches is flat or, in many cases, declining.

Despite the demands urban service-learning administrators face, many succeed in promoting districtwide service-learning programs. What strategies do they use to encourage service-learning implementation, and what factors elicit successful institutionalization? To answer these questions, we selected several urban service-learning directors and administrators from around the United States based on the relative success of their programs and the longevity of their leadership. We asked participants to describe the challenges they faced in developing an urban service-learning program, to tell us their stories, and to provide examples of what works, in order to discover the key elements contributing to program success. We conducted the interviews via telephone during the fall of 2008 and then employed the Frames of Analysis model of organizational leadership (Bolman & Deal, 1991, 1997) to analyze the interviews and to draw out various factors that lead to successful service-learning institutionalization in urban settings.

Frames of Analysis Model of Organizational Leadership

Bolman and Deal (1991, 1997) assert that individuals have specific frames through which they view how organizations work and how people within them relate to one another. Each person tends to view situations through a particular and familiar lens, restricting their ability to be successful and creative leaders. Bolman and Deal encourage leaders to reexamine their organization and how it operates by stepping back and deliberately looking through different frames. Viewing the workplace through multiple frames can bring organizational life into clearer focus, enhancing leaders' ability to make judgments, gather information, and get things done. As they argue,

The ability to reframe experience enriches and broadens a leader's repertoire and serves as a powerful antidote to self-entrapment. Expanded choice enables managers to generate creative responses to the broad range of problems that they encounter. . . . It can be enormously liberating for managers to realize that there is always more than one way to respond to any organizational problem or dilemma. Managers are imprisoned only to the degree that their palette of ideas is impoverished. (Bolman & Deal ,1991, p. 4)

Bolman and Deal offer four frames, or windows:

- Structural frame
- Human resource frame
- Political frame
- Symbolic frame

THE STRUCTURAL FRAME

The structural frame conceives of organizations as social systems rather than as collections of individual human beings. Key concepts of the structural frame include formal roles, responsibilities, and relationships. According to the structural frame:

- Organizations exist to achieve established goals and objectives.
- Organizations work best when rational decisions prevail over personal preferences and external pressures.
- Structures must be designed to fit organizational circumstances.
- Organizations increase efficiency and enhance performance through specialization and division of labor.

Appropriate forms of coordination and control are essential to ensuring that individuals and units work together in the service of organizational goals.

Problems and performance gaps arise from structural deficiencies and can be remedied through restructuring (Bolman & Deal, 1997, p. 40).

THE HUMAN RESOURCE FRAME

Leaders who operate from a human resource frame view organizations as inhabited by individual human beings with unique talents, dispositions, and skills. Rather than molding people to fit a specific role, these leaders assume that organizations should be adapted to individuals' needs. When an optimal match exists between individuals and the systems in which they are embedded, both benefit. Human beings are given opportunities for meaningful work, and organizations gain the efforts of satisfied, motivated workers. Bolman and Deal suggest that the key to effective leadership within the human resource frame is an understanding of people and their relationships.

THE POLITICAL FRAME

Leaders who operate from a political frame acknowledge that organizations are competitive environments in which different factions vie for power and resources. Conflict is seen as a fact of life, and effective leadership involves the use of strategy and tactics to manage relations with different factions. Bolman and Deal offer the following assumptions for the political frame:

- Organizations are coalitions of various individuals and interest groups.
- There are enduring differences among coalition members in values, beliefs, information, interests, and perceptions of reality.
- Most important decisions involve the allocation of scarce resources and what gets done.
- Scarce resources and enduring differences give conflict a central role in organizational dynamics and typically make power the most important organizational resource.
- Goals and decisions emerge from bargaining, negotiation, and jockeying for position among different stakeholders. (1997, p. 163)

THE SYMBOLIC FRAME

Leaders operating from a symbolic frame view organizations through the lens of cultural anthropology. They regard meaning-making as central to organizational life. Shared symbols, myths, and rituals guide activities and lend purpose and passion to peoples' work. Within the symbolic frame, effective leadership means acting as a visionary—creating mottos, stories, or other cultural artifacts to foster a sense of belonging and inspiration for the future.

The Frames of Analysis model is a useful tool for understanding how participants in a district or school community view service-learning and the most effective strategies for promoting it. For example, an administrator who regards a school through the structural frame and believes in rationally organizing efforts to meet accountability goals will support service-learning if it improves student engagement and students learn more and perform better on their exams. A leader oriented to the human resource frame will view service-learning favorably if it enhances the fit between the school's operation and staff members' needs and motivates them to accomplish organizational goals. Viewing a school through the political frame will lead an administrator to regard service-learning as one of several competing instructional approaches and to weigh its costs and benefits accordingly. Administrators who understand their schools through the symbolic frame may strive to align service-learning with their mission or share stories about its impacts on youth in order to arouse enthusiasm for it.

Results

CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

According to Jon Schmidt, the service-learning manager for Chicago Public Schools, a principal who firmly supports service-learning is crucial to a school's ability to move forward with a program. Individual teachers are often the first to propose service-learning in a school, but having the principal explicitly behind the effort is key to institutionalization.

Schmidt suggests that principals who "get" service-learning typically focus on three major developmental domains—civic, social/emotional, and academic—in explaining their reasons for using it. With pressure from the government and the community to raise test scores and show how students are growing academically, principals must have a clear rationale for using service-learning. It can't be simply an add-on, nor can it be the exclusive domain of one or two isolated practioners. Principals who have been successful in institutionalizing service-learning in their schools have made a concerted effort to connect it to specific grade-level and content outcomes; in other words, to integrate it into the curriculum.

While service-learning is a graduation requirement in the Chicago Public Schools, ironically, teachers are not required to use it. Schmidt observes that administrators need to develop support and incentives within their schools in order to encourage teachers to adopt service-learning and provide a recognizable structure for teachers to follow as they develop their lessons.

Having a service-learning coordinator is also central to its institutionalization. In Chicago, the coordinator may be a teacher or a guidance counselor. In most cases, Schmidt sees the service-learning coordinator's first job as developing a team of advocates to assist one another in developing and sustaining their projects. Most service-learning coordinators in Chicago also begin with one or two projects in one or two classrooms. Thus, common themes among many Chicago veterans are to start small and don't try to do it alone.

Recently, Schmidt gathered focus groups of Chicago students to learn why they thought service-learning was important. Their answers varied, but often focused on two themes: (1) service-learning helped them bridge the gap between their academic learning and their real lives, and (2) students felt authentically empowered and engaged in real-world problems. Keeping young people's needs and concerns at the core, Schmidt suggests, is a key factor in developing a sustainable service-learning program.

The approaches used by the Chicago service-learning manager and coordinators reveal elements of several of Bolman and Deal's frames. Ensuring that programs are coordinated with existing curricula and content standards is not only good practice, but reflects a recognition that service-learning must be aligned with the central aims of schooling if it is to survive. Beginning a program by building a cadre of advocates indicates an understanding of the need for service-learning to have political support. Schmidt's comments also show that he is using the human resource frame. He recognized the value of youth voice and linking their views to real, sustainable change using service-learning in the school. Had he not followed through with their suggestions, they would see that their needs and interests were not being met and reform using service-learning in the school would fail.

GREENDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT

In Greendale, Wisconsin, student achievement has risen, while discipline and absenteeism have decreased, especially at the middle school and high school. Superintendent William Hughes attributes these trends to teachers assuming responsibility for helping their students find ways to serve their community as citizen leaders. Merging service-learning and citizenship in children's learning

By allowing youth to play an active role in local decision-making, educators and village residents have seen the impact of youth voice in local government and school.

brings the community into the schoolhouse while making learning more real. Service-learning projects combine community service with student learning in the district's curriculum in a practical way that enhances academic knowledge and improves community environment and fellowship.

Hughes has been instrumental in encouraging schools to adopt and institutionalize service-learning. To him, school leadership means setting goals and developing plans with others to advance student learning. Service-learning is a way to show the Village of Greendale how the faculty is working to strengthen bonds between the community and its schools. By building student connections to the community, Greendale educators have been able to demonstrate that adults can contribute to student learning and address community issues, like voter registration or stream rebuilding. By allowing youth to play an active role in local decision-making, educators and village residents have seen the impact of youth voice in local government and school operations from political campaigns and local government to serving on district advisory committees, cleaning up green space, and helping the homeless who live in a neighboring arboretum.

A small grant can lead to transformation in a school district, according to Hughes. In the fall of 1999, the Greendale school district received a grant of $1,000 from the American Association of School Administrators in a program called Opening School House Doors. This launched the service-learning program. Through the Education Commission of the States' National Center for Learning and Citizenship, the district received research briefs and toolkits for teacher leaders in schools. Groups of high school and middle school students began working with teachers and principals and the district's AmeriCorps volunteer to lead service projects. Students began volunteer work in area nursing homes and attended local government meetings, weighing in on district policy and serving on committees.

Today, each school has a small budget to fund service-learning and civic engagement projects. Additional funds can be redeployed from existing instructional budgets, and service-learning budgets can be supplemented with funds from local service and civic clubs, Learn and Serve grants, or private donors or foundations.

Greendale's superintendent recommends that superintendents keep four mantras in mind when attempting to institutionalize service-learning in their district: Hire for it. Train for it. Evaluate for it. And witness it! Specific strategies for driving service-learning in a school district include the following:

- Interview every teacher and ask about service-learning to determine their interest in developing a sense of responsibility in young people. Look for the spark for service and involvement in local affairs.
- Require a strand of activities and learning outcomes in each curriculum document from kindergarten through grade 12. Include service-learning and citizenship outcomes in the curriculum development process, and train staff during implementation years.
- Teach teacher-mentors about service-learning, expecting them to support it in classroom, as well as model it for new teachers.

- Train new teachers in service-learning and citizenship as part of their two-year orientation process. Link service-learning training to familiarization with the curriculum.
- Evaluate for service-learning and citizenship activities or units of instruction in schools or classrooms. Expect principals to advocate for and support instruction in these areas. Include principals' support for service-learning in their yearly performance review.
- Require a budget line item for service-learning and citizenship activities in each school's budget.
- Support teacher-leaders using service-learning and citizenship in their classes both emotionally and logistically. Recognize their work with students and their colleagues.
- Ask principals and teachers to tell you in measurable ways what they are doing through service-learning and citizenship to increase student achievement.

The Greendale superintendent clearly views the institutionalization of service-learning through the structural frame. After reporting that a service-learning program met a number of overall goals for his district, he recommended strategies for institutionalization that involve multiple levels of district operation from teacher hiring to new teacher orientation to principal evaluation. In his efforts to build small groups of faculty committed to youth voice and service-learning in each school, to demonstrate the value of this work, and to support those in the adoption stage of service-learning, Hughes also uses a political frame. The symbolic frame is evident in his understanding that contributing to community well-being is central to the district's mission, that the culture of the school and community are intertwined, and that youth voice and engagement in quality service experiences involve both.

Districts and schools use educational policy to establish the purpose of service-learning in the structural frame, while the principal who emphasizes the fit and relationships between teachers and students leads using the human resource frame.

MINNEAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

"Everything's about relationships," said Rebecca Dallinger, service-learning coordinator for Minneapolis Public Schools. She commented that service-learning practitioners in Minneapolis are typically building-based and, while engaged with community contacts outside their school, rarely get an opportunity to support and share with others in the field. This observation has prompted Dallinger to focus her institutionalization efforts on developing forums and opportunities to bring these practitioners together.

Dallinger has seen many teachers wrestle with fear and perceived loss of control as the district struggles to meet federal and state testing mandates. Perceived loss of power and control has tended to enhance teachers' apprehension and inhibit their willingness to take on new teaching approaches, such as service-learning. Through events such as recognition dinners and formal and informal training sessions, Dallinger has attempted to provide practitioners with safe places to network and develop their skills.

Dallinger has also observed that some teachers are concerned about letting go of power and control in their classrooms. As many experiential educators note, allowing students to take more responsibility for their learning outcomes requires a certain improvisational approach to teaching, sort of like a jazz musician's music. Dallinger noted that in both cases, you're assured something will happen, but until you hear it or see it, you're

not quite sure what will happen and whether it will be "good." Turning over a classroom project to include authentic youth voice enhances relevance, but also increases vulnerability and risk. Because of this, Dallinger believes that her role is, in part, to provide opportunities for relationships and connections, a safety net for risk-taking teachers and their community partners.

Dallinger offered as an example one of the district's signature service-learning projects—the publication of a newspaper. Shine On! (*http://commed.mpls.k12.mn.us/Shine_On.html*), produced by a student-led staff of editors, writers, and photographers. Students make all decisions about the topics, design, and production. The result is a project that not only gives learners authentic youth voice, but also demonstrates the faith in students that Dallinger feels is key to service-learning.

Dallinger, like Schmidt, believed that one should not approach service-learning as a "lone ranger." Start with a team, start small, and target mini-grants to help people get started were her three key ideas for developing a sustainable program.

Dallinger clearly recognized the significant influence of political issues in determining teachers' willingness to adopt and maintain service-learning practice. While those in the political frame recognize that conflict is inevitable, this conflict can be managed, and in fact welcomed as a sign that change is occurring. Managing teachers' political concerns by allowing for high levels of communication and a risk-free environment became a key strategy for institutionalizing service-learning in Minneapolis.

LONG BEACH UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

Merideth Joyce, coordinator of service-learning in the Long Beach, California, Unified Schools reported that she employs a network of service-learning coaches to support Long Beach's effort to touch every student in their large urban school district. With 90,000 students in 93 public schools, Joyce has had to be pragmatic and flexible. But she and other advocates of service-learning have a powerful incentive on their side: all students in the district are required to perform 40 hours of service in order to graduate. Joyce suggested that this mandate, established by the School Board in 2003, makes each school and its administrators accountable which leads to buy-in, a key factor in the success of efforts to institutionalize service-learning.

In the Long Beach district, each school is empowered to develop a unique plan to integrate service-learning in a fashion that suits their students and community. Teachers then plan projects that link service to curriculums standards and meet student and community needs. According to Joyce, training has been crucial to teachers' capacity to engage in this planning. With the support of a CalServe grant, Joyce and colleagues have brought the district's service-learning coaches and school curriculum leaders together to design training.

Joyce reiterated the need to be practical and accommodating in attempting to promote service-learning in a large district. Long Beach provides its students with multiple paths to meet the district's service requirement. In addition to curricular service-learning, students can meet their service obligation through working with a community partner. Students and their potential partners link up at an event called "Volunteer Village," where more than 60 community agencies offer different ways of making a difference in the community.

Joyce pointed out that tracking and documenting so many students' service hours could be an overwhelming task. Fortunately, Long Beach Unified's service-learning office has developed a strong partnership with co-workers in the district's data management office to track service hours.

Although Joyce's strategies for promoting service-learning reflect the operation of several frames, they are most representative of a human resource frame. Each school was empowered to develop a plan that fit the needs of the school site. This allowed school faculty and teacher leaders to work in small groups, collaborating with one another while designing a program that met the individual needs of their students and situations.

Frames of Analysis: A Practical Theory for Effective Leadership

Individuals are vital to the success of any organizational change, including the adoption of service-learning. A useful analytic tool such as the Frames of Analysis model provides service-learning administrators with flexibility and practical wisdom—powerful tools for creating successful organizational change. As social psychologist Kurt Lewin said, "There is nothing so practical as a good theory" (1951, p. 169).

By building awareness of the perspectives that administrators and teachers bring to their work, the Frames of Analysis model can suggest communication strategies likely to be effective with different audiences. The model can help service-learning leaders identify and prioritize those impacts of service-learning most apt to matter to different groups. An awareness of different frames can also be the basis for designing professional development content and activities.

In this study, we analyzed the perspectives of four service-learning leaders in urban districts that have developed sustainable service-learning programs. We found that rather than using one approach or narrow set of practices, leaders achieved success through flexibility and the capability to employ multiple lenses. Depending on the features of their districts, effective service-learning leaders also emphasized certain frames more than others. Success in social situations is most frequently the result of having multiple options and the wisdom to know when to employ which option (Bateson, 2000). The Frames of Analysis model is like a set of tools—no one tool is better than another. Our results demonstrate that effective service-learning leadership comes from having many such tools and the discernment to choose the right tool, or set of tools, for each job.

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State Profiles

An Introduction

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In this edition of *Growing to Greatness*, we continue our efforts to provide an ongoing and comprehensive overview of service-learning in each state. This year we survey service-learning in 27 states, from Mississippi through Wyoming, continuing last year's volume that featured Alabama through Minnesota.

By regularly profiling service-learning in the states, we can spot emerging trends in how states deal with the challenges of institutionalizing service-learning.

Improving Sustainability

One trend is that states are finding innovative ways to make their service-learning programs more sustainable and less dependent on funding from Learn and Serve America, the source of federal funding for service-learning. For example, in Nevada LSA subgrantees are required to create at least five partnerships and are also encouraged to have an advisory committee. Many of these committees have helped projects live on beyond the grant year. In New York, many districts receiving LSA funds have appointed a service-learning coordinator, an important step toward sustainability and outliving LSA funding.

Another trend is that many states encourage service-learning as a strategy in other education programs. For example, in New Hampshire, LSA merged with 21st Century Schools to create a broader funding pool and a wider network of practitioners. Many of the other surveyed states also indicated that Learn and Serve and 21st Century Schools work closely together. South Carolina has integrated service-learning into initiatives for special needs students and dropout prevention and even designated substantial No Child Left Behind community service funding for service-learning.

Emphasizing the Environment

The high number of environmental service-learning initiatives is one of the clearest signs that practitioners are serious about offering students meaningful service experiences. For example, rural Montana schools have demonstrated incredible creativity and ingenuity by utilizing GPS and other advanced technologies to address geographical and environmental challenges. In Texas, a unique partnership with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department means that service-learning experiences there involve overseeing state parks and historic sites, as well as outdoor education programs.

Support Through Policy

The story of how states support service-learning is a story of massive diversity. Some states, like Vermont and New Hampshire have long history of local control, which means that the size and shape of service-learning efforts are determined by each district. School districts in many states, including New York and Utah, have service-learning requirements. A number of school districts in Washington have made service-learning a mandatory component of the culminating project high school seniors must complete to graduate. In states where service-learning is not required, it may be nonetheless encouraged and promoted (such as in West Virginia), supported as a "state-recommended best practice" (Oregon), or endorsed as an effective teaching strategy (New Hampshire).

A few states have built comprehensive structures to support service-learning. In New Mexico, the New Mexico Blueprint for Civic Engagement and a graduation requirements act provide policy support, the Next Generation Fund and state funding support professional development, and the New Mexico Community Service-Learning Network provides direct support for service-learning practitioners.

The fact that service-learning policy and practices sometimes vary tremendously even within a state can be problematic. A 2008 study by the Corporation for National and Community Service showed that 28 percent of principals do not know whether their district has a policy in support of service-learning.

While the state-level work is essential, service-learning projects take place on a local level. The project examples included with each profile provide an impression of these local contexts, as well as a look at high-quality service-learning practices.

We are grateful to the following people for the assistance provided in creating the profile of their state.

Frednia Perkins (Mississippi)
Alicia Riner (Missouri)
Mary Ellen Ernhardt (Montana)
Mike Kissler (Nebraska)
Heather Dye (Nevada)
Christina Durkee (New Hampshire)
Patricia Concannon (New Mexico)
Wendy Wintermute (New Mexico)
Fran Hollon (New York)
Carolyn Foxx (North Carolina)
Valerie Fischer (North Dakota)
Charlotte Jones-Ward (Ohio)
Andrea Hohlier (Oklahoma)
Pete Ready (Oregon)
Joan Liptrot (Pennsylvania)
Michelle Grimley (Pennsylvania)
Diana Crowley (Rhode Island)
Karen Horne (South Carolina)
Meredith Freeman (Tennessee)
John Spence (Texas)
Alan Griffin (Utah)
Sigrid Lumbra (Vermont)
Marilyn Elder (Virginia)
Beth Kelly (Washington)
Sallie Harrington (West Virginia)
Teri Dary (Wisconsin)
Kimberly Prey (Wyoming)

Mississippi

Natural disaster demonstrated the power of service.

On August 29, 2005, Mississippi suffered the worst natural disaster in the state's history, Hurricane Katrina. That fall, more than 125,000 students were out of school and 30 school districts representing 226 schools were closed. Despite these challenges, the Mississippi Department of Education remained committed to accelerating student achievement.

The loss of matching funding from devastated businesses and organizations made seeking new funding sources a priority to reinstate service-learning opportunities for the students of Mississippi. Through a special initiative from the Corporation for National and Community Service, MDE received $111,000 for hurricane recovery efforts. Five coastal school districts were awarded subgrants to engage approximately 5,850 K-12 students in disaster relief projects. As a result of this special funding initiative, MDE hosted the first Mississippi Gulf Coast Youth Service Summit for the Coastal students.

Following the hurricanes, MDE and the Mississippi Commission for Volunteer Service provided a wide range of service-learning opportunities across the ravaged Mississippi Gulf Coast. These programs combined resources from both partners with the experience of local educational agencies and community organizations to provide high-quality service-learning activities for approximately 15,000 youth between the ages of five and 17, representing the state's diverse ethnic, cultural, and economic backgrounds.

Building Networks of Support

MDE's partnership with MCVS and the Mississippi office of the Corporation for National and Community Service goes back to the early 1990s. The Center for Civic and Community Engagement at the University of Southern Mississippi has been an important partner for 10 years. MCVS convened a steering committee of stakeholders from government, schools, and the private sector in 1999 to strategize how to make service-learning part of every student's educational experience. This committee has subsequently informed service-learning development in the state.

During 2000-2006, LSA grants for community-based, higher education, and school partnership programs supported the Lighthouse Partnership Program at 20 sites, with a focus on afterschool opportunities for service-learning. At the same time, Mississippi's Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning applied for AmeriCorps and VISTA positions to support capacity-building at each Lighthouse site. To strengthen school-based service-learning, the Mississippi Center for Community and Civic Engagement at the University of Southern Mississippi provides service-learning training and technical support to institutions of higher learning in conjunction with K-12 schools and community- and faith-based organizations.

In addition to the regular training and technical support for subgrantees, Mississippi organizes September and April statewide conferences that provide trainings to all national service programs. MDE, along with its partner organizations, continues to lead the Mississippi Youth Service Summit annually in February. The Summit enriches academic learning by focusing on the issues of young people giving back through service-learning and community service.

Learn and Serve

MDE's $358,714 school-based LSA grant currently provides 18 subgrants of $8,000-$15,000 to school districts and involves 7,738 participants. School districts must integrate service-learning into the academic curriculum that assists students and schools in meeting academic goals. In 1995, MCVS began to administer community-based LSA grants. The current $49,000 grant supports nine subgrantees across the state and involves 391 participants. Additionally, the University of Southern Mississippi receives a $90,000 higher education grant that involves 4,151 participants at five sites.

Since the hurricane destroyed their community in 2005, Moss Point School District has been working with the National Youth Leadership Council and State Farm Companies Foundation to involve young people in a unique service-learning experience. The Gulf Coast WalkAbout combines classroom learning, service activities related to rebuilding, and recreational opportunities otherwise unavailable for several hundred students in grades 6-12.

Basic necessities remain a concern for many families. Site coordinator Brenda Lewis noted, "About the time you think your kids have their feet back on the ground, you find out one is living in a FEMA trailer or in a cottage or with a grandparent." Given these circumstances, it might seem a challenge to interest students in an educational activity during the summer, but WalkAbout has helped students develop a newfound sense of self-worth.

Participants have helped with disaster recovery efforts for neighbors in need—cleaning up yards, building birdhouses, planting trees, and neighborhood beautification projects. Their community recognizes their contributions: Moss Point residents, like the owner of a local bed and breakfast, have offered wisdom and informal instruction to students while they aided her in cleaning up after the storm.

"We do so many activities, not just academics. Students want to be a part of it! They have a great degree of compassion. This program gives them a sense of worth, and we need that," Lewis says.

Since the 2007 celebration showcasing their accomplishments, WalkAbout students have taken on a local open space known as Pelican Landing as their signature project. Beginning by landscaping with indigenous plants and trees this year, participants in future years will continue landscaping the area in an effort to restore the massive loss of vegetation during the hurricane.

Missouri

Young people award grants to young people to support service-learning initiatives.

Building Networks of Support

The Missouri Department of Education sponsors a state-level Service-Learning Advisory Council consisting of 35 young people and adults who support service-learning activities throughout Missouri. The Advisory Council and the state service-learning supervisor oversee Learn and Serve subgrants in the form of Student Led Service-Learning Grants and Teacher Grants.

Because a large portion of Learn and Serve subgrantees in Missouri are new to service-learning, the state service-learning supervisor has identified seven school districts to serve as regional service-learning centers that offer support to districts and schools less experienced with service-learning. The regional centers have sustained service-learning programs for an average of eight years beyond their initial seed funds.

Since 2004, the ten young people who serve on the advisory council have offered Student-Led Service-Learning Grants. These grants of $1,000 or less are given by the young people on the council to youth who require resources for their school-based service-learning projects. Youth applicants choose the community needs they want to address and write a grant application to the youth of the advisory council. The young people serving on the advisory council have made 50 grants to youth across the state totaling $38,000.

The Teacher Grant program began in 2006 and supports educators in their service-learning efforts. Teachers apply to the executive committee of the advisory council along with the state service-learning supervisor for funds up to $2,500. Those applying for these grants must be aligned with the formula grant goals of LSA. The Council has awarded 16 Teacher Grants since 2006, totaling $28,500.

The Missouri Service-Learning Network is conducting a statewide data collection of service-learning participation. The nonprofit Network, incorporated in 2005, aims to increase awareness of and funding for service-learning in community and faith-based organizations. Janet Schuster, recipient of the 2005 Service-Learning Practitioner Leadership Award from the National Youth Leadership Council and the State Farm Companies Foundation, is leading this effort.

Each fall, the state service-learning supervisor organizes the Missouri Service-Learning Conference that brings together youth, educators, regional coordinators, and community organizations. The conference typically draws 100 adults and 100 youth. Workshops feature youth project presentations and offer technical assistance for practitioners. In addition, participants in Missouri's national service programs gather each spring at the state capitol for Missouri

Service Day. Service-learning participants share artifacts from their projects with state legislatures and often receive recognition on the floor of the legislature.

Learn and Serve

Of the 524 school districts in Missouri, the Department of Education currently interacts with 54 on their service-learning efforts. The Corporation for National and Community Service has set a goal of having at least 50 percent of public school students involved in service-learning—this means that more schools not yet engaged in service-learning need to be introduced to the concept and supported as they implement programs. Regional centers are equipped to provide the necessary training and technical assistance.

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education receives a $302,439 school-based LSA grant that supports service-learning activities at 29 subgrantee sites.

In addition to the school-based grant, Camp Fire USA, headquartered in Kansas City, and the Heartland Foundation both managed community-based LSA grants worth $733,874. Participation in the school-based program involves 4,741 students, and the community-based grants involve an additional 513 students in-state, as well as numerous students at separate subgrantee sites out of state.

What does barbequing have to do with service-learning? Everything, if you're from Missouri, where a school-based competitive barbeque team, the Smokin' Dogs, satisfies appetites, raises money, and makes news in the tiny town of Wheaton—population 600.

What began as a skills-development/drug prevention program for a school hit by the methamphetamine craze has grown to include fully one-third of the diverse student population, which includes many Hmong and Spanish-speaking immigrants. It is a program that wins national accolades—beating many of the professional competitors. With their delectable barbeque meats, the students have raised money for the volunteer fire department, cancer treatment, and eye surgeries.

Social studies and math teachers Jerry and Barbara Skinner, who started the program nearly 10 years ago, say that the most powerful aspect of the program is its capacity to break the cycle of addiction. "It relies on the power of positive peer pressure," says Jerry, whose background includes serving as a clinical director of a hospital-based drug rehabilitation program. He saw students who needed extracurricular activities to cultivate their leisure skills. Because barbequing involves planning menus, testing recipes, coordinating with others—not to mention storytelling after competitions—it has many of the elements of more deleterious activities. Getting young people hooked on barbequing, says Jerry, is an "all-American" activity that is multicultural, cross-generational, inclusive, and democratic in its judging.

The students gain employable skills whether they're getting certified as food handlers, refining recipes, or redesigning smokers in their agriculture class. As math teacher Barbara says, they're applying their skills to problems such as how to calculate shrinkage if you start with 600 pounds of pork butt and cook for eight hours. One student had the foresight to tell her, "I'm learning a skill that I'll use for my lifetime."

Montana

The inventive powers unleashed through service-learning have provided rural communities with unexpected technology solutions.

Building Networks of Support

Learn and Serve Montana is housed in the Office of Public Instruction Accreditation. It partners with other OPI programs, including Character Education, Montana Behavior Initiative, and 21st Century Community Learning Centers, to address issues of poverty, asset-deficits, and professional development for staff.

Learn and Serve Montana works closely with eight grant-funded project sites, making regular visits to interact with students and faculty and to hold mini-workshops on service-learning. These school sites receive funds on a three-year project cycle. The grant process is very competitive, and current grantees include elementary and middle schools, as well as high schools. All schools are in rural communities and most projects focus on using technology to meet the needs of the community or addressing environmental challenges. "It is really impressive how the students have utilized GPS, Google Earth, and other technologies to investigate flood planes and map communities and then prepare advanced evacuation plans," said Learn and Serve Coordinator Mary Ellen Earnhardt.

Learn and Serve Montana collaborates with Campus Compact to develop service-learning projects. VISTAs spend time at the sites to assist with project implementation. It plans to implement a series of service-learning trainings for educators, with an emphasis on principals and superintendents, beginning in 2009.

Support Through Policy

Although Montana's statewide academic standards do not mention service-learning, OPI has a strong service-learning commitment. Governor Brian Schweitzer provides valuable support. "The Governor has made service and service-learning one of his top priorities," said Earnhardt.

Learn and Serve Montana staff have been able to integrate service-learning into Title I and literacy programs, including formal and informal tutoring. Schools that receive grants must identify the Montana content and performance standards they will address through service-learning. They must include service-learning in their five-year school improvement plan and in district goals.

There are no districts that have service-learning graduation requirements, but several schools have substantial commitments to service-learning. The OPI works with the sites carrying out service-learning projects to incorporate service-learning into their academic standards and curricula.

Learn and Serve

In 2008, Learn and Serve Montana provided nine school-based subgrants, totaling $225,000. Opportunities, Inc., in Great Falls also receives a separate community-based grant. More than 1,700 students statewide engage in LSA-funded service-learning.

Program design continues to emphasize capacity-building among subgrantee school districts to show service-learning impacts through demonstration projects in four areas: Montana Indian Education for All, the Environment, Community Defined Needs, and Disaster Preparedness. The goal is to communicate service-learning outcomes for students, community, and teachers in these areas and move from doing school-based projects to becoming service-learning schools. This is a more program-oriented approach in which each classroom incorporates elements of service into the everyday curriculum.

The 2006-09 Learn and Serve Montana grants promote service-learning projects that support and increase student academic achievement (particularly reading and mathematics), reduce dropout rates, create school and community environments that

value the richness of diversity and support Indian Education for All legislation, and continue service projects that promote school and community safety and preparedness.

Learn and Serve Montana has a seat on the Montana Office of Community Service. Through that link, the program is able to forge closer ties to other programs, in particular the Senior Corps program. An informal group of service-learning leaders meets occasionally to strategize. This group includes Montana Campus Compact, the Office of Community Service, and the University of Montana.

Monforton School in rural Montana has a population of 175 K-8 students, with approximately 40 percent living in poverty. But despite location and economic challenges, the students petitioned their school board to formally support service-learning. In 2001, a service-learning requirement was passed for all students and Principal Lynne Scalia expects "each classroom to be actively engaged in curriculum-related community service."

"These kids have changed the community drastically," said Sally Broughton, a civics and language arts teacher who structures her students' service-learning around the public policy process. "In order for our democracy to work, we have to have engaged and informed citizens," said Broughton. She's proud of the monumental student-driven projects that revamped the school's lunch program, added a warning system to the local dam, convinced local government to build a sidewalk adjacent to the school's road, and raised funds to do so.

However, if you asked the students which project they are most proud of they'd likely respond, "Operation Save the Playground." "It was a real community effort," said Broughton. "The kids found a problem, knew the correct process to follow, and made it happen. They are actually designing and building this incredible playground and community gathering space."

The students began by looking for problems that could be solved by public policy. After selecting the problem that students and community members had no place to play, they developed alternative solutions and chose one. They convinced their school board to commit to the project, but funds were not available. Through soliciting a variety of grants and donations of labor and products, students began creating a community gathering area with healthy activities for all ages. Students utilized skills in nearly every curricular area to design and build a climbing structure and playground, and they are planning circuit stations for children and adults with learning activities tied to the area's history as well.

Nebraska

Acknowledging the importance of agriculture, Nebraska projects emphasize water quality issues and wildlife habitat development.

Building Networks of Support

In a key partnership, the directors of the Midwest Consortium for Service-Learning in Higher Education and Nebraska's Corporation for National and Community Service office work together to share resources and target service project areas. By serving on the Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission, the Learn and Serve coordinator helps promote service-learning in various ways. The program typically hosts a session on service-learning at the governor's conference, and the coordinator is part of the grant review committee for the AmeriCorps program.

During 2007-08, project directors developed partnerships with people from the following entities that involved students in service-learning: Nebraska Game and Park Commission, Natural Resources Districts, University of Nebraska-Lincoln 4H Extension Office, Keep Keith County Beautiful, Nebraska Wildlife Federation, Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, Army Corps of Engineers, National Park Service, Keep Scottsbluff/Gering Beautiful, City of Scottsbluff, Scottsbluff Riverside Zoo, Scottsbluff YMCA, Scottsbluff National Monument, Lincoln YWCA, Montclair Nursing Home, Creighton University, Douglas County Historical Society, Bluebirds Across Nebraska, and several weed control boards.

Conference presentations at the annual Excellence in Education Conference introduce K-12 teachers to service-learning concepts and opportunities. In 2008, sessions focused on using service-learning as an instructional strategy. LSA also organizes a leadership conference that allows high school students to share information about their projects with one another.

Support Through Policy

Currently, Nebraska has not passed any legislation related to service-learning and provides no state funds to support service-learning activity.

In order to link service-learning activities to academic standards in the state, the student assessment process is being revised to focus on writing. The Department of Education provides writing prompts that solicit student responses. Teachers will be able to access rubrics for evaluating writing samples that measure student involvement in the service-learning experience and assess the quality of the response.

Learn and Serve

The Nebraska Department of Education administers the $92,976 school-based Learn and Serve grant. It is managed in conjunction with other programs such as Elementary and Secondary Education Act Title IIA, class-size reduction and professional development; ESEA Title IV, Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities; and ESEA Title V, Innova-

tive Programs. As a result, the state emphasizes developing projects that focus on service-learning areas that could be possibly financed by such programs in the future.

In 2008, the state's LSA grant funded service-learning activities for 852 students across 10 subgrantees. During the 2007-08 grant period, 11 projects received financial and technical support from the program. A majority were related to science curriculum in general and environmental concerns in particular.

Given the rural settings of many communities in Nebraska and the importance of agriculture to the economy of the state, future projects will tend to emphasize water quality issues or wildlife habitat development activities. Activities are also designed to help students meet academic standards by offering teachers viable instructional strategies that can replace existing classroom practices. So rather than being an add-on, the programs are integrated into the curricular offerings of a school.

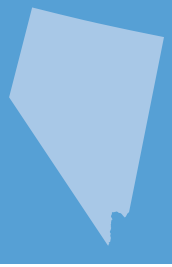
The Nebraska Learn and Serve program's next phase will focus on linking project personnel located throughout the state with one another so they can share technical expertise and resources. Vast distances separate projects, so various computer-based solutions will be used to facilitate communication. The state intends to support high quality service-learning activities that can be embedded in the curricular structure of schools.

The village of Niobrara, Neb., is located in the far northeastern corner of the state, at the confluence of the Niobrara and Missouri rivers. The 405 residents rely heavily on tourism dollars, particularly from hunters and fishermen. Several years ago an invasive weed called purple loosestrife began threatening the town's economic and natural landscape, and the students of Niobrara High School recognized the need to intervene.

"It is a lot easier to inspire students to do something when they can see a real benefit to it," said Sharla Hanzlik, the only high school science teacher in this small school district of 160 K-12 students. The purple loosestrife was so invasive that it was taking over the wetlands, choking out native plants. It dramatically affected the nesting areas for birds and fish, as well as all patterns of animal traffic.

Joining work in progress by organizations such as the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, Northeast Nebraska Weed Management Board, and the Corps of Engineers, students conducted a biological study and examined the weed's growth. They evaluated different biological control options and decided to utilize host specific leaf-eating Galerucella beetles. In the early spring, students join others to dig up purple loosestrife that house Galerucella eggs. These "infected" plants are then raised in netted pots where the beetles can hatch and be contained. The starter beetle colonies are placed in other areas the purple loosestrife has invaded. "It is really working. Seven years ago (our area) was solid purple. Now the diversity is back," said Hanzlik.

The project helps the students meet state science standards and is directly tied to their biology and ecology classes. But Hanzlik sees more, "They see the benefit of saving their town for their own future. The students are able to see the connection from what they are doing in the environment to whether or not summer jobs are available to them at the local cafe. There is a direct correlation between the classroom and real life."



Nevada

A strong emphasis on partnerships helps service-leaning projects live on after the grants expire.

This will give our kids a more structured environment and the opportunities they need to thrive.

Building Networks of Support

Since 1997, Nevada's Learn and Serve program has provided grants to support service-learning in the state. From 2000 to 2003, a Corporation for National and Community Service Community-Higher Education-Schools Partnership grant allowed Nevada to strengthen its capacity for service-learning. Four of 17 counties (two rural and two urban) built partnerships around local "Community Chest" organizations.

Since 2003, the Nevada Future Farmers of America Foundation has administered the state's Learn and Serve program. The foundation chose to administer larger grants for one-year projects. Some of these projects have included a high school/junior high mentoring partnerships to explore careers, a soil testing and education center, and a community garden.

Nevada's Learn and Serve program actively encourages partnership building by requiring subgrantees to create at least five partnerships and encouraging them to have an advisory committee. Many of these committees assist in sustaining the project beyond the grant year. Subgrantees are also required to organize some type of celebratory event. Through the subgrantees, the state administers pre and post surveys to the participants. A post survey is also administered to community partners.

The state offers technical assistance training twice a year to subgrantees. Most of this training relates to the grant; however, methods of reflection and celebration are also addressed. Service-learning training also takes place through the annual Nevada Association of Career and Technical Education Conference. Subgrantees and partici-

pants can be nominated for an award through Nevada Volunteer. In 2007, a student was recognized under the service-learning division.

Support Through Policy

Service-learning has no explicit mention in state statutes or academic standards, and it does not count toward graduation requirements. Currently, Nevada does not fund service-learning beyond CNCS grants.

Learn and Serve

To build local capacity, Nevada Learn and Serve concentrates resources on awarding three annual subgrants. (Up to six subgrants can be awarded each year, but usually three are funded.) Each of the 17 school districts is eligible to apply for a one-year grant in a competitive process. Recipients must then develop local resources to carry on the program after that year. In 2008, the subgrantees were the Lincoln, Elko, and Washoe County school districts, which involved nearly 600 student participants.

In addition to the school-based LSA grant awarded to the Nevada Department of Education, the Fort McDermitt Paiute Shoshone Tribe receives a separate school-based grant that involves 151 participants in service-learning. The state receives $173,566 between the two grants.

One hundred and twenty miles north of Reno, Nev., on the edge of the Black Rock Dessert, sit the communities of Gerlach and Empire. The economically disadvantaged area has a rapidly declining population of 300 people with only 60 students in kindergarten through twelfth grades.

The primary source of the area's livelihood is the United States Gypsum Corporation's mine. With wallboard one of the primary uses for gypsum, the towns are feeling the effects of the declining new housing market. With fewer jobs and residents in the area, the local grocery store was forced to close in 2007, and residents were left having to travel 100 miles for fresh food.

The situation was grave but the innovative school responded. Led by Elizabeth Jackson, a career counselor and teacher's assistant, students created a community garden and greenhouse, with community being the key word. "Even though they thought was crazy, everyone eventually came out to support it," said Jackson. Support came from local ranchers, the gypsum mine, the roads, and railway departments—plus Learn and Serve America. In the garden's very first year, it supplied produce to the neighboring senior center as well as enough for the students to eat at school and bring home to their families.

The garden and greenhouse are integrated into English and social studies classes. "I took them kicking and screaming to the garden last year. But they started to see the value and the difference in the produce. One student commented, 'This tomato tastes so different!' Now I have students showing up after school to work on the garden—a complete turnaround," said Jackson.

Jackson and her students are not yet satisfied. They have goals to dramatically increase yield to provide more food for the community. They also hope to start a summer program in the garden. Jackson explained, "There are no organized sports or summer programs at our school. This will give our kids a more structured environment and the opportunities they need to thrive."

New Hampshire

By merging Learn and Serve and 21st Century Schools, service-learning has gained broader funding and reached more students.

Building Networks of Support

Since 2006, New Hampshire's service-learning has been integrated into 21st Century Schools programming, which provides a much larger funding pool and reaches a far greater number of schools that the state would have otherwise been able to offer. Only eight programs receive Learn and Serve subgrants, while 58 receive support through 21st Century Schools. By making service-learning a requirement for the latter grant program, far more students are engaged in service-learning than if LSA were a stand-alone initiative. The New Hampshire Learn and Serve office makes use of its partnership to bring LSA subgrantees into the strong community of 21st Century Schools-funded programs. A two-day retreat for site directors is held every winter, in addition to a three-day conference involving LSA programs. Online blogs and discussion forums help 21st Century and LSA programs connect.

The Department of Education also partners with New Hampshire Campus Compact and KIDS Consortium to provide professional development and technical assistance to service-learning programs. These organizations work together to showcase students' work.

The New Hampshire Alliance for Civic Engagement supports teaching and learning opportunities that foster civic engagement. The steering committee includes Campus Compact for New Hampshire, the New Hampshire Council for the Social Studies, the New Hampshire Bar Association, the League of Women Voters, and the Department of Education, as well as several higher education agencies. This broad coalition focuses on K-16 and community education of civics, including an emphasis on applying civics skills through activities such as service-learning. NHACE has organized statewide summits on civic education as well as a 2006 workshop on effective district strategies for civic learning and engagement. NHACE is also developing civics and service-learning curricula aligned with state graduation standards.

New Hampshire is part of an informal New England network of education departments. More formally, Vermont, Maine, and New Hampshire jointly offer an annual 21st Century Schools conference. These three states also share a Corporation State Office in Concord, N.H.

Support Through Policy

Led by Governor Craig Benson, the New Hampshire Department of Education and the State Board of Education held a series of 20 public input sessions on public education, including an emphasis on "Real-World Learning." One goal is to offer students credit for qualified learning experiences outside the classroom, including service-learning.

As a state dedicated to local control of schools, service-learning develops at the school and district levels with the guidance

of the New Hampshire Service-Learning Specialist. State efforts concentrate on motivating and supporting programs, with a minimum of mandates. Service-learning is promoted as an effective teaching strategy.

Learn and Serve

From 2000 to 2004, New Hampshire received a Community-Higher Education-Schools-Partnership Learn and Serve grant supporting seven subgrantees. Many focused on environmental projects. This also supported numerous training opportunities for K-12 subgrantees from all Learn and Serve programs.

When New Hampshire's Learn and Serve merged with 21st Century Schools in 2006, service-learning gained a broader funding pool and a wider network of practitioners. As part of the merger, Learn and Serve funds are exclusively dedicated to afterschool programs and are not available for any school-day activities.

In 2008, the state received both a small school-based grant of $58,751 and a higher education grant, awarded to Campus Compact for New Hampshire. The school-based program is managed by the New Hampshire Department of Education and serves 1,794 participants at 12 subgrantee sites.

Students at Laconia High School in New Hampshire address genuine homeland security needs through service-learning. Initiated by a conversation among students, and now funded by a Learn and Serve America grant, the project provides digital floor plans of the high school to law enforcement officials for use in emergency situations.

The project ties directly to pre-engineering classes, including Introduction to Engineering Design, Principles of Engineering, and Computer Integrated Manufacturing—classes that are open to all high school students but primarily taken by 11th- and 12th-grade students interested in engineering as a career.

Students begin by studying the school's original floor plans on paper. Next, room by room and hallway by hallway, they measure each space, taking note of structural features such as windows and doors. Using computer-aided design (CAD) software and state-of-the-art equipment, students input the specifications to computers. "The idea is that these new plans could be put on a DVD and pulled up quickly in the case of an emergency at the high school," said Paul Robdau, career and technical education coordinator at Laconia High School.

The school is large, however, and the project is labor intensive. "It is a slow process," said Robdau, who reports that they have completed almost 100 percent of the J. Olivia Huot Technical Center and approximately 25 percent of the high school in three years. "I've been working with teens for more than 18 years. I really appreciate them taking the initiative and Mr. Martin [the teacher and service-learning advisor] being patient with their progress. We are seeing the results—slowly but surely," said Robdau.

Both the former and new Belknap County Sheriffs have been active partners in the process and very impressed with the students' work. "The law enforcement side, including Laconia Police Department, is really talking about it and its future potential," said Robdau. Students plan to finish the digital floor plans of Laconia High School and then move on to other buildings.

New Jersey

Infusing service-learning into social studies standards.

They really pushed themselves to rise above their challenges and make a real contribution to society. They could possibly be saving lives.

Building Networks of Support

State-level service-learning began in New Jersey with Learn and Serve funding in 1993. In the early 1990s, the New Jersey Department of Education closely linked service-learning with School-to-Work programs. The state produced guidelines to help schools utilize service-learning and help students meet cross-content work readiness standards.

Currently, the department links service-learning with character education, 21st Century Community Learning Centers, and Title IV Safe and Drug-Free Schools. Service-learning is identified as a priority for these funds, and integrated into Department of Education training on these and other subjects.

The Center for Social and Character Development at Rutgers was created by the New Jersey Department of Education in 2002 to help school districts develop character education programs, including a number of service-learning program models. The Center also provides statewide and regional conferences.

In the fall of 2003, Learn and Serve America moved to the Office of Community Services in the Department of State.

Policy Support

According to Education Commission of the States, New Jersey code recommends "community service and service-learning opportunities for all students as a means of enriching

their academic learning, applying learning to real life and work situations and developing skills for productive citizenship." In the 2009 New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards Revision Project, the proposed social studies standards include service-learning in grades 5-8 as a means of incorporating relevant activities that connect content knowledge to current issues and empower students to become civic-minded and socially active.

Learn and Serve

Linda V. Rivera currently serves as SEA for the state and manages the New Jersey's Learn and Serve $483,503school-based grant. Twenty-seven subgrantees receive funding from the state and reach 13,966 participants. Princeton University also receives a $445,000 higher education grant that involves 1,297 participants across four subgrantee sites.

Bergen County Technical High School is proud to be a three-time State Farm Project Ignition grant recipient focusing on teen driver safety through service-learning. As one of the Top Ten finalists in their second year, "Students really wanted to try it again and build on their campaign's previous success," said Karen Waller, the graphic design teacher at this suburban high school.

Their previous success involved reaching the students of 48 Bergen County high schools and a 21% increase in safe driving awareness at Bergen Tech in Paramus. Directly tied to technical courses such as graphic design, advertising and broadcast media, these special needs students created banners, posters, bulletin boards, brochures, surveys, and videos for their public education campaign. Their theme was "Streetwise" and highlighted the students' passion for urban hip-hop. "They really pushed themselves to rise above their challenges and make a real contribution to society. They could possibly be saving lives," said Waller.

"Garnering media coverage for this important work is difficult though," commented Waller. Just 15 miles from New York City, television reports often focus on seemingly larger problems. Students wanted to call attention to what they see as a critical issue in their densely populated, high-traffic community. As a publicity stunt, students created the longest graffiti art roll and submitted it to the Guinness Book of World Records. At 2,000 feet, students broke the world record, will be published in the 2009 edition, and earned a great deal of media coverage for the issue of teen driver safety.

With similar goals designed to build on their previous campaign's success, in year three students changed their theme to M.E.T.A.L. – Make Every Teen A Listener, this time highlighting the students' affinity for heavy metal music. They are crossing state lines and reaching out to students in New York as well. "We're always thinking about who else we can bring into this," said Waller.

New Mexico

Through solid policy and strong funding for service-learning, New Mexico has become a leader in positive youth and community development.

Building Networks of Support

Service-learning in New Mexico profits from a longstanding network of service-learning organizations. The state continues to build on its network of public-private partnerships to support, expand, and enhance service-learning opportunities throughout the state.

Leadership and support is provided from the Lt. Governor and the New Mexico Children's Cabinet. Among cabinet members are several key supporters for service-learning, including the New Mexico Commission for Community Volunteerism, the Public Education Department, the Higher Education Department, and the Department of Workforce Solutions.

The New Mexico Commission for Community Volunteerism serves as a focal point for community engagement efforts, providing a Blueprint for Civic Engagement (described in detail in *G2G 2007),* which articulates a set of recommendations to support and expand a range of community service and service-learning in communities, schools, and institutions of higher education throughout New Mexico.

The Commission provides support for the New Mexico Centers for Community Service-Learning. The seven members of this 15-year-old statewide network of community-based service-learning centers provide a regional infrastructure for training, "match-making," technical assistance, and leadership for service-learning programs and policies. The Centers provide support to both in-school and out-of-school service-learning educators and partners, including targeted training and technical assistance to constituent groups.

The New Mexico Community Service-Learning Network is supported by e-newsletters, a website, and face-to-face gatherings that bring together K-12 teachers, higher education faculty, and community partners. Each December the Network convenes at the New Mexico Youth Practitioners Summit, hosted by the New Mexico Forum for Youth in Community, leading and participating in workshops and sharing ideas and resources for positive youth development, including community service-learning.

Coursework in service-learning for undergraduate and graduate credit has been available since mid-2005, through the University of New Mexico's Institute for Professional Development. The School of Education offers pre-service curricula in service-learning. Additionally, an online service-learning course is offered by New Mexico State University at Grants on how to design, implement, and sustain high-quality service-learning programs, and Santa Fe Community College offers credit-bearing service-learning courses.

Support Through Policy

The New Mexico Youth Alliance represents a particularly strong ally in community service-learning. This network of 112 young people

representing each of New Mexico's legislative districts meets quarterly to develop leadership skills, to design and implement community action projects, and to identify issues and solutions that comprise the annual Youth Policy Agenda, presented to the Lt. Governor and the legislature.

These many collaborative efforts in the state have highlighted service-learning in recent statewide education initiatives.

- The 2007 High School Redesign Act requires all public high schools in the state to offer a service-learning elective.
- In 2008, the Children's Cabinet launched its Career Clusters Initiative, a new school-to-work collaboration. The Youth Alliance provided recommendations, insisting that hands-on, engaged learning opportunities be incorporated into career cluster programs, including community service-learning and internships.
- The 2008 Centennial Scholars program offers a host of programs and supports to help ensure that the class of 2012 (New Mexico's centennial year) complete high school, transition to higher education or the workplace, and give back to their communities through community service and service-learning.

Learn and Serve

New Mexico receives three Learn and Serve grants: a school-based grant to the New Mexico Public Education Department, a community-based grant to the National Indian Youth Leadership Project, and a higher education grant to Central New Mexico Community College. In 2008, the $130,340 school-based grant involved eight subgrantees and 4,171 participants.

South Valley Academy in Albuquerque, New Mexico, is a small charter high school with a very big heart. All students participate in a unique sequenced service-learning program that is progressively challenging and fulfills the three and one-half credit service-learning requirement for graduation.

As freshmen, students spend one afternoon per week as literacy tutors in elementary schools across the city. Most students are bilingual and typically work with a small group of struggling learners. As sophomore students progress, they work in a non-profit focusing on how these organizations are sustaining their community. At both the freshmen and sophomore levels, the service is integrated into humanities curriculum.

Juniors have a career preparation focus and spend six weeks refining those skills. Then they spend one afternoon per week working in a business or organization within their career interest. The juniors' experiences are not formally integrated into a subject area but classroom time is again borrowed to do specific assignments throughout the year.

The program culminates in the students' senior year with the Senior Action Project. According to Dawn Stracener, the senior service-learning coordinator, "This is the capstone project of their entire high school career. They are so proud of themselves that they feel they can do anything." During the fall semester students choose an individual issue of interest and write in-depth research papers. This semester is integrated into government and English courses.

During the spring semester, students spend one afternoon per week planning their action to address the issue and go into the community to implement it. They present for 30 minutes at the end of April during their final exhibitions. According to Stracener, "Students have worked on critical issues such as immigration, health care, literacy, alternative energy, homelessness, and child development."

New York

Service-learning boosts dropout prevention and science and technology learning amongst disadvantaged students.

Building Networks of Support

Leaders in New York have worked hard to integrate service-learning into existing state and district initiatives. Of particular emphasis since 2008 are efforts by the New York State Education Department to focus service-learning efforts in the areas of literacy, character education, social and emotional learning, and STEM.

The STEM programs are the newest initiatives and are targeted particularly to minority and disadvantaged communities. Aside from LSA-funded programs, the department is working to incorporate service-learning into the K-12 Science and Technology Entry Program (STEP) and College STEP programs, which use a $15 million state grant to involve up to 12,000 students from disadvantaged communities in science and technology programs that help lead to college access. NYSED is also beginning to train project directors in the Liberty Partnerships Program on how to incorporate service-learning into dropout prevention efforts statewide. This program, with $12 million in state funding, reaches 13,000 New York students.

NYSED assists local districts to infuse service-learning into character education and inclusion programs and curricula. NYSED, the Finger Lakes Regional Service-Learning Institute—Albion Central School District, and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York have engaged teachers from multiple schools to aid in developing, implementing, and evaluating a character education method that promotes virtues in students while addressing community needs through service-learning. The New York State Service-Learning Leadership Institute seeks additional funding to expand its efforts to link service-learning and civic engagement.

The state's partnership with the nonprofit Children For Children has helped bring service-learning into afterschool and weekend programs for K-12 students. Additionally, efforts to build partnerships between K-12 and higher education, particularly through New York Campus Compact, are helping to define a PK-16 service-learning vision for the state.

At the local level, school districts with established service-learning programs serve as role models for other districts new to service-learning. Developing relationships with New York State United Teachers and the New York Teacher Centers are helping to bring service-learning training into broader education professional development and teacher training. The Teacher Centers alone deliver online and in-person professional development to more than 200,000 teachers in the state.

New York no longer holds a state service-learning conference, but a number of regional meetings and professional development opportunities for students and teachers

connect practitioners. During the National Service-Learning Challenge, participants and educators from around the state gather to showcase their work and engage in service projects.

Taking the approach that sustainability of service-learning in schools comes from long-term investment and support, the state is committed to institutionalization rather than using LSA funds to build programs from the ground up.

Support Through Policy

Currently, service-learning has no mention in statute but it is referenced in academic standards. The state encourages service-learning when possible, but the decision of requirements or districtwide implementation is left to local policymakers. Some LSA subgrantee districts, particularly those who have received funding for a number of years, have heavily institutionalized service-learning and a few have service-learning requirements.

Learn and Serve

Starting in 2000, New York began to fund school districts to promote program longevity. As of 2008, many programs have received funding for eight to ten years. In some school districts, 70 percent of students and teachers are involved. Despite limited staff hours, New York's school-based Learn and Serve program has expanded service-learning programs through effective partnerships within and outside state government.

New York has numerous Learn and Serve grantees, across all program categories. In total, the state receives $2,079,516 in LSA funding for service-learning. NYSED and the American Red Cross of Greater New York both receive school-based grants, involving 39,328 students in 36 subgrantee programs. NYSED is responsible for 26 of those subgrantees.

Charles C. D'Amico High School in rural Albion, N.Y., once had just an average Senior Citizen's Day. When the student council asked themselves, "How can we turn this into something more?" they decided that the Golden Gala was the answer.

"This was a way to truly engage and interact with our isolated senior citizens," said Sue Starkweather, grants manager with the Albion Central School District. The students created stations for the 150 seniors to visit throughout the day, from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m., with a break for lunch. Each station tied back to a classroom subject, making the service-learning project interdisciplinary.

"Because the students had all prepared, it was highly interactive," said Starkweather. Health classes did blood pressure checks and diabetes screening in partnership with the local hospital. They taught the seniors healthy recipes and prevention strategies. The Nintendo Wii bowling game got the seniors moving, and massage therapists relaxed their muscles. Art students worked with the seniors to make painted note cards, and they created a mural together. Photography students took photos of the seniors with their friends and printed them immediately. Choir and band classes played songs of the 1940s and physical education students ballroom-danced with the seniors. Starkweather said, "It wasn't just one class doing this. It was so special to see all the different groups coming together."

At the end of the day, a king and queen of the Golden Gala were chosen and, according to Starkweather, the queen recently said, "I still have my tiara!" Starkweather added, "The seniors were just glowing. They still stop me in the community to tell me how much it meant to them and how much they are looking forward to future events."

North Carolina

Professional development has been enhanced to include service-learning standards.

They make a connection—one human to another. They will forget my lectures, but they will never forget who they worked with in practicum.

Building Networks of Support

The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's most important partners include other state agencies, higher education institutions, and research organizations. Professional development has recently been enhanced to include service-learning standards. There are also efforts to build awareness of the benefits of service-learning in supporting student achievement, increasing student engagement, and increasing the use of service-learning as an instructional method, learning tool, and community engagement strategy.

Service-learning training opportunities are available for grant managers who receive awards for their school or district. Service-learning institutes seek to build capacity in service-learning by training educators and partners in the pedagogy and in building community partnerships. Certificates of Participation for training are available for teachers who need credits for continued certification.

Subgrantees convene annually in one of three site review assemblies to present their successes and challenges, and to discuss ways to strengthen performance. Programs write a report on the best program practices implemented in their community.

Support Through Policy

Although North Carolina does not require service-learning for high school graduation, service-learning activities count toward graduation requirements. North Carolina has not adopted a definition of service-learning.

Learn and Serve

In the early years of Learn and Serve America, North Carolina spread small project grants among individual teachers. In 1999-2000 there were 35 subgrantees, and shortly thereafter North Carolina boasted 24

National Service-Learning Leader Schools. This support complemented many effective service programs run by student clubs and organizations across the state.

In 2002, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction shifted funds to support comprehensive proposals from school districts. Each district now must assess its needs and capacity to support service-learning, and submit a plan for the integration of service-learning into the academic curriculum. Given the diversity in applicant communities' sizes and economies, programs have varied widely in scope and design. Most grants are for $20,000, renewable annually for up to three years.

In 2008, the state involved 13,154 participants in its school-based grants program. Thirty-three subgrantees received funding from the DPI's $429,713 school-based grant. Additionally, HMCUC/North Carolina Central University Foundation received a community-based grant of $404,555 serving eight subgrantees. And the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Mars Hill College, Inc., both received higher education grants.

At East Carolina University in Greenville, N.C.,

undergraduate and graduate students studying to teach physical education have a unique opportunity to apply knowledge while they serve public school students with special needs.

Professors Jim Decker and Boni Boswell include an adapted physical education practicum in three relevant courses. Every week for 45-60 minutes, each university student is paired with a preschool through middle school student (referred to as the "client") for physical activity. The university student designs the lesson plans that best meets the client's needs, depending on their specific abilities. Clients represent special needs typically found in public schools such as intellectual and developmental disabilities, as well as such conditions as autism, cerebral palsy, and sensory impairments.

To prepare for the experience, each university student receives detailed information regarding their client. "Before they receive the folders, they are anxious and it seems like a chore. But there is a transition throughout the semester and it becomes their favorite day of the week," said Dr. Decker, associate professor of exercise and sport science at East Carolina University.

The practicum accounts for 40 percent of the students' course grade. At the end of the experience they each submit a final case study report, which includes an individualized education plan for their client. The reports are given to the clients' public school teachers for their review and use. "There is always more desire to participate than there is room," said Decker, in part because the university students are meeting such a genuine need.

Students evaluate the course at midterm, and the practicum is always the highest rated aspect particularly for its relevance to the real world. "They make a connection – one human to another. They will forget my lectures, but they will never forget who they worked with in practicum," said Decker.

North Dakota

Valley City Public Schools use service-learning to foster positive cultural change and have led the way in North Dakota for almost a decade.

Building Networks of Support

Service-learning in North Dakota has long benefited from this cross-border spirit of collaboration. Schools, colleges, nonprofit organizations, and agencies from Fargo and West Fargo have repeatedly pooled resources, ideas, and energy with the community of Moorhead, Minn.

The key service-learning partners in the state are the Department of Commerce, the Department of Public Instruction and the North Dakota Supreme Court. A service-learning mentor or adviser program is offered through the North Dakota Workforce Council. The state does not facilitate networking of service-learning practitioners; however, service-learning is one component of a community school philosophy that includes 21st Century Schools, adult education, English Language Learner programs, and special education.

Valley City schools have carried out a service-learning program since 2000. The program has typically involved students in service alongside senior citizens and other adult volunteers, and has received support from community members and businesses. The goal of the program is to provide service-learning opportunities that help strengthen community and teach civic responsibility to students. Mentors help develop relationships that empower our students to make positive life choices. Valley City Public Schools' plan focuses on creating a positive cultural change within their school climate, and service learning-opportunities are to be extended to grades K-3.

In 2008, the North Dakota Department of Commerce, Workforce Development Division, secured funding to establish pilot projects under the Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG). Through this initiative, JAG North Dakota is seeking businesses to partner with local high schools to, among other things, develop service-learning opportunities for students.

> There are people in the community who impact us. We ask the students, "How can we impact them?"

Support Through Policy

North Dakota does not have any statutes or academic standards that include service-learning. However, some districts have service-learning requirements and a commitment to service-learning. The state does not fund service-learning beyond CNCS grants.

Learn and Serve

Statewide school-based service-learning in North Dakota has grown slowly. The state's first Learn and Serve school-based program was implemented in 2004. As of 2008, a grant of $41,738 to the North Dakota Department of Public Instruction supports 695 participants in two subgrantee programs. Additionally, Turtle Mountain Community College and Mountain Plains Network for Youth are subgrantees for out-of-state higher education and community-based grants, respectively, and involve an additional 1,085 participants. Learn and Serve has worked closely with the North Dakota Commission on National and Community Service to engage AmeriCorps members with schools.

A team of sixth-grade teachers at Discovery Middle School in Fargo have made service-learning a central theme for their students' homeroom time. Their 70 students are becoming more respectful, responsible citizens through a variety of projects designed to give back to their community.

Because of their focus on service-learning, a recreational field trip to the local YMCA became a valuable learning and serving opportunity. After the field trip, a speaker from the YMCA women's shelter came to talk to the students during their homeroom time. They discussed community needs and the services that the women's shelter provides.

The spokesperson described the need for new blankets for the people the shelter serves, and the students quickly responded. They sewed 40 blankets for the shelter in 13 days during one month. Using math skills to develop the pattern, cut materials, and purchase supplies, the students also gained valuable social skills, including respect and responsibility—a very intentional outcome for this Discovery Middle School team of teachers.

"The YMCA responded with gratefulness. They told us that on the day the students' brought in the blankets, the shelter had just given away the last one. A family from a southern state, not dressed for North Dakota weather, came seeking help. The blankets just came like an angel," said Jeannie McCann, a member of this team of sixth-grade teachers.

These students are engaged in service and service-learning year-round. They address the needs of veterans in the community as well. According to McCann, "There are people in the community who impact us. We ask the students, 'How can we impact them?'"

Ohio

Through the SOS program, service-learning is being used to advance homeland security objectives in Ohio.

Building Networks of Support

Ohio has a long history of service-learning initiatives. In 1999, Ohio developed 12 regional service-learning cooperatives. The same year, the state implemented an initiative that brought service-learning to eight urban schools.

The nature of service-learning in Ohio is highly collaborative. Since 1997, the Ohio Department of Education and Ohio Campus Compact have advanced a K-16 partnership for service-learning with a joint website and publications, 10 Community-Higher Education -School Partnership subgrants (2000-2003), ongoing K-16 partnership mini-grants, a joint state program directory, and collaboration on training and evaluation. Learn and Serve Ohio publishes a comprehensive annual report documenting program activities and featuring a focus on a larger state initiative such as civic engagement or homeland security. It also sponsors a service-learning training workshop (K-16) to certify service-learning trainers.

Safety in Ohio through Service (SOS) introduced a replicable statewide service-learning model for homeland security that integrates K-12 youth into Ohio's homeland security efforts. This Ohio Department of Education and Learn and Serve Ohio initiative builds state and local partnerships with businesses, private schools, first responders, faith-based and community organizations, and six local education agencies to develop prototypes of service-learning projects related to homeland security in urban, rural, and suburban areas. More than 20 modules have been developed, mainly by school faculty, and each has a guidebook available for download.

Since 1981, Ohio has hosted an annual conference, Forging New Links, focused on service-leaning, volunteerism, and giving. The conference is supported by the CNCS state office, Ohio Campus Compact, Ohio's Community Service Council, ODE, Learn and Serve Ohio, The Ohio State University, and the Ohio Volunteer Center Association.

Support Through Policy

Ohio's graduation standards require students to show that they can apply academic content, offering an avenue to integrate service-learning into the academic curriculum. Social studies standards infuse service-learning links. Learn and Serve programs link to other state priorities, including School-to-Work, character education, and Continuous Improvement Plans.

Successive First Ladies have been ardent spokespersons for the Ohio Community Service Council and for service-learning. They have helped promote Make a Difference Day and integration of service-learning into state academic standards. The state has adopted a formal definition of service-

learning, and it is incorporated into state academic standards. However, there is no statewide program for service-learning to count toward graduation requirements.

Learn and Serve

Learn and Serve Ohio's vision is to make service-learning a vital part of Ohio's education system. Currently, Ohio receives the Learn and Serve K-12 formula grant of $651,801 and the state provides no supplemental funding for service-learning activities. This grant involves 22,561 participants across 41 subgrantees.

Since 1997, ODE has employed a unique strategy based on four guiding principles to help school-based subgrantees advance:

1. Develop a solid foundation of school and community support through the planning process.
2. Foster high-quality programming by encouraging ongoing training, continuous improvement, and expansion.
3. Encourage sustainability through integrating service-learning into the academic curriculum, connect service-learning to school improvement efforts, build strong partnerships through equal participation of schools and communities.
4. Utilize the expertise of service-learning practitioners to build statewide capacity.

In addition, many strong service-learning programs have been developed without Learn and Serve funding. Family and consumer science and vocational-technical education both developed service-learning initiatives prior to Learn and Serve funding becoming available.

What do you get when you partner suburban students from Hudson with rural students from Ripley? In this case, high-quality service-learning and a mutually beneficial relationship in the Appalachian region of Ohio.

Ripley Union Lewis Huntington High School is located on the Ohio River and surrounded by three major power plants and one paper mill in the Appalachia region. Throughout the year students form pen pal relationships with Hudson High School students, discussing academics, service, and families. Then, in culmination, Hudson students travel to Ripley for one week of environmental service-learning projects, all of which are tied to science, history, and language arts.

One of the projects involves visiting a local creek to gather and analyze water samples, grading the quality of the water that empties into the Ohio River. "It is very important that students learn at an early age that they need to be the keepers of the water," said Kristi Scott, teacher and project coordinator at Ripley High School. "Ripley's only source of revenue now, since the shrinkage of the tobacco market, is recreation. It is extremely important that we make sure our water is safe and thriving for this and the next generation," added Scott.

Students communicate their findings to the Brown County Soil and Water Agency for state reports and write articles for local newspapers. They have painted fish symbols on drains in the area villages. "This teaches others that if you are not careful you will pollute our water sources," said Scott.

"All of Hudson High School students who visit have a vision and a plan for life. They are all headed for college. On the other hand, our rural Appalachian students ... are for the most part undecided about future plans with only approximately 40 percent headed for college," according to Scott. Despite being from varied backgrounds, the students get along famously and learn from each other as they focus on environmental issues in Ripley.

Oklahoma

Oklahoma's history of service is exemplified through responses to the Murrah Building bombing and hurricanes as well as the challenge of many low income communities.

Building Networks of Support

Oklahoma Learn and Serve has established relationships with several key partners. It collaborated with Oklahoma Lions Clubs for $100,000 in funding from Lions International. Through this grant, 275 educators have been trained in Lions Quest curriculum with emphasis on the service-learning component, and a Student of the Month initiative has been set up through local Lions Clubs. Cherokee Nation Learn and Serve subgrantees have participated in the Cherokee Nation Youth Leadership Conference hosted by Inola Youth Council, an Oklahoma Learn and Serve subgrantee.

Oklahoma Learn and Serve annually hosts two network meetings for Learn and Serve subgrantees to share information and ideas and receive professional development. The state also maintains an informal service-learning adviser program. In 2003, four teachers completed a one-year Service-Learning Teacher Academy through Learn and Serve. Since then, these teachers have conducted training workshops in schools across the state and have served as consultants or advisers to other Learn and Serve program directors.

Collaboration with other Oklahoma State Department of Education state and federal programs is reflected in a strong service-learning component in a Vietnamese youth immigrant summer program hosted by the OSDE Bilingual Education staff, the inclusion of service-learning as a priority in the 21st Century Community Learning Center program, service-learning integrated into the criteria for Community Education funding, and Title I financial support to train a cadre of 20 AmeriCorps*VISTA members assigned to the OSDE to serve as coordinators of local service-learning programs.

Oklahoma Learn and Serve staff participate in the National Service-Learning Conference yearly and encourage subgrantees to attend. Staff also offer service-learning workshops at various state conferences, such as the superintendents summer conference, alternative education conference, and the counselors conference.

Learn and Serve

Oklahoma has conducted minimal evaluations that primarily assessed student achievement in civic knowledge and attitudes. In 2008, the office requested the use of state funds to conduct an extensive onsite and interview program assessment.

Support Through Policy

Since 1992 Oklahoma has granted elective credit for service. Ponca City High School social studies students wrote and won passage

of the bill allowing schools to offer elective credit for service-learning. As a result, a number of schools have developed service-learning electives. Ada High School recently adopted a service-learning requirement for graduation. A number of subgrantees have encouraged school board commitment to service-learning.

Learn and Serve

In 2008, Oklahoma received both two school-based Learn and Serve grants totaling $569,487 and a community-based grant. The Oklahoma Community Service Commission manages the community-based grant and the Oklahoma State Department of Education and the Cherokee Nation in Tahlequah manage the school-based grants. The three grants involve a combined 43,238 participants across 41 subgrantees.

Though state formula grants have decreased, Learn and Serve Oklahoma has chosen to award smaller grants to include a greater number of schools. The last round of grants was awarded for three years and during the third year of the grant, subgrantees are expected to involve new teachers and students in service-learning to broaden the service-learning programs.

Since 1997, the Oklahoma Commission has contracted the services of the OSDE to administer the community-based Learn and Serve America program. The 2005 community-based grant supported five regional service-learning centers in community organizations, including YMCA of Greater Tulsa, Oklahoma 4-H Foundation, Inc., Camp Fire USA, Great Plains Youth and Family Services, and Ardmore Communities in Schools. Each center provides technical assistance to school and community service-learning activities in a 10-county region, including support and training to local and regional Youth Action Councils.

Annette Dake and her fellow teachers at Bridge Creek Schools in Blanchard, Okla., have engaged their students in many noteworthy service-learning activities during the past five years, including the successful introduction and passage of state legislation. They're always watching for new community needs, and when Dake learned about the Veterans History Project she felt it would be a great fit for her students.

The Veterans History Project collects and archives stories of wartime service, recorded and submitted by volunteers across the country. Sixth- through eighth-grade gifted and talented students at Bridge Creek Middle School conduct on-camera interviews and help local veterans tell their stories from boot camp to the present. They have edited and produced 30 videos thus far, hand-delivering some to the Library of Congress, where all of the accounts are archived in the American Folklife Center. The videos will serve as a permanent inspiration for all and valuable resource for researchers.

"My hope is that as the students go on to high school history, they will have a name to put with a place and an event," said Dake. She has connected the project to history curriculum, and it has become a critical piece of her pull-out gifted and talented program. Twice a year, the students host a highly anticipated reception for the veterans most recently interviewed. Dake explained, "The veterans are so moved that the students care about their stories. It is giving them hope for the next generation."

Bridge Creek Elementary students have been inspired as well. As an extension of the Veterans History Project, the Little Hands for Big Heroes project has sewed 300 quilts for the Oklahoma City Veterans Administration Medical Center. And a partnership has been formed with the local National Guard Unit and the Veterans Administration nursing home to bring good cheer and activities to the residents there. "It is just getting bigger and bigger," said Dake.

Oregon

Environmental service-learning programs are a means to improve the state's natural resources.

Building Networks of Support

In Oregon, Learn and Serve-supported programs are primarily an investment in people and relationships. K-12 service-learning practitioners convene and collaborate for service-learning success statewide and across all content areas. The Oregon Department of Education continues to support progress in priority areas such as the service-learning standards, civic engagement, diploma requirement changes, Essential Skills, and statewide partnership developments to promote sustainability. It also offers on-site training and professional development for grantee districts.

A variety of organizations provide service-learning support. The State Farm Companies Foundation supports a variety of initiatives. The Ford Family Foundation has funded 18 community education programs, many of which feature service-learning as a core component. The PGE Foundation is a service-learning partner in the statewide Learn and Serve grant through its Community 101 curriculum. Several regional education service districts emphasize service-learning as a means to advance a range of initiatives.

Oregon SOLV, a statewide nonprofit, engages K-16 students in environmental service-learning as a means to improve the state's natural resources. It is developing a community impact instrument to help districts and community partners develop, measure, sustain, and enhance meaningful service-learning partnerships. The organization's website provides curricula, project examples, funding opportunities, and other resources to support environmental service-learning projects.

Support Through Policy

As Oregon values local control, each school district determines its own path within the parameters of state standards, which do not require service-learning. However, service-learning is a recommended and supported instructional strategy across all content areas and in all grade levels. Specifically, service-learning is a state-recommended best practice in alternative education.

Multiple opportunities for special initiatives and professional development through strategic statewide partnerships have built the number of strong K-12 service-learning districts. Service-learning may be increasingly valuable for districts and teachers, given Oregon diploma revisions and requirements for students to demonstrate proficiency in order to gain their high school diploma.

The State Department of Education supports service-learning in many areas, including career and technical education, applied academics, and inquiry-based science. School superintendents have been outspoken and effective advocates for service-learning. A number of the state's most recognized school

administrators have developed systems that support and sustain service-learning throughout their school districts. With strong leadership from superintendents, many Oregon school districts include service-learning as a strategy to implement a wide variety of programs, including Federal Title IV (Safe and Drug-Free Schools), and Title V (technology and staff development).

Learn and Serve

Oregon receives Learn and Serve funding in the form of school-based, community-based, and higher education grants. School-based funds are managed by the Oregon Department of Education. The Department requires all K-12 Learn and Serve grant recipient districts to develop service-learning policies before the completion of the third year of their grant. A benefit of this strategy is that many school districts that have received Learn and Serve subgrants over the years still continue service-learning programs long after federal funding ends.

In 2008, the $187,701 school-based grant provided service-learning opportunities to 13,714 participants across 23 subgrantee schools and school districts. Those not awarded full grants are offered professional development grants and services. Portland State University and Southern Oregon University both receive higher education grants, totaling $140,689, which involve an additional 700 participants through five subgrantees. Six subgrantees in the state benefit from competitive community-based grants. In addition to the LSA formula grant provided by CNCS, the Oregon Department of Education and private organizations help support service-learning in the state.

When Marion Elementary principal, Christy Wilkins, asked for help, Cascade High School students responded with great enthusiasm to address the genuine need. Mixed classrooms of special education students and general ed students created the Reading Buddies mentorship program to help K-2 students improve their reading skills.

As it often happens with service-learning, Reading Buddies brought benefits to not only the younger students but the high school students as well. Now in its third year, teachers are seeing tangible results with multi-grade improvement in reading skills for many of the students.

Reading Buddies is integrated into Cascade High School's literacy leadership and study lab class, for which students need to apply. Twice a week for nearly an hour the high school students visit Marion Elementary and take part in leisure reading and literacy games. The younger readers begin to see reading as exciting and the older readers begin to see themselves as contributors. "For some it was a surprising realization that they had something valuable to offer," said Vanda Baughman, service-learning facilitator.

Integrating regular and special education students in one high school class isn't always easy. "I am very surprised at how well they get along. They all have the same passion. They bond in an unusual way for a high school classroom," said Amanda Terpening, special education teacher. The naturally outgoing kids work with the students who struggle. This course easily fulfills the teambuilding/teamwork graduation requirement and has a strong career exploration component.

The success of Reading Buddies has prompted other service-learning activities for the class including a partnership with a local retirement home and a community garden. "When teachers are encouraged to think outside the box and kids are given opportunities, they absolutely outshine our expectations," Baughman commented. "They have caught the vision of service-learning."

Pennsylvania

Youth-Driven Service-Learning Centers bring school and community resources together.

Building Networks of Support

The Bureau of Community and Student Services at the Pennsylvania Department of Education provides technical assistance across Pennsylvania in a variety of locations and ways, including workshops, conferences, networking meetings, and in-service programming. The Bureau collaborated with the Pennsylvania Service-Learning Alliance to operate regional service-learning centers at Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, until PSLA dissolved in 2007. The PSLA website continues to operate, to share service-learning information and technical assistance resources, and training and technical assistance for Pennsylvania Learn and Serve grantees continues to be provided by the Center for Schools and Communities in Camp Hill, Pa.

Pennsylvania's model of service-learning includes Youth-Driven Service-Learning Centers, community development centers located in schools and managed primarily by young people, designed to bring school and community resources together to better leverage funding and other resources. For example, through YDSLCs, schools have received federal refugee funds to work with refugee students. Other centers have received character education, special education, alternative education, and School-to-Career grants. In addition, the fact that the centers are youth-driven helps centers leverage funds through Safe and Drug Free Schools sources.

The Institute for Global Education and Service-Learning in Leavittown, Pa., offers service-learning training in the state, and Pennsylvania hosted the National Service-Learning Conference in 1995 and 2006, both times in Philadelphia.

Support Through Policy

Although there is no mention of service-learning in Pennsylvania statutes, service-learning some schools and school districts have strong policy support for service-learning. In the Philadelphia school district, for example, a service-learning or multidisciplinary project is required for promotion from grades 3 and 8 as well as graduation from high school. Philadelphia has five YDSLCs in middle schools and high schools and is seeking funding for a sixth.

Learn and Serve

Both the Pennsylvania Department of Education and the Institute for Global Education and Service-Learning receive school-based Learn and Serve grants, totaling $1,347,752. In 2008, higher education grants were also awarded to Pennsylvania Campus Compact, Franklin and Marshall College, and Temple University of the Commonwealth System of Higher Education. Statewide participation in LSA-funded service-learning is nearly 15,000, through 43 school-based, 3 community-based, and 18 higher education subgrants.

School-based Learn and Serve funds are managed by the Bureau of Community and Student Services at the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The office provides service-learning subgrants; technical assistance; and training to students, teachers, school administrators, and neighborhood agencies.

In urban Philadelphia, 432 students are "Building Healthy Communities" by participating in after school programs operated by Service-Learning Manager Amy Andrews of EducationWorks, one of three nonprofits involved in the BHC program. The initiative allows children to explore the childhood obesity epidemic in the context of their own community and take steps to combat it.

The 20-session curriculum is at 15 after school sites in Philadelphia that serve economically disadvantaged kindergarten through eighth-grade students. Each session addresses topics such as nutrition, exercise, body image, media and culture, and other issues related to healthy living habits. Students participate in a "warm up" that addresses why the topic at hand matters; a "work out" that includes action that the students can take; and a "cool down" that engages them in reflection. Sessions 15-20 employ the IGNITE Project Plan where students hone into their project planning details by Identifying, Gathering, Networking, Informing, utilizing Teamwork and Encouragement. As students move through the curriculum and analyze their community, their service-learning projects emerge to address the issue of childhood obesity in their communities.

"The impact has been astounding," said Shammara Wright, program coordinator for BHC at The After-School Corporation. "We've seen youth participants who have changed their after school snack from chips to apples. You see the ripples from the kids to their teachers to their school day and to their homes," added Wright.

"The object is to really engage students and get them to think about solutions throughout the year. The best thing is when you start them thinking critically at such a young age, it really begins to frame (their lives)," said Wright.

BHC is supported by a Corporation for National and Community Service Learn and Serve America grant to The After-School Corporation.

Rhode Island

Service-learning strategies help improve school-to-work and literacy programs.

Building Networks of Support

Rhode Island began receiving Learn and Serve America funding in 1992 to support school-based service-learning. Also in the early 1990s, every high school in the state—43 public and private schools—received grants of $20,000 or more for service programs through the Feinstein Foundation. Some high schools received grants to restructure their curriculum around service-learning. The Foundation has also funded numerous other programs that together have helped establish a culture of service across the state.

Rhode Island gained awareness of campus community service when Brown University President Howard Swearer co-founded Campus Compact in 1985. Campus Compact places 150 "education award-only" AmeriCorps members in Rhode Island schools whose role is, in part, to support service-learning programs. Practicing teachers must engage in staff development as service to schools and maintain portfolios on their progress.

The Rhode Island Department of Education has maintained a broad approach to service-learning, focusing on program quality while weaving the philosophy and methods of service-learning into a range of school improvement efforts in turn, especially those linked to broader reform goals and strategies. School-to-Work, Goals 2000, and literacy programs have been particular areas of focus. Rhode Island's state writing test includes prompts related to service. Learn and Serve has awarded 130 small grants to teachers for staff development.

Support Through Policy

Rhode Island has officially defined service-learning, but does not require it for high school graduation. Service-learning has not been incorporated into state academic standards, nor is there a statewide program offering credit for community service, volunteering, or service-learning.

The Rhode Island legislature created the Permanent Commission on Civic Education, which includes support for many aspects of service-learning. The Commission has increased involvement with government and business. Schools must teach the basics of civics, including the responsibilities of citizens. The Commission also sponsors an essay contest.

Learn and Serve

Rhode Island coordinates Learn and Serve activities through the Rhode Island Department of Education. Currently the state has one full-time service-learning coordinator. As of 2008, Rhode Island received a $225,000 Learn and Serve K-12 competitive grant, but has not allocated additional funding to supplement those provided by the Corporation for National and Community Service. The state reports that 4,629 participants engage in service-learning program through the nine subgrantees funded by this grant. Two higher education grants also support service-learning in the state, through Rhode Island Campus Compact and the Campus Compact national office in Providence.

Eighty percent of Charles E. Shea High School's students are immigrants from the Republic of Cape Verde, a group of islands off the western coast of Africa. Students read and write Portuguese, the official language of the Republic, but speak Cape Verdean Creole. Many students have limited formal education and present numerous challenges for the school district, which also faces problems such as gangs and teen pregnancy.

"We had to find a vehicle that would get kids to school, educate them, and connect them with the community," said Michael Connolly, coordinator of applied learning for the Pawtucket School Department in Rhode Island.

Four years ago, as a way to engage the students, the Shea Government and Public Administration Academy was born and developed into a national model. Students often served by local agencies began serving in places such as the Department of Children and Family Services, the Office of Governor of Rhode Island, and the local court system.

Students enrolled in the Academy and interested in public administration begin their studies in ninth grade with three classes a year specific to the field. "Every year their studies become more intense, culminating with a full-year internship twice per week during their senior year," said Connolly. Bringing what they learn at their internships back to their community is a key aspect of the Academy. Students develop related programs and projects that serve their community such as a comprehensive voter education campaign.

"One hundred percent of the Shea Government and Public Administration Academy students have been accepted to higher education," reported Connolly. "And, they are bringing the minority population's issues to the total community's awareness."

South Carolina

Service-learning projects help address community needs in some of the state's poorest districts.

Building Networks of Support

South Carolina has made a conscious effort to use service-learning to address poverty-related issues. A great number of the Learn and Serve grants administered by the South Carolina Department of Education have been awarded to the poorest districts in the state. Many service-learning projects focus on tutoring or rural education such as environmental challenges and landscaping. In 2008 all 18 grants were awarded to school districts, not schools, as a policy to build competence and improve sustainability.

South Carolina Department of Education works closely with the South Carolina Association of School Administrators to expand its service-learning efforts. Other partners include Communities In Schools of South Carolina, Inc., and State Farm. The latter has been an important source of funding and annually sponsors awards for outstanding service-learning efforts. The prize money goes back to communities to help develop new projects. Diverse sources of funding have raised the credibility and reliability of service-learning in South Carolina. In addition to grants from the Corporation for National and Community Service, service-learning has received funding from foundations, civic clubs, and local governments (for example, a portion of waste disposal fees).

Dropout Prevention Leads the Way

Since 1993, the National Dropout Prevention Center/Network at Clemson University has been an invaluable asset for service-learning, offering practitioners publications, staff development, and graduate study. NDPC/N has identified Service-Learning as one of 15 effective strategies that have the most positive impact on the dropout rate.

An annual South Carolina Dropout Prevention Summit attracted about 400 participants. This is a major collaborative effort with the planning team comprising a host of state agencies, the Governor's Office, youth organizations, corporate representatives, education associations, nonprofit organizations, elected officials, and institutions of higher education. Service-learning training is organized in conjunction with this event, with the participation of nationally renowned service-learning experts.

South Carolina schools of education have previously offered a 30-credit hour education specialist graduate program to help teachers obtain National Board certification. Service-learning is an essential component of these programs. Partly because teachers receive tangible financial benefits for being certified, 3,000 South Carolina teachers have earned certification.

Support Through Policy

Service-learning receives tremendous support from the State Superintendent. School administrators also demonstrate a strong commitment. While there are no statewide service-learning standards or requirements, several districts require high school students to complete a service-learning capstone project for an honors diploma.

The state's service-learning capacity has increased over the last few years, mainly due to strong policy-level support that has helped integrate service-learning into efforts dealing with special needs students, dropout prevention, and 21st Century Schools. South Carolina has employed service-learning as a core strategy for Safe and Drug-Free Schools, and the Department of Education designated No Child Left Behind community service funding for service-learning.

Learn and Serve

In 2008, South Carolina received school-based, community-based, and higher education grants from Learn and Serve America totaling $588,788. The South Carolina Department of Education manages the school-based grant, while the South Carolina Commission for National and

Community Service administers the community-based grant. Benedict College and the College of Charleston are both higher education subgrantees.

Through the school-based grant, the Department of Education manages subgrants to 18 school districts throughout the state. Service-learning participation in these programs was 44,539 students in 2008. South Carolina has an efficient Learn and Serve program set-up with the median program reaching 257 students, compared to a national median of 191.

"Our Youth Action Council is beyond anything we ever initially imagined," said Beverly Hiott, lead teacher for service-learning and civic engagement at Richland School District Two in Columbia, South Carolina. What began 10 years ago with a grant from NYLC's Youth FELLOWS program, has expanded to become one of the nation's strongest youth councils of its kind. With a mission to promote youth-directed civic engagement through a service-learning framework, the Richland Two Youth Action Council plays a key decision-making role within the district's service-learning program, administering a grant program with awards ranging from $1,500 to $10,000.

The 50-member council is composed of middle and high school students selected through a nomination and application process. The group's responsibilities include helping teachers and students link community issues to classroom studies and developing partnerships that bring support for districtwide service-learning efforts. Committed to sharing their expertise, council members have provided information, training, and technical assistance to thousands of service-learning stakeholders, not only in their district, but across South Carolina and the United States as well.

Funding support from Learn and Serve America as well as State Farm has allowed significant expansion of both the district's service-learning program and its Youth Action Council. Institutional support also comes from the Richland school board and district leaders. Superintendent Dr. Steve Hefner said, "As I see it, the very survival of our democracy hinges on our ability to create responsible citizens. Clearly, this is one of the most essential requirements of public school education. By fostering civic engagement, in-depth knowledge of government and politics, involvement in school governance, and a philanthropic spirit through meaningful service-learning activities, we are creating the public our nation needs."

South Dakota

South Dakota has emphasized service-learning as a component of effective character education.

Building Networks of Support

Debra Schiefelbein, state director for the Corporation for National and Community Service points out that while the state has no Learn and Serve program and no State Commission, service opportunities exist through Senior Corps, VISTA, and at various college campuses. These programs, in turn, help model service to younger citizens and promote service-learning in an informal way. Cuts at the state office, from three staff members to one, additionally limit the ability of cross-stream service coordination.

Schools and youth-serving agencies across South Dakota engage in a range of community service and service-learning efforts. Most of these initiatives are organized by individual schools, school districts, and various organizations.

In the mid-2000s, regional efforts in some areas strengthened school-based service-learning. Sioux Falls's Help!Line Center received a community-based Learn and Serve grant to boost service by young people. Through the 2004-5 Service-Learning Impacting Citizenship (SLIC) program of the Points of Light Foundation, the Volunteer Center has worked with Senator Tim Johnson's office to engage students in the Veterans History Project. Students interviewed veterans and forwarded the transcripts to the Library of Congress for collection. Through the SLIC program these youth explored issues such as homelessness by working with the local Veterans Administration and coordinating a Stand Down (an event to provide veterans with basic needs, health info, etc.), as well as developing an ongoing relationship with Senator Johnson's office and the Veterans Administration.

The state currently has no policy that authorizes, requires, or provides funding for service-learning or related activities.

However, the South Dakota Department of Education has emphasized service-learning as a component of effective character education, particularly as a means to develop moral character. The state Character Education newsletter has featured service-learning examples, and the state website offered service-learning resources.

Higher Education

Strong service-learning programs at institutions of higher education have sought to nurture school-based service-learning. In 2002, the University of South Dakota joined the Nebraska Consortium for Service-Learning in Higher Education, followed by a number of other campuses. The organization then dropped Nebraska from its name to reflect its expanded membership in South Dakota and Iowa.

Since 2000, USD requires all students to complete a service requirement as part of

its Interdisciplinary Education and Action program. The school also sponsored a service-learning research conference in fall 2005. Some university faculty have incorporated service-learning methodologies into the teacher education curriculum.

Oglala Lakota College receives a $190,933 higher education grant that funds service-learning at four colleges and universities in the state. As well, Volunteers of America Dakotas receives a portion of a national community-based grant. The college offers mini-grants, up to $2,000, through its Wolakolkiciyapi (Living Lakota Ways of Life In Community) program to help them transform traditional college classroom experiences into service-learning courses.

Learn and Serve

South Dakota receives limited Learn and Serve funding and does not currently have, nor has it ever had, a state-level K-12 service-learning program. About 1,300 students in higher education were funded through Learn and Serve in 2008. Through the community-based organization Volunteers of America Dakotas, eleven K-12 students are involved in service-learning. If South Dakota were to establish a K-12 Learn and Serve program, it would receive approximately $40,000 in funds from CNCS.

The Interdisciplinary Education and Action (IdEA) program is a University of South Dakota graduation requirement that challenges students to look at the world outside the box that is their major. It allows students to take their knowledge of a particular field of study and apply it to societal questions while increasing universal skills such as reading carefully, thinking critically, and analyzing arguments. After a foundation class that introduces students to liberal learning principles, they complete a capstone course that is narrowed on a subject area in community, justice, or sustainability, and engage in an action component that addresses a community need related to the course.

One capstone course, Arts and Identity: Issues in Contemporary Art, has had a lasting impact on the rural Vermillion, S.D., community as well as on the Vermillion Area Arts Council (VAAC). In this diverse class of many different majors, instructor Carol Geu challenged the students to learn more about local artists and their impact on the community. Students are paired with an artist, whom they interview and write a full biography about. They photograph the artist and create a framed display for a gallery event, often attended by hundreds of people. Both the biographies and the framed displays are then put in the permanent collection at the VAAC.

Not only is this project serving the needs of the 67 artists profiled and the community as a whole, but it has greatly increased the depth of the VAAC's archives. "This will have a lasting impact for the community and a long-term benefit to the Arts Council," said Jacquie Lonning, University of South Dakota's coordinator of academic engagement and the person responsible for coordinating the "action" in IdEA. "We strive for all of our projects to do that."

Tennessee

Tennessee has developed its own service-learning curriculum.

Building Networks of Support

Since the Tennessee Commission on National and Community Service (now called Volunteer Tennessee) began its operations in 1994 and invited the state's Lions Clubs to serve on the Commission Board, Lions has been a key partner in offering training in the state. A training workshop in service-learning methodology is offered to equip high school educators with the skills and materials necessary to meet the state's academic standards. The workshop is offered free of charge through a collaboration of Tennessee Lions, Volunteer Tennessee and the Tennessee Department of Education, and to date has engaged more than 2,000 service-learning practitioners.

In 2006, Volunteer Tennessee was awarded Learn and Serve community-based funding to support integration of service-learning in strong afterschool networks to further statewide meth prevention initiatives by creating anti-meth communication products for youth by youth. Several afterschool networks have infused service-learning into their afterschool programming, including 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Lottery Education for Afterschool Programs, and the Child Care Resource and Referral network.

The Department of Education's Safe and Drug Free Schools program partners with Volunteer Tennessee and emphasizes service-learning as a core strategy. It currently supports Aspire—a statewide high school leadership program that empowers youth to improve the learning climate of schools with a special focus on school safety and youth norms regarding alcohol, drugs, and violence. The program also gathers youth from across the state for a three-day fall training session and a spring celebration.

Tennessee Campus Compact, launched in 2008, provides a solid resource for increasing service-learning through the higher education programs in the state. Volunteer Tennessee also looks forward to increasing the number of College of Education students trained in service-learning. Many schools deploy AmeriCorps members in support of service-learning.

Learn and Serve funds are used to further practitioner training. Subgrantees assemble each fall for two days of training. Each spring, participants share program presentations with fellow subgrantees, community organizations, and state education officials. The state employs two teams of professional evaluators to measure the progress of statewide service-learning programs. An annual Character Education survey of every teacher in the state records which teachers are using service-learning.

Tennessee co-hosted the 20th Annual National Service-Learning Conference in Nashville in March 2009.

Support Through Policy

In 2000, the State Board of Education adopted the Success Skills through Service-Learning Curriculum Framework. This service-learning course focuses on ethical, social, and intellectual skill development. Every teacher must participate in training, including service-learning to teach the class. It is not mandatory across the state, but currently it is offered by 82 schools.

Tennessee has adopted a formal definition of service-learning that has been incorporated into policies related to program and funding management and into state academic standards. Additionally, service-learning experiences can count toward graduation requirements.

Learn and Serve

Tennessee receives three Learn and Serve grants: a school-based grant to the State Department of Education, a community-based grant to Volunteer Tennessee, and a higher education grant to Vanderbilt University. Total funding to the state in 2008 amounted to $833,132 and involved 9,222 participants through 59 subgrantees.

The Department of Education contracts with Volunteer Tennessee to administer training and technical assistance for service-learning programs. The Department of Education receives the LSA formula grant and has allocated it among 21 subgrantees, while also providing some state-level supplemental funding. Several of the subgrantees have additional sub-subgrants. Subgrants last for three years to foster institutionalization of service-learning within schools and school districts.

Eighth-graders at Lakewood Middle School in Buchanan, Tenn., were learning about human genetics, heredity, traits, and fingerprints. They fingerprinted themselves and others, watching for patterns and realizing their uniqueness. Through classroom discussion and inspiration from teacher Mrs. Green, they decided to create identification cards for their younger classmates at Lakewood Elementary.

The elementary school was immediately interested. The eighth-grade science students worked with elementary counselors to prepare kindergarten through seventh-graders for the process. They presented to the little ones and discussed why identification cards are important, how the cards would be made, and what other safety precautions they should take everyday. Eighth-graders developed a permission form for involvement in the project, and 98 percent of the elementary students participated.

Partnering with the Sheriff's department for guidance, assistance, and funding, the eighth-graders took the elementary students' fingerprints and photographs and made their identification cards. One card stayed in the students' records and the other was sent home. "Many times we focus outside of our schools. This focused on a community very close to us – our students and their parents. It was easy to see the benefit," said Dawn Poole, Henry County Schools' service-learning coordinator.

Word spread quickly and soon all of the district's elementary schools wanted and received identification cards for their students. Now, with only the kindergarten and other new students in need, Poole hopes to spread the project regionally or statewide. "The project is directly tied to Tennessee State Science Curriculum, and at the same it gives the students a greater sense of community. It's a win-win situation," said Poole.

Texas

Through meaningful partnerships, students are able to learn and serve in state parks and at historic sites.

Building Networks of Support

Learn and Serve America and other service-learning grants in Texas are administered through the Texas Center for Service-Learning (TxCSL), a partnership with the Region 14 Education Service Center. TxCSL engages students and improves schools through the STARS model of service-learning (Student leadership; Thoughtful service; Authentic learning; Reflective practice; and Substantive partnerships).

TxCSL, with four full-time staff members, has expanded its partnership with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWP), which overseas the Texas state parks, historic sites, and outdoor education programming. Because of this partnership, environmental stewardship has become a key performance measure for Learn and Serve programs and developing partnerships with outdoor education programs has become increasingly important. TxCSL has found that the strength of TPWD, combined with its greater access to resources and media, make it an excellent partner to bring greater attention to service-learning in the state.

Since 2005, State Farm has become a major service-learning partner in Texas. For the last two years, TxCSL has managed the $125,000 Ready, Set, Drive! program that funds student-directed driver safety programs in schools.

State Farm also sponsors the state's service-learning summer institute. Institute attendees are typically teachers, but also include administrators, private school educators, and community-based organization staff. The 2008 institute featured nationally renowned service-learning experts, including Cathy Berger Kaye, Jim Toole, Nelda Brown, and Shelley Billig. The institute brought in 340 participants from across Texas. The youth track attracted 81 middle and high school students who received training and performed a service project. In addition to the institute, TxCSL provides January and September LSA subgrantee trainings and site-based training as needed.

In 2007-2008, there were 16 grant sites and TxCSL is expecting to expand the program in 2008-2009. Until now, the program has been exclusively for school groups working with a teacher or adviser, but funding opportunities will now also be available to community-based organizations that operate a program within a school.

Between 2006 and 2009, three sites that received Title IV funds for service-learning in alternative education programs expanded service-learning into more traditional classroom settings, using service-learning as an incentive for students placed in suspension programs.

Support Through Policy

Like many states, Texas has no formal policies that support service-learning and does not specifically fund service-learning programs. Service-learning is also absent from state academic standards because the state does not prescribe specific teaching strategies.

In 2008, a state bill to fund a two-year pilot program involving service-learning in disciplinary programs failed. Despite lack of formal policy support, many students engage in service-learning and some earn elective credit for service-learning classes through school- and district-level community service requirements. Many districts have strong commitments to service-learning and some even have service-learning requirements.

Learn and Serve

As a large state, Texas receives substantial LSA funding. In 2008, the Texas Educational Agency received $1,476,796, and awarded 64 subgrants. TxCSL has begun to focus its Learn and Serve grants at the district level, with funding that spans three years. This approach seeks to improve sustainability and institutionalization of programming. While environmental issues are not the focus of every grant, TxCSL requires that some students at every site address them.

In 2004-2005, there were 30,920 participants in Learn and Serve programs; in 2008, there were 45,748 participants divided among 64 subgrantees, an increase of almost 50 percent.

Though research, simulations, presentations, and reading excerpts from A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier by Ishmael Beah, 12th-grade humanities students in Humble, Texas, discovered that many young people who live in areas of political and social unrest are forced to become child soldiers. "The students were compelled to 'do something,'" said Kim Huseman, service-learning specialist at Quest High School.

Students listened to speakers from Invisible Children, a nonprofit organization with a mission to change the lives of enslaved child soldiers in war-torn regions like Uganda. Students felt that the organization would be a viable partner and determined that they would raise funds to support Invisible Children's goals, raise community awareness about this problem, and advocate for support from the government regarding this issue. To do this, they hosted a very wide variety of events including dances, garage sales, and concerts. They sold bracelets and T-shirts. And they engaged the community through forming partnerships, distributing brochures , and giving presentations. They were able to select four of their own to travel to Washington, D.C., for a Day on the Hill to advocate for the child soldier and deliver a petition they created, signed by 2000 supporters.

Ultimately, the students' impact was great. In addition to raising awareness and lobbying lawmakers, students raised more than $6,000 for Invisible Children. And, what started in a single humanities course spread to the entire school. "We united as a school and as a senior class as we took on this project," said James Nerad, senior humanities instructor. Brent Horn, a 2008 Quest High School graduate added, "The Invisible Children project provided a great opportunity for our senior class to bond with each other and introduced us to the beauty of giving back to the global community. Learning about the inhumane circumstances that children in Uganda were living with opened our eyes to just how truly blessed we are, and it impacted us in a profound way."

Utah

Utah has a tremendous cultural ethic for committed service, which is emphasized in homes, churches, communities, and schools.

Building Networks of Support

Utah was among the first states to recognize the potential of the Learn and Serve program. The Utah State Office of Education's promotion of service-learning for two decades has resulted in a statewide awareness of service-learning as a tool for effective teaching and learning. For example, the state has provided teachers with curricula that feature service-learning as a means to meet state graduation standards for health.

USOE provides assistance for schools and districts in academic service-learning essentials. The office has forged great relationships with the Utah Commission on Volunteers, Campus Compact, the Community of Caring, Learning for Life, Utah Federation for Youth, Boys and Girls Club, Utah Coalition for Civic, Character and Service Learning, Safe and Drug Free Schools and their partners, the Corporation for National and Community Service (Utah office), Youthlinc, the Inclusion Center, Utah PTA, and Lowell Bennion Community Service Center. These partners have helped organize a very successful summer Youth Summit, which provides hands-on service-learning training. They also assist in evaluating service-learning grant applications and partnering with school and district grantees. Through a partnership with the University of Utah, the Social Research Institute on Prevention Studies has examined the impact of service-learning participation on academic performance.

> I've found that if you are a little more flexible when you are working with students and the community, you get a lot more done.

In 2007, Utah Valley University initiated the Communities of Engaged Learning initiative offering mini-grants that support community engagement including service-learning classes and study abroad programs. In 2008, the university in collaboration with Campus Compact and the International Partnership for Service-Learning and Leadership organized its First International Service-Learning Conference.

The Utah Commission on Volunteers provides quarterly coordination meetings for all its partners. The State Education Agency keeps email information about various service organizations statewide. There are also 18 Volunteer Centers located throughout the state.

Support Through Policy

In 2003, the Utah State Board of Education passed a resolution endorsing service-learning as a means "to enhance and supple-

ment the Utah State Core Curriculum." The State School Board passed a resolution in support of Academic Service Learning in June of 2004 and the State Service Plan was revised by the Utah Commission on Volunteers in 2006.There are no statewide service-learning requirements. A few districts have service-learning requirements and most have strong commitments to service-learning. Utah does not fund service-learning beyond CNCS grants.

Learn and Serve

The Utah State Office of Education receives a $225,000 school-based Learn and Serve grant, which involves 22 subgrantees and 35,793 participants. The vast majority of subgrants are awarded at the district-level with each district managing funds in their own way. Several school districts feature

mini-grant programs for teachers. Others advance service-learning through a district-wide strategy. All subgrantees cultivate strong local project partnerships with community-based organizations.

The Learn and Serve representative at the State Office of Education serves on the executive board of the Utah Commission on Volunteers, and Learn and Serve communicates with local CNCS offices largely through the Commission.

K-12 students in Utah's Ogden City School District are working together to improve their own homeland security. This student-driven, districtwide service-learning project began with conversations about the district's emergency preparedness plan and is evolving to include all students and virtually all subject areas.

Eileen Nicholas, Ogden City School District's service-learning coordinator said, "This isn't fluff – it had to happen. We just had to figure out how." Starting at the elementary level, where the greatest needs can be in an emergency, students are being trained and training each other in a trickle-down fashion. They are using a peer-leader model and dramatic performances to learn how to respond in a variety of emergencies.

In addition to preparing mentally for an emergency, students physically prepare their classrooms. Three teams with distinct responsibilities work together to prepare a 72-hour emergency kit for every single district classroom. The kit contains enough food and supplies to aid all of the students. In addition, families assemble a comfort bag for each child. In the case of an emergency during school hours, the comfort bag will contain items from home designed to help calm emotions.

"I've found that if you are a little more flexible when you are working with students and the community, you get a lot more done. You just have to go with the flow and get others involved," said Nicholas. Getting others involved has been a key to the success of this initiative. Officials from the city and county and local businesses have embraced the initiative and supported it with supplies, funds, and volunteers.

The curricular connections are vast and include, among others, science and the study of natural disasters, history and human suffering, drama and the skill of public speaking, civics and the ability to make community change. The model evolves as the students develop new ways to meet the needs of their community. Nicholas added, "We really want to make a mark in our own community. We also want this to go national and it can be done."

Vermont

Service-learning is a strategy to re-energize rural and economically challenged communities.

Building Networks of Support

Rural communities have taken the lead to promote service-learning as a way to regenerate rural parts of the state. Shelburne Farms brings together educators around environmental and sustainable education, including service-learning. The Vermont Rural Partnership is a coalition of 17 of Vermont's smallest, most rural, economically challenged schools and communities. The partnership focuses on service-learning, student leadership, and school-community partnerships. It organizes an annual conference where the schools in the network come together to learn from each other and celebrate their successes.

Vermont Community Works offers specialized support and training to assist local educators in integrating community-based education and service-learning. In collaboration with other partners, it organizes an annual summer institute on service-learning. The Institute provides training, models, strategies, and resources for developing service-learning as an integrated feature of curriculum with clear links to standards. The organization also publishes the quarterly Community Works Journal that supports reflective documentation from the field to share educator insights on service-learning and place-based learning. It has also published a compendium of research based on Vermont schools deeply involved in service-learning: Vital Results Through Service-Learning: Linking Students and Community in Vermont Schools. Community Works is a founding member of the National Service-Learning Partnership.

Vermont Campus Compact provides numerous professional development opportunities. Members have formed more than 670 partnerships with local, state, and international organizations and agencies. An estimated 25 percent of the approximately 30,000 college and university students on VCC campuses engage in course-based service-learning each year.

Support Through Policy

Vermont's "Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities" includes Civic/Social Responsibility Standards. The service section stipulates that students should take an active role in their community through service. Specifically, they should "Plan, implement, and reflect on activities that respond to community needs," and "Use academic skills and knowledge in real-life community situations." They are also called upon to "work cooperatively and respectfully with people of various groups to set community goals and solve common problems."

As a state that strongly emphasizes local control, the Department of Education does not have any coordinator role in relation to service-learning programs in the state. Some schools in Vermont have strong commitments to service-learning and service-learning graduation requirements.

Learn and Serve

No state-level agency coordinates Learn and Serve funds for the state. However, three schools receive school-based subgrants: Spaulding High School, Montpelier High School, and Washington West Supervisory Union. Over 1,100 participants are engaged in service-learning at these schools. Learn and Serve has also supported the work of the Vermont Rural Partnership. Vermont Campus Compact at Middlebury College receives a Learn and Serve grant that in turn is subgranted to eight institutions of higher education and involves 1,200 students.

Two small elementary schools in Burlington, Vt., are making a big difference through the Healthy Neighborhoods/Healthy Kids project. Five classrooms of fourth- and fifth-graders at Champlain Elementary and Lawrence Barnes Elementary are studying how their neighborhoods are designed, the impact that has on residents' health and then making changes for the better.

As mini community planners, students begin with the development of a quality of life index, answering the question, "What do we need to be healthy and successful in our community?" They look at specific development patterns such as sidewalks, places to recreate and the safety of streets.

Based on that index, students develop a report card and begin collecting data to assess the quality of life in their neighborhood. "The neighborhoods are racially and economically diverse and students begin to see how their classmates live and how neighborhoods look different," said Jennifer Cirillo, director of professional development at Shelburne Farms, Healthy Neighborhoods/Healthy Kids founding partner.

Once the data is collected and analyzed, students present it to teachers, parents, city council members, the mayor and community groups to discuss how everyone can work together to make improvements. A service-learning project is designed to address a need they discovered.

The project is integrated in science and social studies curriculum as well as the service-learning standard in Vermont. The yearlong curriculum is expanding to additional Vermont elementary and middle schools and is being translated for use in the Dominican Republic and China. "It is transferable and translatable. It has universal appeal," Cirillo added.

The increasing universal appeal is due in part to the positive program evaluation that is emerging. "We are finding that students are more interested in their homeplace—being good stewards not just of natural resources but of human resources as well," said Cirillo.

Virginia

Data collected by students can be valuable to businesses, state agencies, and community partners.

Building Networks of Support

In 2008, the state Learn and Serve office brought together a think-tank of experienced grantees who have done exceptional work with their funds. Through their experience, the state hopes to improve the quality of student experiences and project outcomes. Particularly important for Marilyn Weyer-Elder at the State Education Agency is the state's emphasis on science-based service-learning. In the coming years, she hopes to better use data collected by students on the local level to make it valuable to businesses, state agencies, and community partners. While all subgrantees coordinate with local soil and water officials, state-level partnerships are not as fully developed.

Local subgrantees maintain strong partnerships with institutions of higher education in their area, including Mary Baldwin College, Virginia Tech, and the College of William and Mary. These schools typically provide professional development to teachers and expertise to support student service activities. Some also provide technical assistance or help to coordinate "on-water" activities for students to fulfill requirements of Chesapeake 2000.

Twice a year, subgrantees gather for two days of staff development led by veteran teachers focusing on the principles and concepts of service-learning and effective grant management. RMC Research assists Virginia with its program evaluation. The Virginia Department of Education is represented on the Virginia Commission on National and Community Service. Also, the Governor's Volunteerism Awards includes a Youth Volunteer Award.

A step towards better evaluation of projects came in 2008, through a subgrantee whose wife, a doctoral candidate in statistics, developed survey instruments to evaluate the efficacy of Learn and Serve programs in the state. These evaluations will be used statewide in coming years and an internal evaluation of programs will be completed in 2009. Aside from formal outcomes measured in research, Virginia grantees pride themselves on participating in activities that have tangible benefits for their communities in the form of healthier watersheds.

Support Through Policy

While several school districts (including Fairfax, Virginia Beach, Alleghany Highlands, and Alexandria) developed service-learning programs as early as the 1980s and 1990s, service-learning has not been integrated formally into Virginia's education policies. It is not part of Virginia academic standards or state statute and no definition of service-learning has been adopted. Likewise, service-learning experiences do not count toward graduation nor is service a graduation requirement.

Learn and Serve

Virginia receives several types of Learn and Serve funds. School-based grants are awarded to the state Department of Education and to the National Association of Secondary School Principals, which is headquartered in the state.

The Corporation for National and Community Service reports its service-learning programs reach 23,000 participants statewide. Total LSA funding to the state amounted to $896,881 in 2008, with approximately three-fourths of those funds going to K-12, and the remainder to higher education programs. Virginia currently receives the Learn and Serve K-12 formula grant and provides supplemental state funding for service-learning.

In 2006, Virginia had 12 subgrantee school districts. That has increased to 13 in 2008 and, as Weyer-Elder said, the sites "could not be more strategically located if we had hand-picked them," citing their locations in all areas of the state from the tidal basin to the Appalachians. Participation in these subgrantee programs is roughly 12,000 students. The state currently operates on a three-year grant cycle, with the first year dedicated to professional development, the second year focused on effective networking, and the final year on building local partnerships and program sustainability.

The Wetlands Estonoa Learning Center began in 1999 with a single classroom project focused on the declining state of a one-acre mud puddle next to St. Paul High School. The legacy of that initial project is a student-directed, place-based service-learning program that has been nationally recognized for transforming an abused and abandoned mud puddle into a federally certified wetland and environmental education classroom.

Located in the small, mountainous town of St. Paul, Va., the Learning Center receives visits by high school students for the direct application of their curriculum, including water testing and weather monitoring. "We're doing really, really good science," said Terry Vencil, science teacher and project coordinator. As one of 20,000 GLOBE Program sites around the world, students use a standardized process for scientific inquiry and contribute their findings to the GLOBE database for use in environmental research.

In addition to this global impact, students are also involved in local community and peer education. This ranges from educating elementary students about the local ecosystem and its impact on the nearby Clinch River, to hosting workshops for community members in the Learning Center. Students are entirely responsible for the wetland, grounds, trails, and indoor areas that include classrooms, a computer lab, and full kitchen. Thanks to the students, more than 150 groups have utilized the Learning Center including schools, universities, and community agencies.

"This is truly a partnership between the community, the town, and the school," said Vencil. As the program evolved, the need for an indoor space became apparent. A federal grant to the city and additional fundraising resulted in $250,000 for the building's construction in 2005. According to Vencil, the process of building and operating the Learning Center has made the entire community more environmentally conscious. She added, "The Learning Center is about what the students carry in their hearts when they leave St. Paul High School. We're planting seeds for their future involvement and that of the entire community's."

Washington

High-school students in Washington develop sophisticated service-learning initiatives for their culminating projects.

Building Networks of Support

Service-learning in Washington has been and remains firmly embedded in the nature preservation movement. From the 1980s Adopt-a-Stream initiatives to today's high school-led computer reclamation projects, environmental awareness has helped nurture the state's commitment to service-learning.

Service Learning Washington, the state's service-learning advisory group, meets two to three times a year. The group offers a training cadre led by experienced service-learning practitioners. Programs can be tailored according to the audience (teachers, national service members, coordinators, community partners, or youth).

Washington State Learn and Serve's online service-learning certificate program began in earnest in 2008. The five-course program is offered through the Heritage Institute and Antioch University Seattle. The successful program has included participants from both within Washington and out of state. Washington Learn and Serve also infuses service-learning presentations into other conferences and events of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Washington State School Directors' Association, Washington Association of School Administrators, and Washington Council of the Social Studies.

The Washington Commission for National and Community Service has published High Impact Project Manuals on six themes (Diversity, Environment, Sober Minded, Social Justice, Tobacco Prevention, and Youth Action & Advocacy) to help high school students make service-learning an integral part of their culminating project. The State Farm Companies Foundation and AmeriCorps have supported this and related projects.

Service-Learning Northwest publishes a service-learning newsletter three times a year for OSPI. They also provide service-learning trainings and publication support statewide.

A Legislative Youth Advisory Council was initiated in 2005. It works with legislators on bills pertaining to youth. Members also receive training on the legislative process. The Council is made up of 22 people aged 14 to 18 and meets up to six times a year. The state also presents an annual volunteer award to a young person who has shown outstanding commitment through service or service-learning.

Support Through Policy

Washington has elected not to make service-learning a requirement in its academic standards. However, a number of school districts have made service-learning a mandatory component of the culminating project high school seniors must complete to graduate. OSPI provides support and Learn and Serve has made mini-grants available for this purpose.

Learn and Serve

In 2008, Washington received three types of Learn and Serve grants: two school-based grants, three higher education grants, and a portion of a national community-based grant distributed to two YMCA subgrantees. Statewide and across all grant programs, over 30,000 students participate in service-learning.

The Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction offers two types of school-based grants: a $10,000-$15,000 first-year Implementation Grant and a $4,000-$6,000 mini-grant. OSPI targets these Learn and Serve subgrants to strengthen service-learning practice at both individual schools and district-wide. For example, grant recipients must extend service-learning across grades or across schools within a district over the three-year life of the grant. Currently, OSPI seeks to broaden its own

support by creating five regional service-learning support networks at a rate of one per year.

Learn and Serve Washington offers trainings for subgrantees twice a year. Service-learning workshops are offered three times a year at OSPI education conferences, as well as at conferences of the School Directors' Association, Principals' Association, and Grant Administrators' Association.

In response to the Corporation for National and Community Service's renewed emphasis on civic engagement, in 2002 a curriculum was developed by the Washington Service Corps in collaboration with Service-Learning Northwest. The "Roadmap to Civic Engagement" is now a required curriculum for 600 AmeriCorps members in Washington State, executed in partnership with 500-750 middle school youths each year.

The 7-unit curriculum brings participants through a civic engagement process starting with lessons in history and community; identification of a genuine community need; definition of a service-learning project to address that need; development of a plan; and, the execution of that plan. After the AmeriCorps members complete the process for themselves, they facilitate it for groups of middle school youth in various settings including civics classrooms, community organizations and after school programs.

"Because it is facilitated by AmeriCorps members, the middle school students build relationships with valuable role models who have already demonstrated civic responsibility by giving a year of their life to national service," said Erin Tuvey Lopez, a program manager with the Washington Service Corps.

The Roadmap culminates with the participants serving their communities through their chosen project. Projects in the past have supported animal shelters, increased awareness of domestic violence, beautified children's clinics, cleaned neighborhood parks and collected thousands of pairs of socks and mittens for the homeless. "Once students feel that they can individually and collectively make a difference, they become engaged. That experience is the key to teaching youth to embrace civic responsibility and be active members in our democracy," said Lopez.

According to an evaluation of the initiative, alumni are more connected to their communities, feel more empowered to work for the betterment of their communities and continue to take action in their communities.

West Virginia

West Virginians share a rich culture of assisting others and providing a "hand up" but not a "hand out."

Building Networks of Support

West Virginia values partnerships to sustain service-learning. The First Lady and Governor of West Virginia have produced television and radio commercials promoting service-learning and volunteerism. The West Virginia Department of Education requires service-learning programs to work with community and faith-based agencies and institutions of higher education.

Closing the Achievement Gap, a program affiliated with No Child Left Behind and sponsored by the state superintendent of schools, includes service-learning as a criterion for excellence in its model of an ideal West Virginia school. The West Virginia Department of Education's 21st Century Community Learning Center Programs and the West Virginia Department of Education's Office of Healthy Schools programs both promote service-learning.

The WVDE employs four service-learning specialists who serve as mentors and advisors. and provide technical assistance to local subgrantees.

The annual three-day West Virginia Conference on Volunteerism, National Service, and Service-Learning is the result of a partnership of state and federal agencies, nonprofits, faith-based and private organizations and is coordinated by the West Virginia Commission for National and Community Service. The governor recognizes 12 categories of service awards each year at the conference.

Support Through Policy

State education statutes make no mention of service-learning, but the state administrator for WV K-12 Learn and Serve programs encourages all academic agencies to promote and use service-learning as part of the academic curriculum across the individual disciplines. The office provides presentations on demand to inform and educate about the benefits of service learning for students. No state funding is allocated to service-learning.

Under the direction of State Superintendent Steven Paine, the Department of Education and the state Board of Education have reworked social studies standards to focus on hands-on learning. Whether service-learning counts toward graduation varies among the 55 county school systems and boards of education. Some districts have service-learning requirements or strong commitments to service-learning. According to Service-Learning Specialist Karlie Price, "The service course in Kanawha County has become such an ingrained part of the culture that students often speak of it as a requirement even though it really is not mandatory."

Learn and Serve

West Virginia's Learn and Serve funds come in the form of a school-based grant to the Department of Education and a community-based grant to the state's commission, Volunteer West Virginia. WVDE currently receives a school-based Learn and Serve grant of $127,041. The state's subgrantees along with the organizations receiving funds from the West Virginia Commission for National and Community Service's community-based grant involve as many as 4,900 students in service-learning annually.

Subgrantees receive $5,000 per year, renewable for up to three years. Programs vary based on local needs. In some cases, countywide school districts advance districtwide initiatives. Others direct funds to a particular school. A regular newsletter connects subgrantees between training events.

A community-based grant funds the statewide service-learning program Project FLOW (Future Leaders of Watersheds). In its third year in 2008-2009, the project seeks to involve youth with community-based organizations on watershed monitoring and improvement.

Projects funded by Volunteer West Virginia's community-based Learn and Serve grant involved on average 100 youth per program (compared to a national average of 50) and had 11 community partnerships (compared to a national average of 7). Students across the state performed more than 5,000 hours of service to their communities.

Thanks to Potomac Valley

Audubon's Watershed Education Initiative, students in 33 fourth-grade classrooms are improving their watersheds through service-learning. This 10-hour hands-on curriculum reaches students in two rural counties in the eastern panhandle of West Virginia.

"It really brings the students' eyes out of their classrooms. They begin to connect that science is not just out of a book – it is very real and exciting," said Ellen Murphy, the youth education director for the Potomac Valley Audubon Society. The curriculum is taught by paid interns of the Audubon Society, often college students, in seven sessions between February and the end of May, approximately every two weeks. They start with general education about watersheds, erosion, and the water cycle. Students visit a sewage treatment plant and conduct water quality testing of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Finally, they do erosion assessments in their own schoolyards and, in erosion-prone areas, plant the native grasses and flowers the students have grown. The curriculum ties directly to the students' science, social studies, and math lessons.

Thanks in part to a grant from the state's Project FLOW (Future Leaders of Watersheds) Program and the Corporation for National and Community Service, the Potomac Valley Audubon Society's program has been able to grow from 500 to 800 students. It is expanding to a yearlong program in several schools to make an even larger impact. "We found that the students retained the information but didn't connect it to themselves. We plan to do more to help them make this connection to their personal lives," said Murphy. They also intend to do more water quality testing and reporting to increase the impact on the watershed.

Wisconsin

Service-learning has been fully integrated into a host of state programs.

Building Networks of Support

Partnerships have been central to the efforts to establish high quality service-learning as a core pedagogy throughout Wisconsin. They help support an annual statewide service-learning conference and strengthen connections among K-12 and higher education, community organizations, and the business community. Partners in these efforts include the Wisconsin Education Agency Council, the Wisconsin Educational Communications Board, University of Wisconsin-Extension, 4-H, Positive Youth Development, Wisconsin Campus Compact, Wisconsin National and Community Services Board, State Farm Insurance Companies, and the State Superintendent's Learning Lab on Service-Learning and Citizenship.

The Southeast Wisconsin Service-Learning Consortium continues to provide state level leadership and is a strong model for effective PK-16 partnerships to advance service-learning practice in regional areas. In 2008, the consortium provided ongoing professional development to a cohort of 60 practitioners in teams from local districts and higher education institutions.

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction has integrated service-learning into state strategies for Education for Employment, School-to-Work, technology education, Title II, Title V Innovative Programs, 21st Century Schools, Title IV Safe and Drug Free Schools, and Character Education. These efforts have been bolstered at the regional level thanks to the twelve Cooperative Educational Service Agencies that are responsible for supporting these programs and that are constantly building regional networks of support, helping local advocates secure additional funding beyond Learn and Serve, and promoting links between service-learning and many other initiatives.

The annual State Superintendent's PK-16 Institute on Service-Learning and Citizenship remains a collaborative effort of DPI and Wisconsin Campus Compact. The conference focuses on deepening practitioners' skills. Also, state service-learning awards are given to exemplary projects and leaders in the field.

A state trainers' network has been formed in collaboration with the Minnesota Department of Education. In 2007, it offered a train-the-trainer workshop to selected practitioners who have demonstrated a strong foundation in service-learning. In addition, the Wisconsin Service-Learning Trainers' Network has become a core advisory group for the development of new resources, providing feedback to other colleagues on program development, and incorporating the new K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice.

The state measures service-learning participation, teacher training, and impacts. Currently, an evaluation process is measuring the effectiveness of the Learn and Serve grant.

Support Through Policy

Wisconsin has adopted a formal definition of service-learning and integrated the practice into state academic standards. Wisconsin statute states that "a school board may require a pupil to participate in community service activities in order to receive a high school diploma." However, no state-level policy allows for or requires service-learning to count toward graduation requirements.

Nonetheless, the Wisconsin DPI has identified service-learning as a priority initiative and is making strong connections between effective schools working toward the goals of 21st Century Skills and the use of service-learning in the classroom as a core teaching methodology. Throughout the agency, service-learning is connected to a wide variety of educational programs, including 21st Century Skills, content area skills, career and technical education, STEM initiatives, family and consumer economics, and Future Farmers of America.

Wisconsin has had consistent support from its elected state superintendents. Current Wisconsin State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster speaks out frequently on her interest in service-learning and citizenship.

Learn and Serve

In 2008, Wisconsin had two Learn and Serve grantees, the state Department of Public Instruction and the Oneida Indian Nation of Wisconsin. The state receives a Learn and Serve K-12 formula grant of $283,246 which funds 18 subgrantees and involves over 11,000 participants. Each year CESAs give as many as 100 mini-grants involving thousands of students. DPI reinforces the mini-grants with many conferences and training events. Even though these grants are small, they typically influence policy and practice far beyond what their size would indicate. In several communities, enthusiastic teachers and administrators have integrated service-learning into school district strategic plans.

A student came to Marlo Dentice-Johnson, social studies teacher at Greendale Middle School, with an idea. The student's grandfather was involved with We the People: Project Citizen and the student felt it would be a good experience for her classmates. Dentice-Johnson quickly agreed, and soon all four seventh-grade social studies classes were participating.

The nationwide program engages students in the public policy process by helping them identify a community problem, gather information, examine solutions, develop an action plan, and propose public policy to appropriate policymakers. The students at Greendale Middle School worked collaboratively in class for the entire school year, but the curriculum can also be used in other settings with a wide range of age groups. It links directly to academic standards in each state.

"I just served as the advisor – to make sure things stayed calm," said Dentice-Johnson. The students were responsible for all classroom discussions, interviews with community members, presentations to policymakers, and reflection components. Dentice-Johnson continued, "The kids got to choose the direction, and by the end they knew they could make a change and that they did it on their own."

In the years that Greendale Middle School participated, students made a wide variety of significant impacts. They designed and obtained approval for a recycling program at their school. They revamped the lunch menu to be much healthier. And when they determined that the area between their school and neighboring Canterbury Elementary School was unsafe, they took swift action. Once plagued by children smoking and drinking, the wooded area was cleaned up. Now students have proposed that a ladder golf game be installed. By collaborating with the police department and attracting more people to the wooded area, the young people plan to deter troublemakers and give students a much safer place to walk and play.

Wyoming

Wyoming Service-Learning Support Group and other partnerships aid service-learning growth.

The community agencies value the students and the schools as resources because we help their businesses, their clients, and their properties.

Building Networks of Support

Service-learning initiatives in Wyoming found their feet in the late 1990s. Learn and Serve projects included a wetland restoration in western Wyoming and a literacy program in Casper. Alternative high school students in Cheyenne used language arts, history, and workplace skills to help interpret the Old West Museum for the public. In an exemplary inter-generational project, students at the Arapaho Public School installed a computer lab and interviewed elders as a means to preserve tribal oral histories.

Currently, two school-based service-learning programs are supported with Learn and Serve funds. These programs began their operation in 2006 and are funded through the 2008-09 school year. Positive partnerships and momentum are allowing service-learning initiatives to continue to grow throughout the state. For example, the Wyoming Service-Learning Support Group has been set up by educators who are dedicated to strengthening service-learning programs across the state.

Support for a statewide service effort has grown with the formation of the nonprofit Serve Wyoming, Inc. In 2005, Wyoming placed all of its allotted AmeriCorps members for the first time in eight years. Serve Wyoming is also key to the overall implementation and oversight of the school-based Learn and Serve programs. Additionally, during the past few years, an annual service-learning workshop has been held bringing service-learning practitioner together to advance service-learning programming.

The Wyoming Community Foundation, in partnership with Serve Wyoming, organizes the biannual Wyoming Philanthropy Days/ Service and Volunteerism Conference. During this event, the Spirit of Service Award pays tribute to the most outstanding partici-

pants in national service programs—Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and VISTA Serve—as well as an outstanding corporate or foundation partner, and a nonprofit organization, or individual.

Support Through Policy

No specific service-learning public policies are currently in place, although the impact and importance of service-learning is acknowledged by educational leaders. In 2004, the governor set up Serve Wyoming as the state's Commission for National and Community Service to administer AmeriCorps programs and promote volunteerism across the state. ServeWyoming is guided by a volunteer board of directors appointed by the governor.

Learn and Serve

In 2008, the state received three grants, totaling $124,397 and involving over 300 students, through the Wyoming Department of Education, Northern Arapaho Tribal Housing, and St. Stephens Indian School Educational Association, Inc.

Currently, in partnership with Serve Wyoming, the Wyoming Department of Education is administering school-based Learn and Serve funds through two subgrantees in Gillette and Rock Springs. These programs are implemented as part of afterschool programming with a focus on supporting academic achievement and youth development through involvement in service-learning opportunities.

Community Connections in Rock Springs,

Wyoming provides extensive opportunities for junior high through high school students to serve their community. Operating Monday through Thursday from 2:45 until 5:00 p.m., approximately 40 students spend these critical after school hours engaged in service with a focus on career exploration, personal growth, college preparation and resume-building.

In a mutually-beneficial way, the program has developed in-depth partnerships with a multitude of local agencies. "It has changed the community agencies' view of the typical teenager. They now know that they are basically good kids," said Lisa Plant, Community Connections coordinator.

The students choose which community agency they'd like to serve at each day, including Chamber of Commerce, Humane Society, Sage View Care Center, Recycling Center, White Mountain Presbyterian Church daycare, and others. A teacher is sent to each of the sites with the students, to facilitate their work and coordinate the relationship with the agency. "The community agencies value the students and the schools as resources because we help their businesses, their clients and their properties," said Plant.

Guiding these intense partnerships is a Coalition Committee that meets quarterly and includes City of Rock Springs Mayor and Chief of Police, the Sweetwater County Attorney's Office, Commerce Bank, Holy Spirit Catholic School, a Sweetwater County School Board member and Waddell and Reed, an investment firm. At these quarterly meetings they discuss program progress, collaborate and set common goals.

Community Connections is intentional in its community partnerships as well as its students' outcomes. Being allowed to participate in Community Connections isn't automatic, however. Plant explained, "The students' grades are checked every Monday and they have to be up before they can participate. We have to keep them on track for school."

Glossary

The following terms are commonly associated with service-learning; the definitions pertain to their application to service-learning.

Accountability: Measurable proof—often shown in student achievement data—that teachers, schools, districts, states, organizations, and agencies are efficiently and effectively accomplishing their goals.

Authentic assessment: A form of assessment that measures students' knowledge and skills as demonstrated through real-world products or achievements. Service-learning demonstrates learning through a service project that results in such a product or achievement.

Civic and Citizenship Education: Teaching the knowledge and skills necessary for effective civic participation, and connecting education to concepts such as democracy, liberty, responsibility, and freedom.

Community Service: Community service is often a form of volunteerism done within a defined community, which could be a classroom, school, town, or city. Typically, it does not have an intentional tie to learning; the emphasis is strictly on service. In the context of the judicial system, "community service" can have a punitive connotation.

Experiential Education: Emotionally engaged learning in which the learner experiences a visceral connection to the subject matter. Good experiential learning combines direct experience that is meaningful to the student with guided reflection and analysis. It is a challenging, active, student-centered process that impels students toward opportunities for taking initiative, responsibility, and decision-making.

High Quality Service-Learning: Service-learning that meets the K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice.

Indicator: A quantitative measure used to predict an outcome.

K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice: A set of standards and associated indicators determining the nature and extent to which service-learning practice can be considered as high quality.

Learning Assessment: Documentation and evaluation of how well students have met curricular goals and learning objectives. Because of the nature of service-learning, assessment activities such as portfolios, rubrics, and anecdotal records are appropriate in addition to standard approaches such as test and papers.

National Service: Service programs organized by national governments to promote the welfare of their citizens. Participants are often young people in emerging adulthood.

Positive Youth Development: A body of theory that identifies factors that support the development of young people into caring, capable, and civically engaged adults.

Project Evaluation: The process of evaluating how well a service-learning project achieved its goals, and what impact the project had on participants and the community. Project evaluation is separate from student assessment.

Reflection: A critical component distinguishing service-learning from community service. Reflection is the conscious review and critical analysis of the service performed, giving meaning to the service and enhancing the understanding of classroom concepts.

Service-Learning: A philosophy, pedagogy, and model for community development that is used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or content standards.

Social Capital: The features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit.

Youth Service: An umbrella term identifying program models, titles, and organizations whose youth provide service to their school and/or communities. The term should not be confused with "youth services," which typically refer to programs that serve youth.

Youth Voice: Young people have ownership of and an active say in the selection, design, implementation, and evaluation of a service-learning project.

About NYLC

The National Youth Leadership Council has been at the helm of advancing service-learning and supporting its practitioners—young people and adults—for 25 years. Whether conducting action research, developing model programs, codifying teaching standards, advancing legislation, convening practitioners, or training, NYLC is at the center of quality service-learning practice.

NYLC supports education that

- Makes students active in the communities as partners, leaders, and advocates.
- Is experiential, student-centered, academically sound, meaningful, and lifelong.
- Provides teachers with the resources they need to bring service-learning opportunities to all students.

About Service-Learning

- Planting flowers at a local park is *service*.
- Studying erosion is *learning*.
- Researching native grasses and working with master gardeners to control erosion at a local park is *service-learning*.

More about Growing to Greatness

The desire to serve, to do meaningful work that is of value to other people, is universal. *Growing to Greatness* provides community leaders, educators, and policy-makers with critical information and resources to mobilize local people, including neighborhood youth[s], to solve local problems. It is an important overview of the service-learning field's progress to date in creating not only active citizens, but also future leaders eager to be the agents of change.

Dorothy Stoneman
President and Founder, YouthBuild USA

Growing to Greatness 2006 brought renewed power and insight to our shared commitment to service-learning and its impact and potential on "both sides of the hyphen." Together, NYLC and State Farm are playing an important leadership role for the field—by making the case, pointing to what works, and reminding us yet again that we will only achieve the full promise of this great country when young people are viewed as important resources and partners in the work to be done.

Marguerite Kondracke
Executive Director, America's Promise—The Alliance for Youth

NYLC and State Farm are giving a great boost to the service-learning field with each annual publication of *Growing to Greatness*. The information is not only useful for those of us "in the business," but it provides a compelling argument for young people, educators, elected officials, parents, corporate leaders, and anybody who cares about student achievement and the health of American democracy.

Steven A. Culbertson
President and CEO, Youth Service America

Growing to Greatness continues to offer some of the most valuable reading in the service-learning field. Whether you are a researcher, administrator, or practitioner, you will find timely, lively, well-documented information that will assist you in your quest to improve both schooling and community life.

Drs. James and Pamela Toole
Compass Institute and the University of Minnesota

Growing to Greatness is a wonderful resource on service-learning that fits well with strategies for school reform outlined in NASSP's *Breaking Ranks II* and *Breaking Ranks in the Middle*.

Gerald N. Tirozzi, Ph.D.
Executive Director,
National Association of Secondary School Principals

Growing to Greatness is a must-read resource for policy-makers, practitioners, and any member of the public interested in service-learning. It's practical, highly readable, and full of rich detail about this important and ever-changing field.

Shirley Sagawa
Author; Consultant; Former Executive Vice President,
The Corporation for National Service

By drawing together cutting-edge research and carefully documented practice, *Growing to Greatness* tells the compelling story of how service-learning is shaping the lives of young people, their schools, and their communities. Policy-makers, educators, and community leaders will find in these landmark reports the evidence and insight needed to propel this movement into the future.

Peter L. Benson, Ph.D.
President, Search Institute

Across this country our youngest citizens are stepping forward to shoulder the responsibilities of active citizenship through service-learning in ever-expanding number. Thanks to State Farm and NYLC, this pioneering movement comes to life through the pages of *Growing to Greatness*.

Harris Wofford
Former U.S. Senator, Pennsylvania; Former CEO,
Corporation for National Service

Growing to Greatness recognizes and celebrates the work done daily by dedicated young people, educators, and civic leaders to promote and expand service-learning in schools and communities across the country. The examples, profiles, and articles of this report are incredible resources for those of us committed to nurturing generations of engaged learners and active citizens ready to participate in our global community.

Nelda Brown
Executive Director, National Service-Learning Partnership

Growing to Greatness is an exceptional source of information and ideas about the status of service-learning. It provides perspectives on service-learning as a field of practice and subject of study; reports empirical evidence from survey research; presents profiles of practice in particular places; and features highly intelligent thinking about this work in the years ahead.

Barry Checkoway, Ph.D.
University of Michigan School of Social Work

State Farm and NYLC are to be congratulated for providing this important resource and for contributing to a deeper understanding of the service-learning movement. *Growing to Greatness* clearly documents the contributions service-learning is making to the intellectual, personal, civic, and moral development of students.

Ira Harkavy
Associate Vice President and Director, Center for Community Partnerships, University of Pennsylvania

Growing to Greatness documents how youth[s], families, and communities are working toward educational and social change, and is essential reading for anyone interested in youth development. *Growing to Greatness* provides fresh perspectives and intellectually stimulating arguments on the merits of service-learning.

Chris Kwak
Program Director, W.K. Kellogg Foundation

An excellent resource that answers questions many policy-makers, education leaders and other education stakeholders ask: What is the current status of service-learning across the country? What does quality service-learning look like? What are examples of policies for states and districts?

Terry Pickeral
Executive Director, National Center for Learning and Citizenship

An excellent source for up-to-date information on service-learning from across the nation, including information on programs, policies, and research.

Reed Larson, Ph.D.
Pampered Chef Ltd., Endowed Chair in Family Resiliency, University of Illinois-Urbana

Growing to Greatness demonstrates the importance of providing meaningful opportunities for youth[s]. It's an especially important resource for schools that have not invested in service-learning because it will convince them to get involved.

Patti Smith, Ed.D.
Associate Director, Secondary School Redesign
The Education Alliance, Brown University

Growing to Greatness is the best available resource on the state of K-12 community service and service-learning in this country. The evidence presented overwhelmingly supports the reach of this work, and includes research findings, policy information, and state and program profiles in clear, easily digestible summaries.

Jeffrey Howard, Ph.D.
Associate Director for Service-Learning at the University of Michigan's Edward Ginsberg Center for Community Service and Learning

Growing to Greatness offers readers essential information to understand and advance service-learning. Long-time practitioners will feel a sense of pride at the state of service-learning. For people new to the field, *G2G* captures the meaning and value of service-learning for young people and teachers, provides encouraging research results, gives you lessons on ways to implement service-learning, as well as helpful resources.

Carol Kinsley, Ed.D.
Corporation for National and Community Service, Board of Directors, National Service-Learning Partnership, Chair, Board of Directors

We know that young people's hope, passion, and energy can provide vital fuel to community efforts to improve. *Growing to Greatness* not only offers a comprehensive scan of the "how, what, where, and when" this exciting work is taking place, it also paves the way for the movement's continued growth by organizing information for policy-makers, practitioners, researchers, and anyone who cares about youth[s] and change into a true one-stop shop.

Karen Pittman
Executive Director, The Forum for Youth Investment

Engaging youths in the advancement of civil society is a fundamental component of the promotion of positive youth development. This landmark report documents the important contributions being made by community-based, service-learning organizations in enhancing the lives of our nation's youths.

Richard Lerner, Ph.D.
Director, Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development, Tufts University

Growing to Greatness documents the power of learning that engages young people as active citizens in their communities. An excellent resource for educators, policy-makers, and community activists.

Rachel B. Tompkins, Ed.D.
President, Rural School and Community Trust

Growing to Greatness is an excellent resource for learning about the state of service-learning in the U.S.A. and for getting a bird's-eye view of the research that is needed for its progress.

Don Eberly
President, International Association for National Youth Service

About Growing to Greatness

As an educator involved for the past three decades in higher-education service-learning initiatives throughout the developing world, I have found *Growing to Greatness* to be a consistent and trusted resource that cogently presents and summarizes research, current developments, and innovations in this field. In places where service-learning as an educational practice is as yet little-understood or valued, *G2G* has often been, for me, the catalyst that stimulates interest, begins the conversation, and leads to initial engagement.

Paul W. Robinson, Ph.D.
Director & Professor, Human Needs and Global Resources Program, Wheaton College, and Board Vice Chair, Université Chrétienne Bilingue du Congo, Beni, Democratic Republic of Congo

Growing to Greatness is an essential resource. By documenting how youth, schools, and communities can successfully work together for social change, it provides indisputable evidence of the value of service-learning. As both a parent and education professional, I am deeply grateful to NYLC for 25 years of leadership and support.

Don Helmstetter, Ph.D.
Superintendent, Spring Lake Park (Minn.) School District #16

Growing to Greatness makes clear the case for service-learning by demonstrating how quality service-learning experiences can broaden and deepen schooling's impact. It does so by synthesizing research and by providing descriptions of initiatives that work. *Growing to Greatness* highlights important and often undervalued gaps in many schools' priorities and practices and shows how service-learning can help educators respond.

Joseph Kahne, Ph.D.
Abbie Valley Professor of Education, Dean, School of Education, Mills College

Growing to Greatness annual reports have become essential desk (and backpack!) companions for those writing about, organizing, and participating in service-learning programs throughout the world. Each report provides snapshots of the current state of research alongside concrete examples of service-learning programs in action. This interplay in bridging the research and practice makes *G2G*'s publications enormously useful.

Joel Westheimer, Ph.D.
University Research Chair in Democracy and Education, University of Ottawa (Ontario)

Service-learning through volunteering is one of the most effective ways to enrich young people's lives by enhancing personal and social growth. Through civic engagement, young people can develop leadership skills, explore career opportunities and appreciate how individual contributions can make our community a better place to live.

Congresswoman Betty McCollum, *MN-04*

The series of these annual reports has provided a very useful documentary on the service-learning landscape as it has evolved by citing research, discussing topics of interest to practitioners, and raising important policy questions. We need this kind of information to support the role we believe young people should have in transforming their communities and their education.

Susan E. Stroud
Executive Director, Innovations in Civic Participation

Those of us in higher education need to pay attention to what is happening in K-12 service-learning. High school students are coming to expect service-learning experiences as part of their college education, and we need to be ready for them. *Growing to Greatness* helps the higher-ed community understand the trends and outcomes for younger students in civic engagement.

Gail Robinson
Manager of Service-Learning, American Association of Community Colleges

The *Growing to Greatness* series has become a reliable source of reflections by leading figures on both where the field is and where it needs to be headed. By tapping a broad range of authors who provide both new insights and challenges, this essential publication helps build a stronger, intellectually grounded field – one that can help shape the future. It combines the best of lessons from research and practical examples that inspire.

Dale A. Blyth, Ph.D.
Associate Dean for Youth Development, University of Minnesota

For 25 years NYLC has been a clear, constructive, compassionate voice for some of the most effective methods to improve not only schooling, but also learning. Many of the schools in the U.S. with the highest test scores are also strong believers in service-learning. The more we listen to NYLC, the better our youngsters will do.

Joe Nathan, Ph.D.
Senior Fellow, Director of the Center for School Change, University of Minnesota

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