

## SUCCESSFUL SERVICE-LEARNING STRATEGIES

Service-learning policies, including requirements, have become increasingly popular across the country. In 1997, 18% of school districts reported having service requirements for their high school students,<sup>1</sup> and in 1999, 46% of high schools reported students participating in service-learning activities.<sup>2</sup> As service-learning gains more momentum in the education field, it is important to recognize and share the effective practices and successful strategies of other service-learning initiatives. The following chapter focuses on two successful aspects of the Chicago and Philadelphia initiatives: 1) successful school-based service-learning models and 2) school/community partnerships.

Six basic models of service-learning can be found within the “best practice” high schools of Chicago and Philadelphia. These models offer schools and districts various strategies to integrate service-learning into their community. As seen in Chicago and Philadelphia, these models can be used to introduce service-learning to a school, integrate service-learning further into academic curricula and/or provide students with an after school program. This chapter also includes practical examples, and a follow-up discussion, of each model.

One of the essential components that contributes to the success of each model is a community-based partner. Chicago and Philadelphia teachers, as well as administrators, report that “community partners are critical” to the success of their service-learning programs. People often assume that “school-based” service-learning happens within the insular world of the school. However, community-based organizations are playing a critical role within school-based service-learning and these partnerships need to be recognized and supported.

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<sup>1</sup> Shumer, *The Status of Service-Learning in the United States: Some Facts and Figures*, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Rebecca Skinner and Chris Chapman, *Service-Learning and Community Service in K-12 Public Schools*. (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistic, U.S. Department of Education, 1999) 6.

## SERVICE-LEARNING MODELS

Each school and community has unique populations, educational structures, assets and needs, and will need to develop a unique and appropriate service-learning implementation strategy. Although many service-learning policies are designed and implemented at the district and state levels, policymakers need to allow flexibility at the local level, for schools to determine the manner in which service-learning is implemented.

Advocates for school-based service-learning often stress the importance or necessity of fully integrating service-learning into the academic curriculum. Although service-learning does enhance many subject areas, and some would argue service-learning enhances *all* learning, complete school integration is not necessary for schools to provide students with quality service-learning experiences. There is an assortment of integration avenues for schools to explore.

The following is an outline of service-learning models that have been successful within the “requirements” of Chicago and Philadelphia. These models are examples of how schools can begin to integrate service-learning into students’ education.

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| <b>MODEL 1</b> | <b>Single Course:</b> A school offers service-learning in certain courses.  |
| <b>MODEL 2</b> | <b>Single Discipline :</b> A school integrates service-learning into a specific academic discipline and includes service-learning in course framework and standards.    |
| <b>MODEL 3</b> | <b>Multi-Disciplinary :</b> A school integrates service-learning across academic disciplines, in which each service-learning project would include two or more courses. |
| <b>MODEL 4</b> | <b>Elective Course:</b> A school offers service-learning opportunities through elective courses.  |
| <b>MODEL 5</b> | <b>Club:</b> A school coordinates an out-of-class Service-Learning Club.  |
| <b>MODEL 6</b> | <b>Individual Project:</b> A school allows students the opportunity to design and implement individual service-learning projects.                                       |

Table developed by Beth Swanson, 1999 National Service Fellow.

## **MODEL 1: SERVICE-LEARNING INTEGRATED INTO COURSE CURRICULUMS**

A school offers service-learning in certain courses. Teachers would be trained in service-learning and provided the tools necessary to integrate service-learning into their curricula.

### **Examples:**

1. The wood shop class at Hubbard High School, Chicago, IL, supplies furniture to a local shelter, as students learn carpentry skills. The program began as a community service project, facilitated by the teacher, who felt it was important to instill an ethic of service in his students. He decided to utilize the students' skills, which are at the professional carpentry level, to help the families at St. Elizabeth's, a group home that provides shelter for impoverished families. Five years ago, the students began to build furniture for St. Elizabeth's as an extension of their course work. Through their service projects, the students honed the carpentry skills that they learned in class, while providing well constructed beds, desks, bureaus, cribs, and more to the residents of St. Elizabeth's.

As a part of the program, students were required to deliver the furniture they made to the home (transportation was provided by their teacher). When students met the residents and toured the facilities at St. Elizabeth's, they began to develop a much deeper understanding of their project and began to form relationships with the families. This well intentioned community service project soon developed into a student-driven service-learning project, as the high school students continued to visit St. Elizabeth's and began to engage one another in reflective discussions regarding poverty and inequality.

Now in its fifth year, the partnership with Hubbard high school and St. Elizabeth's continues to grow and has become a high-quality service-learning program. Students, in conjunction with their teacher and the residents of St. Elizabeth's, identify furniture and home repair needs. Students design and build the furniture at the school wood shop, usually in the early morning before school begins.<sup>3</sup> Some students take the project a step further and teach residents basic home repair skills, so they can become self reliant. The teacher regularly facilitates reflection discussions, and recognizes student efforts through celebratory lunches.

The teacher reports that the service-learning program has not only helped students develop emotionally and socially, but has brought academic growth as well. Families often request projects that extend beyond the traditional classroom curriculum and challenge students to use advanced carpentry skills. Not only are the students fulfilling a need in their community through this project, but they are also increasing their carpentry skills and their professional allure.

The students feel that they have a much better understanding of their community, particularly regarding the socio-economic inequities that exist within their community, after participating in the program. Many students also express the desire to continue their

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<sup>3</sup> All of the furniture is made during out-of-school time, as stipulated by the Chicago Public School service-learning graduation requirement.

service to St. Elizabeth's after they complete the course, and feel that they will continue to serve their communities throughout their adult lives.

2. An English class at Nicholas Senn High School, Chicago, IL, learned writing and editing skills through coordinating a reading program at a local elementary school. The high school students wrote and designed storybooks for first graders and also tutored the children in reading skills. In addition to learning writing skills and teaching reading skills, the high school students also became mentors and role models to this group of children.

Although not an outlined objective of the program, the high school students also taught the first graders "life lessons" through their creative storybooks. Story topics included how to cross the street safely, why drugs are dangerous to your mind and body, how to cope with fear and being scared, and other social issues such as racial tolerance and gender equality.

This teacher had always taught in the "project-based" format and was quite familiar with service-learning before undertaking this initiative. The teacher was responsible for all preparation for and supervision of the service project, and students kept reflective journals throughout the semester, which counted toward their English writing grade at the completion of the semester. To celebrate the project, the high school students organized and hosted a party for their first grade "buddies" and the elementary students made thank you cards for their tutors. At this celebration, it was obvious that the bond between these two groups of students went far beyond a school project. They had become friends and a support system for one another.

### ***Discussion***

The success of this model and the quality of the student's service-learning experience is predominantly dependent on the teacher. Professional development is critical for the teachers involved in the initiative, and they need to be familiar with not only the basics of service-learning, but the larger issues of how to integrate service-learning into their curricula and how to assess their programs.

A benefit to this model is that many teachers are already using service-learning within their courses, or some form of "experiential" or "project-based" learning, which could be massaged into a service-learning program. Experienced service-learning educators should be encouraged and supported to continue to use service-learning as a teaching strategy. Schools should also utilize these experienced teachers, as they can be a tremendous resource to other faculty and staff interested in incorporating service-learning into their curricula.

With a well-trained and/or experienced teacher, particularly a teacher who has *chosen* to use service-learning within his/her courses, this model often produces a high-quality service-learning experience for students. The teacher will have the ability to provide direct connections to the course curriculum, prepare the students for their service experience, include reflection activities throughout the project and supervise the project from its inception to completion. By working with one class, the teacher also has a

manageable number of students to work with and is more likely to be familiar with students' skills and interests.

Schools that integrate service-learning into only one or even a handful of courses, will need to offer subsequent service-learning opportunities and/or models for students, as all students will not necessarily take the courses that have a service-learning component.

## **MODEL 2: SERVICE-LEARNING INTEGRATED INTO AN ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE**

A school integrates service-learning into a specific academic discipline and includes service-learning in course frameworks and standards. Teachers within this discipline would be trained in service-learning and provided the tools and skills necessary to integrate service-learning into their course curriculums.

### **Examples:**

1. Masterminds African-American Studies Community (MAASC), housed in William Penn High School, in Philadelphia, PA, requires "Senior Exhibition" of all 12<sup>th</sup> grade students. This is a one semester (half year) course in which students develop individual service projects that respond to the question: How can I use my skills, gifts and talents to make a difference in my community? The course is organized into 6 units: Introspection, Community Needs Assessment, Intention Paper, Strategy Development, Strategy Implementation and Presentation. In short, the course guides the student through the process of self and community analysis, and asks the student to address a social issue within his/her community. Each unit incorporates various educational projects, which are also used for reflection opportunities, such as research, book reports, interviews, essay writing, oral presentations and other creative options (Appendix L). These projects not only prepare the student to take action within the community, but they also meet numerous academic standards for twelfth grade. At the completion of the semester, students participate in the "exhibition" to display their knowledge and celebrate their efforts with faculty, family and friends.

2. The Social Studies Department of a Chicago high school chose to integrate Active Citizenship Today (ACT)<sup>4</sup> service-learning curriculum into all Sophomore social studies courses. The Constitutional Rights Foundation provided teacher training for eight teachers, from separate disciplines, including a core team of teachers from the social studies department. In turn, those trained teachers took the lead and trained their school colleagues in the basics of service-learning and the ACT curriculum. The first year of implementation consisted of faculty trainings, and one teacher piloted ACT in his tenth grade U.S. History course. Next year, all tenth grade social studies teachers will have completed training and plan to integrate ACT into their respective courses (Appendix M).

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<sup>4</sup> Active Citizenship Today (ACT) offers teachers an approach to civic education through service-learning. The five unit curriculum provides a step-by-step process that guides teachers and students through a service-learning project. ACT is most often integrated into an established civics course or within a community service course.

3. Another possibility within this model is to add service-learning to a pre-existing program within the discipline. For example, CPS partners with The Chicago-Metro History Education Center to coordinate a History Fair for grades 9-12. The History Fair is a project-based learning activity and a service-learning component could be easily added to the project requirements. Although the History Fair is a voluntary activity in CPS, many high schools do require their students to participate and a large number of students participate in the fair annually.

### ***Discussion***

Professional development is critical to the success of this model. Teachers must receive the proper training to create high-quality service-learning opportunities for students. After training, teachers will have the ability to provide direct connections to the course curriculum, prepare the students for their service experience, include reflection activities throughout the project and supervise the project from its inception to completion. By working with one class, the teacher also has a manageable number of students to work with and is apt to be familiar with students' skills and interests.

Another benefit to this model is that when a team of teachers uses service-learning within their curricula, a natural service-learning support network will develop within the school.

If a school chooses to integrate service-learning into the framework of an academic discipline, the issue of whether or not a teaching methodology is being mandated may surface. If a school's administration is uncomfortable with this, rather than attempt to mandate how one teaches, they can recognize the potential of service-learning as a methodology and encourage the use of service-learning by including it in an academic framework. Teachers would then be able to choose how to integrate service-learning into their specific courses. For example, a teacher could have one lesson include a service-learning project or s/he could have a service-learning project span the entire semester throughout various lessons.

Although this model will most likely reach all students as it spans an entire academic discipline, students need more than one opportunity to fulfill their graduation requirement. The school will need to provide subsequent service-learning opportunities and/or models if such a requirement exists.

### **MODEL 3: MULTI-DISCIPLINARY IMPLEMENTATION**

A school integrates service-learning across academic disciplines, in which each service-learning project would connect with two or more courses.

#### **Example:**

The Hotel, Restaurant & Tourism Academy, housed in Ben Franklin High School, in Philadelphia, PA, has initiated the “Spring Garden Millenium Project.” This community beautification project incorporates four academic disciplines – English, Social Studies, Science and Math – and all four teachers actively participate in the project. The school has also partnered with a community volunteer who helps with project coordination and logistics, and the local Horticulture Society.

Students chose to create their garden on the median strip of the road in front of their school and will design the garden in math class. Students are currently researching their community and neighborhood through projects in their social studies class, while also studying various types of plants and proper planting processes in science. Once the service project is underway, each student will be responsible for keeping a journal and reflective essays will be completed in their English courses. Each teacher involved in the project is responsible for designing academic activities that challenge the students, enhance their learning within the respective subject area and connect to the service experience. It is also up to the teacher’s discretion how to evaluate student work and incorporate it into their grading system.

#### ***Discussion***

For a multi-disciplinary service-learning project to be successful, it must involve teachers who are committed to project-based learning and collaboration, and have an appreciation for the content of other academic disciplines. This model requires a great deal of teacher preparation time and flexibility regarding schedules and class time. However, multi-disciplinary projects can be very powerful and produce high-quality student experiences.

Service-learning, particularly when conducted through the multi-disciplinary model, provides teachers and students the forum to make connections between academic disciplines, experiment with various learning styles and connect students’ education with real-world experiences. This model allows for a more holistic approach to one’s education. Rather than viewing academic subjects in a compartmentalized manner, students will begin to see “how the learning in separate disciplines is in fact interrelated, and how learning applies to their own lives.”<sup>5</sup> In Philadelphia, this model proves to be particularly attractive to new teachers who are new to service-learning, as they are supported in their work and do not feel so isolated in their efforts to integrate service-learning into their courses. With a team of teachers collaborating on a project, a natural service-learning network forms and the teachers have the opportunity to influence and learn from each other’s work.

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<sup>5</sup> Gene R. Carter, *Service Learning in Curriculum Reform*, Service Learning: Ninety-sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education. (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1997) 70.

The school will also need to provide subsequent service-learning opportunities and/or models for students.

#### **MODEL 4: ELECTIVE COURSES**

A school offers service-learning opportunities through elective courses.

##### **Examples:**

1. Literacy Corp at Master Minds African-American Studies Community, housed within William Penn High School, Philadelphia, PA, is a full-year elective seminar for ninth and tenth grade students. Students are trained in literacy education by two community-based organizations, the Free Library of Philadelphia and Philadelphia READS. The teacher also invites other professional speakers to address the students on subjects such as selecting age appropriate activities for younger students and developing lesson plans. Students then develop lesson plans and visit local elementary schools to teach first and second graders how to read. Teachers also conduct reflective sessions through writing assignments and group discussions.

This well-structured program results in positive impacts for all participants: elementary students, high school students and the greater community. Both the elementary students and high school students have shown increases in academic performance during the program. Teachers report that elementary student reading levels have been raised, as well as high school students' knowledge of the English language. Kensington High School also coordinates a literacy project, in which many of the high school reading tutors are recent immigrants who only learned English a few years ago. These students are enhancing their own learning and mastery of the English language while also helping third graders with their literacy skills.

The high school students of Masterminds are also utilizing their literacy training within their own school by implementing a "book bank" and encouraging literacy among their peers. Both activities are extensions of the original program, all facilitated by the students on their own initiative.

Another notable component of the project is that the high school students tutor local elementary students, who will eventually attend William Penn High School. Thus, the tutoring project not only improves the reading skills of high school students, but the skills of future William Penn students as well. The program has also existed for a number of years and continues to work with the same elementary schools. Over time, this project will develop a more literate and educated community.

2. The Girard Academic Music Program (GAMP), Philadelphia, PA, offers a service-learning elective course which focuses on health education. In a unique partnership, the school librarian, school counselor and a science teacher collaborate to teach this course,



which culminates in a student-run “health fair.” Students brainstorm various health issues that they feel are pertinent to themselves and their peers, research the selected subjects, organize a school-wide health fair and present their research at the fair in the hopes of educating their school and community. The teachers also partner with numerous community-based agencies that act as resources on various health issues, such as HIV/AIDS, anorexia, bulimia and depression. These “experts” visit the school to discuss certain topics, as well as assist students with the development of their projects.

The project incorporates many academic disciplines (e.g. English, Science and Health) and student learning is assessed through a variety of methods, including research, writing, oral speaking, group projects and tests. Teachers also facilitate reflection activities.

### ***Discussion***

The elective courses in Philadelphia produce some of the highest quality service-learning experiences for students. The teachers of elective courses are committed to service-learning as a teaching methodology, and service-learning is the framework for their course. Teachers are also very comfortable with course content and learning objectives, as in the case of the Literacy Corps. Literacy Corps has been taught for a number of years within Masterminds. A solid service-learning curriculum with reflection components has been developed, strong community partnerships have been formed, and a system of evaluation and assessment of the course and student performance has been created.

Students also feel committed to the class since they *choose* to participate. The teachers of elective courses report that students are engaged and dedicated to the service-learning projects, as can be seen through the high rate of class attendance in these courses. Another indication of student commitment to service-learning courses is the desire to stay involved after the completion of the course, as in the case of Literacy Corps. Many Literacy Corps graduates remain involved with the program and act as mentors and resources for the new program participants.

Elective courses are a very manageable integration option for schools. This model allows a school to concentrate on one service-learning class and develop a solid course curriculum, which is taught by a teacher committed to service-learning. Elective courses provide students with a high-quality introduction to service-learning and many schools, such as Masterminds, find that students become very engaged in their service-learning courses and begin to advocate for more service-learning activities within the school. An effective elective course can lead to a more school-wide integration of service-learning, as students may begin to promote and support the projects, and teachers may adopt the teaching method in their own courses.

To ensure students fulfill the requirement, school administrators may choose to mandate that each student participates in at least one of the courses.

## **MODEL 5: SERVICE-LEARNING CLUB**

A school coordinates an out-of-class Service-Learning Club. (e.g. after school or during lunch). Students would have the opportunity to voluntarily participate in the program and it would not be specifically linked to one particular course or curriculum.

### **Examples:**

1. Students at Nicholas Senn High School, Chicago, IL, with the guidance of their social studies teacher, have formed an after-school group that is participating in the *Illinois Youth Summit: Creating Safer Communities* program (Appendix N). The summit is coordinated by the Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago (CRFC), and focuses on issues of violence and public safety. The semester-long program annually addresses three topics. Participating students study the issue areas and research current policies that address these issues, then choose a topic to address in their own community through a service project. CRFC creates a curriculum and resource guide for teachers and students, and also provides training and technical assistance regarding developing service projects. The program at Senn is purely voluntary and the students meet on a weekly basis.

This year the Senn students have selected intolerance as their topic to study and address, and will implement their service project within their school community. The students developed a survey regarding issues of intolerance, distributed the survey to approximately 300 peers, and developed a service project in response to the survey results. The surveys found that students' style (i.e. clothes) and sexual orientation were the greatest contributing factors to intolerance at Senn. The Youth Summit participants have written and performed two short plays addressing each factor and will also be facilitating student forums for their classmates to discuss the issue of intolerance in further depth.

At the completion of the Youth Summit program, the Senn students felt that the issue of intolerance was too important to abandon. The students have now formed a student-run service-learning club, called "Accepting Students, Appreciating People" (ASAP) to continue their work at Senn. They will spend the remainder of the Spring semester coordinating the program and will implement the club in the fall of 2000. There are currently ten members registered to participate in the initiative.

2. Sisters Together in Action Research (STAR) is an after school program that promotes and supports the healthy development and empowerment of young women. High school young women work together with middle school girls to identify and research various gender issues that impact their social, cultural and economic lives. Students at Simon Gratz High School, Philadelphia, are currently participating in the program (facilitated by a faculty member) and have decided to document their lives and community through photographs. The photographs will eventually be organized into a "post card" project and distributed throughout the school and surrounding communities, with the intent to "enlighten, educate and bring about social change." The students are also discussing selling their photographs for a minimal fee and then donating the proceeds to a local women's shelter. The primary goal of the project is to raise consciousness around social

issues and motivate people to address their community's problems through positive social change.

3. A Service-Learning Club can also function without a pre-planned community-based program such as the Illinois Youth Summit or STAR. As an example, a group of students would perform a needs assessment of their school or community, pick an issue to address, and plan and implement a service project. A faculty advisor would help organize the initiative and guide the students through the service-learning process, including reflection and intentional learning objectives.

### ***Discussion***

The service-learning club is considered a "school-based" model because the program is sponsored and supervised by the school. Although the club may not offer the clear curricular connections of other service-learning models, intentional learning can still be achieved through such programs and the participants can enjoy a high-quality experience.

This model allows students to drive the project and assume leadership roles within the initiative. Faculty members act more as facilitators, and the students take on the responsibility of the club and resulting projects. Because the club meets in out-of-class time, faculty advisors have no curriculum constraints and may feel more at ease to allow the students to control the project and become active constructors of their own knowledge. One teacher finds this to be true, as

The current curriculum constraints within CPS do not encourage flexibility or creative teaching, and seem rather contradictory to service-learning. However, without those constraints in an after-school program, students become empowered, as they take on leadership roles and are an active participant in the planning of their own education.

There are many community-based organizations that currently conduct service-learning programs, such as the Illinois Youth Summit. Many of these programs are coordinated in the out-of-school hours and can be tremendous resources and/or partners to student run groups such as a service-learning club.

### **MODEL 6: INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS**

A school allows students the opportunity to design and implement individual service-learning projects. A faculty member would advise each project.

#### **Example:**

The School District of Philadelphia has outlined criteria for individual projects. Each school is responsible for assigning a Project Mentor to each project to oversee the progress and completion of the project. The Project Mentor can be a faculty member or community partner and is selected based on the student's topic and content standards. Through regular meetings the student and Project Mentor are expected to define the

project, outline learning objectives and connect them to one or more academic courses, develop reflection activities and discuss how the project and student's performance will be assessed.

### ***Discussion***

Allowing students to design and implement their own service-learning projects maximizes youth voice and can become a very empowering experience. Individual projects also have the potential to be very creative, as they are not limited to one course and project connections can be made to numerous academic disciplines.

These projects are student-driven, but a faculty advisor (e.g. Project Mentor) is critical to the success of this model. The advisor would not only be responsible for guiding the student through the completion of the service project, but plays an integral role in connecting the service to the student's academic learning. Students must have opportunities to demonstrate their learning (e.g. essays or oral presentations) and the advisor must have a means to assess the quality of the project, both in terms of service outcomes and participant impacts.

Faculty members who act as project advisors may find it challenging to take on these projects in addition to a full teaching schedule. If advisors are assigned too many students, the quality of the service-learning projects may be sacrificed, as in the case of Chicago. School service-learning coaches are the established advisors to all student service-learning projects. However, the Chicago Panel on School Policy found that the ratio of 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders to service-learning coaches is 852 to 1.<sup>6</sup> This being the case, coaches have very little time to conduct assessments of student service activities and find it difficult to monitor the quality of student projects. A more manageable and realistic student/teacher ratio is necessary or the quality of student service projects will continue to suffer. If the quality of the service projects is compromised, it will be difficult to attain the District's policy objectives and the CPS service-learning initiative will most likely have little impact.

### **CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS**

These models provide administrators and teachers with various avenues to integrate service-learning into their schools. It should be the responsibility of school administrators and staff to determine which service-learning model(s) to implement, depending on the assets and needs of their students and surrounding communities. Currently, schools seem to be having the greatest amount of success (i.e. producing the highest quality programs) with service clubs and elective courses. Particularly in schools where service-learning is a rather new concept, clubs and electives provide a manageable starting point for personnel. Both models allow for working with a relatively small number of students and offer intentional learning, without strict course curriculum constraints. Teachers and students within both models are involved on their own accord; they have chosen to participate. This is a fact that deserves more attention, and the

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<sup>6</sup> Williams, *Schools say no time for service learning*, Catalyst, April 1999: 4.

possible correlation between the choice to serve and the quality of the service program needs to be explored further.

The six models outlined are the most common, and appear to be the most effective, service-learning strategies within the school districts of Chicago and Philadelphia. However, simply adopting one or two of the models does not ensure high quality service-learning programs. As described in the project examples, successful projects within each model must also contain certain elements, which provide the foundation for a successful service-learning project. These “base elements” include: a commitment to service-learning, intentional learning objectives, the service project addresses a real community need, reflection, and collaboration.<sup>7</sup> If teachers are not adequately trained and/or the base elements are not included within a project, then the service-learning models will most likely fail. Policymakers must allow schools the flexibility to implement models appropriate for their communities and provide school personnel with the proper support and resources for their programs to succeed.

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<sup>7</sup> For more information on the “base elements” of service-learning, see page 62.

## COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are playing a critical role in the development, implementation and evaluation of service-learning programs across the country. Whether the policy involves community service or service-learning, schools are depending on community partners to make their initiatives successful. In fact, the highest quality service-learning, reported in both Chicago and Philadelphia, is happening when a school is partnered with a well established CBO, whose mission includes youth service and/or leadership development.

The Points of Light Foundation has created the *Practical Guide for Developing Agency/School Partnerships for Service-Learning*, which addresses the critical components of successful partnerships. The guide outlines three basic levels of partnerships: cooperation, coordination and collaboration (Appendix O). This framework is helpful in beginning to understand and categorize the types of school/community partnerships that are developing in Chicago and Philadelphia.

### COOPERATION

The service-learning partnerships in Chicago fall primarily within the “cooperation” level. For example, the American Red Cross and Working In the Schools, both provide a quality service-learning experience for Chicago students. However, the participating school and CBO remain separate entities. The CBO provides program resources such as training, transportation, funding and the service opportunity, while the school’s main responsibility is to provide the student participants.

#### **Examples:**

1. The **American Red Cross** (ARC) of Greater Chicago coordinates the “Youth Leadership Training Series” to train high school students to become: 1) HIV/AIDS Instructors; 2) Community Disaster Education Presenters; 3) Kid’s Safety Instructors; or 4) First Aid and CPR Instructors. Once trained in one of the four issue areas, students then teach other community members (e.g. elementary students) about the subject matter.

Training for the four issue areas varies, but most students complete ten to thirty hours of training during the program. ARC staff members come to the school (either after school or on the weekend) to conduct the trainings, as transportation to another site is often difficult for the students. Once training is complete, students are asked to teach ten to fifteen people in their community about their subject area. As a group (approximately 20 students per school), students are encouraged to design and conduct a service project related to one of the issues. Past service projects include: teaching safety to local elementary schools, creating and distributing pamphlets on “community disaster education” within the community, teaching first aid and safety to local Girl Scouts troops, and visiting and working with HIV patients at a local shelter. ARC staff members coordinate the project, including regular reflection activities and a celebratory event at the completion of the program.

ARC worked with approximately forty students, representing two Chicago high schools, during the 1999-2000 school year. The service-learning coach of each school was responsible for recruiting participants and ARC provided the entire service-learning program. Although they share natural ties, there are currently no formal connections between the ARC educational materials and the students' health or science course curricula.

2. **Working In The Schools (WITS)** is a not-for-profit organization that places volunteer math and reading tutors in Chicago public elementary schools. The WITS service-learning program, developed in response to the CPS requirement, began as a pilot program in the fall of 1998. Now, in the first year of full implementation, WITS works with six Chicago high schools, engaging students in service-learning projects.

WITS actively recruits high schools by contacting the school principal and service-learning coach. The principal's commitment to service-learning and community partnerships is a significant factor of whether or not WITS will work with the school. Once it is determined that the school is dedicated to working with WITS, the principal, service-learning coach and WITS service-learning coordinator meet to discuss and plan the program. WITS staff members then hold a school-wide "information session" at the school and students choose whether or not they would like to participate in the program. Once the students have selected themselves and registered for the program, WITS staff conduct a "leadership training," which includes an introduction to service-learning, tutoring, students roles and responsibilities, how to be a role model and other leadership skills.

After the leadership training, the high school students have the opportunity to visit the elementary school they will be working with and participate in a "Meet and Greet" with the elementary school principal, key faculty and their tutees. This meeting is another opportunity to learn about the program, define roles and responsibilities, and raise any questions or concerns.

The high school students tutor elementary students after school for one hour, once or twice a week (depending on the student's availability). WITS provides transportation for all of the tutors free of charge.

In addition to training and transportation, WITS also coordinates reflection opportunities for students (e.g. written evaluations and discussion groups) and a celebratory event at the end of the program. In fact, all aspects of the program are developed and coordinated by WITS staff. The school service-learning coach assumes strictly a support role within the program, and assists primarily with the recruitment of high school students.

### ***Discussion***

Staff members from both organizations recognize that they and the school with which they work function discretely within the program. They also report that they are working toward a more intimate partnership with school personnel and hope to eventually weave

their programs into certain course curricula. As one staff member explains, “the students are performing a needed service and they are learning, but their experience is not applied to a specific curriculum. We hope to get more teachers involved and move the program in that direction.”

## **COORDINATION**

Schools and CBOs are more closely aligned within this level of partnership. Rather than functionally separately, CBO and school staff work together to create a service-learning experience appropriate for the students (i.e. a particular class).

### **Examples:**

1. **City Year Chicago**, an AmeriCorps program, developed the High School Service Learning Academy in response to the CPS service-learning requirement. Teams consisting of six corps members serve in Chicago high schools and assist teachers and faculty with the integration of service-learning into their schools, as well as coordinate additional out-of-school service projects for the students. City Year Chicago also organizes a service-learning conference for high school students to attend during their spring break. The 2000 conference theme is Multi-Cultural Experiences Creating Cultural Awareness (MECCA) and students will have the opportunity to attend workshops and various events, and participate in two days of service during the week.

City Year Chicago has a structured, supportive service-learning program for both students and teachers. Corps members are trained in service-learning and basic teaching skills, and become a tremendous resource to teachers within the classroom. Corps members prepare students for their service activities, facilitate the service project design, develop appropriate reflection activities and evaluate the attitudinal impacts of service-learning on the students.

City Year Chicago also provides participating teachers the opportunity to gather three times a year to discuss the successes and challenges within the service-learning programs at their schools. Teachers find this opportunity to be extremely helpful and worthwhile.

The corps members’ greatest challenge (and the greatest asset they bring to the schools) is assisting with the integration of service into students’ learning and current course content. City Year Chicago reports that much of the service activities take place in out-of-school time, as schools and teachers struggle to view service-learning as a tool to enhance the core curriculum. It is still seen by students, teachers and administrators as an extra-curricular activity.



The corps also takes on the task of connecting student service projects to the national service movement and the quest for social change. Rather than dwell on the completion of 40 hours, the program stresses the larger concepts of the initiative: service, leadership development and civic engagement.

2. The **National School and Community Corps** (NSCC) is an AmeriCorps program based in Philadelphia that places teams of trained corps members in the public schools to support various educational initiatives. Approximately 150 corps members are divided among the three “signature areas” of the program: Arts, Literacy and Service-Learning.

The fifty members that concentrate their efforts in service-learning are assigned to a school, in teams of seven, and assist with the creation and implementation of service-learning programs. The corps members are trained in one of two service-learning curriculums, both prior to the school year and throughout the program: Community Works, by the National Crime Prevention Council and Street Law, Inc., and the Earth Force CAPS program. Schools, specifically principals, select which curriculum they would like to work with and the corps members are then trained accordingly. Schools may also chose to create their own service-learning curriculum and corps members are equipped to facilitate and assist in this process as well.

The sites with which NSCC works, primarily implement service-learning programs within school hours. However, corps members have coordinated some out-of-school programs, including summer projects, depending on the needs of the school. NSCC has seen the most success and the greatest student impacts within the service-learning programs during school hours. They feel it is the support of a committed teacher that accounts for these results.

### ***Discussion***

City Year Chicago and NSCC both strive to work in coordination with teachers to develop service-learning programs, rather than bring pre-determined programs into the school. In addition to creating projects, the Corps’ ultimate goal is to assist teachers in the complete integration of service-learning into course curricula. However, this has proven to be quite challenging, as the level of service-learning knowledge among school faculty varies greatly.

Because of this, Corps members find themselves assuming numerous roles within the classroom, including project facilitator, teacher trainer and even the “service-learning expert.” Corps members report that many teachers have yet to be trained in service-learning and often “turn over the service component” of the course to the Corps member. Although this is a welcome teaching experience for the Corps members, members feel it enforces the notion that “service” and “learning” are separate. While Corps members assume the role of the teacher, the teacher “often grades papers” or “takes a break,” rather than participating. Not only does this trend send students the wrong message about service-learning, but it creates programs that cannot be sustained. If teachers continue to separate themselves from the experience, service-learning will neither become an integral component of their curriculum, nor will it be able to exist once the Corps member’s term

is complete. Schools and districts will need to provide more teacher training and support for these partnerships, if service-learning is to be sustainable within the schools.

## **COLLABORATION**

Partnerships functioning at the collaborative level are committed to much more than service-learning. Such partnerships do, indeed, provide students with high-quality service-learning experiences and have the potential for significant community impact. However, these partnerships are not only about creating an engaging education program or adopting an effective teaching strategy – these partnerships are about social responsibility, education reform, youth development and community improvement.

### **Examples:**

1. **Do Something, Chicago** offers an experiential, “hands on” service-learning program, which focuses on youth leadership. The goal of the program is to train teachers to facilitate the leadership course within the school and be able to offer their students with a high quality service-learning experience. As a Do Something staff member explains, “we want the teachers to take the lead...we’ll give them the support they need, but the teacher will have the ownership.”

Do Something currently works with eleven Chicago public high schools. These partnerships are typically established with the school principal, who must be committed to the program, and with a team of teachers who will implement the leadership course. The program begins with a two day teacher training, which reviews the curriculum and provides the teachers and Do Something staff the opportunity to design a program that is appropriate for the school and students. Rather than present a prescribed service program, Do Something works with teachers to integrate leadership, youth development and service-learning into their existing course structures. Within the eleven sites, Do Something has assisted with the development of environmental service-learning courses, multidisciplinary projects and a senior (grade 12) leadership course. Some schools have also opted to offer the leadership course during an after school program or a “breakfast club.”

Although the goal of the program is leadership development, one of the means to achieving that objective is through service-learning. Half way through the leadership course, students are asked to develop a service project related to their course content. Students assume responsibility for the design and implementation of the project, as their teacher and the staff of Do Something maintain the role of facilitator. The majority of service projects take place after students complete the leadership course, which makes the service activity an ideal culmination to the program. Through the service experience, students have the opportunity to utilize their newly developed leadership skills.

Once teachers have completed their initial training, Do Something staff describe their roles within the program as “support mechanisms.” When requested, staff members are available to “team teach,” conduct further training, schedule guest speakers, recruit other

community partners and more. Do Something offers reflection activities throughout the course and also evaluates students' growth during the program (i.e. assess change in students attitude toward community and civic engagement) through pre and post surveys. Teachers and Do Something staff also hold "strategy meetings" throughout the program to discuss the successes and challenges of integrating service-learning into their curricula, and to assess the progress of the overall initiative. At the completion of the course, Do Something, in coordination with the eleven sites, hosts a celebratory event at which all students, teachers and community members participating in the programs are recognized for their efforts.

2. The mission of the **Youth Driven Service-Learning Center** (YDSLCL) is "to serve as a catalyst for community development by facilitating partnerships among community members." As a result, "these members - agencies and organizations, higher ed institutions, teachers and students (K-12), businesses and concerned citizens - working in partnership, will positively impact [their] students and their communities."<sup>8</sup> Through these partnerships the YDSLCL is able to offer a variety of services, including teacher and student trainings, student-run workshops, an informational newsletter and web site, program resources (e.g. books, videos, community guides) and a number of service-learning opportunities for students, both during and after school (Appendix P).

All of the programs offered by YDSLCL, whether in conjunction with an academic course or coordinated as an after school program, appear to be high-quality service-learning experiences. Programs are designed with intentional learning objectives, include reflection activities, are evaluated by teachers or the center Director, and conclude with celebratory events as well. However, YDSLCL prides itself in being more than a traditional service-learning program (i.e., simply including the basics of PARC). It is a re-visioning of teaching, learning and community, which challenges us to think about how we live and learn with one another.

The YDSLCL offers a holistic approach to living and learning. Community needs are assessed through student-run focus groups, and the information gathered through those sessions is used to develop authentic needs-based service projects. Students, in partnership with teachers and community members, then design and implement service projects with the overall goal of "building community." As the Director of YDSLCL explains, "The idea is to meet everyone's needs within a project. We all bring different assets to a project...but when community members are brought together, we can meet each other's needs and help each other build our community."

Youth and leadership development are also critical components of the YDSLCL programs. Not only do the service-learning projects reflect this, but the center itself. The center is staffed by the "Home Team," a dozen high school students who are trained in service-learning and act as resources for their peers, teachers and school faculty. The Home Team describes their function as being responsible to "give and receive information to enhance the development of our community and the quality of life of our community

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<sup>8</sup> YDSLCL Web Site (2000): <http://www.gratzclusterydslc.org>

members.”<sup>9</sup> The staff not only work as information specialists, they are also peer trainers, conduct community focus groups, and are an integral part of the center’s leadership.

The YDSLCL has been nationally recognized as a model of service-learning and is being replicated throughout the state of Pennsylvania. There will be ten sites across the state by the 2000-2001 school year.

### ***Discussion***

There are very few service-learning partnerships currently at the “collaboration” level. These partnerships can be difficult and time consuming, and they also challenge the established system of education. Collaborations such as Do Something and the YDSLCL push us beyond the traditional notions of teaching and learning, to the practice of community building. By working with students, teachers and community members, agencies such as Do Something, Chicago are able to challenge students academically while “providing the forum and support to develop [student] attitudes, skills and knowledge for the challenging tasks of building neighborhoods and communities.” Project partners are committed to a holistic view of education, in which “service” and “learning” are equal foci within the projects.

The Director of YDSLCL believes that such collaborations are not only necessary to effectively implement service-learning, but also serve a larger and critical function to the sustainability of communities. “As a community we are learning how to share assets and how to define our individual and collective needs. Community is being rediscovered...and collaboration is being recognized as the key to successful communities.” She goes on to say that “at least every school district [in Pennsylvania] should have a center to support service-learning initiatives...and then a network of centers would be created throughout the state,” ultimately changing the face of public school education and the practice of building community.

### **CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS**

Whether at the cooperation or collaboration level, these partnerships are enhancing student learning and helping to build stronger communities. Community agencies bring a number of assets to schools, including both tangible resources (e.g. curriculum content or funding) and intangible resources (e.g. staff bring a new energy to the classroom and provide students with additional role models). By partnering with CBOs, school-based programs are also often introduced to the larger service community and national service movement. This connection provides students and teachers the opportunity to learn about the greater goals of the global community, while actively participating at the grassroots level of community change.

Service-learning policies, such as the requirements of Chicago and Philadelphia, are indeed creating more community partnerships and bridging schools with community.

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<sup>9</sup> The HUB, Winter/Spring 2000: 10.

However, these partnerships are not necessarily stable, or ensuring the sustainability of service-learning within the school district. CBOs must contend with issues such as tenuous funding and limited personnel, which results in fragile partnerships. For example, if organizations such as the American Red Cross, WITS or City Year Chicago, were to suffer a loss in funding, they would be forced to limit the number of schools they work with. Because these CBOs are the primary providers of service-learning to the schools, if the CBO is forced to sever a partnership, then service-learning will most likely end at that school as well.

If a state or school district designs a service-learning policy, which primarily relies on the resources of CBOs (e.g. Chicago Public Schools), then policymakers need to understand this constituent, including their capabilities and limitations. For CBOs to effectively partner with schools, particularly in school districts as large as Philadelphia and Chicago, a dramatic increase in funding and resources is necessary. Rather than increase service-learning funds to the schools, it may be more effective to allocate state and/or federal funds to the community agencies that are providing the programs.

## **SERVICE-LEARNING POLICY: RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE FIELD**

Service-learning policy brings “new goals, new values and new relationships” to the public school system.<sup>10</sup> As service-learning is relatively new to the education and policy fields, policymakers must take care to define their subject matter (i.e. school-based service-learning) and policy objectives, solicit input from the numerous stakeholders during policy development, and create an accessible framework for implementation. Both the School District of Philadelphia and Chicago Public Schools have tackled this policymaking process, and the impacts of this process have begun to emerge within the districts.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an outline of the components of service-learning policy development and implementation, through the study of the current policies of Chicago and Philadelphia. Both in their second year of implementation, these policies provide insight into the successes and challenges of such initiatives, as well as infrastructure and resources necessary to support them.

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<sup>10</sup> Larry Gerston, *Public Policy Making: Process and Principles* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe Inc., 1997) 95.

# **POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

## **ELEMENTS OF SERVICE-LEARNING**

There are numerous definitions of service-learning and various opinions on the essential elements of service-learning programs. This becomes particularly troubling for schools, school districts, and states that are creating service-learning initiatives in their respective communities. Unclear definitions and multiple understandings of service-learning present a tremendous challenge to those attempting to create policy, particularly requirements, regarding service-learning.

In an attempt to clarify the service-learning discussion, I propose that there are five “base elements” necessary to build quality school-based service-learning programs. In the exemplary service-learning programs of Chicago and Philadelphia, these five elements are evident and tangible. They include: a commitment to service-learning, intentional learning objectives, the service project must address a real community need, reflection, and collaboration. These five elements should be included in any school-based service-learning policy and clearly identified for the community affected by the policy.

## **BASE ELEMENTS**

### **1. Commitment to Service-Learning**

“The school administration must be supportive for service-learning to work.”

– Philadelphia teacher

A school administration’s level of understanding of, commitment to, and support of service-learning, directly influences the quality of service-learning programs at the school. The following three examples highlight this correlation:

1. One high school principal feels that teachers are “overburdened and too strapped for time” to integrate service-learning into their courses. So rather than support curriculum-based service-learning, the principal encourages students to “volunteer with community agencies” in out-of-school time. The principal also provides students with other incentives, such as decreasing students’ detention hours, to participate in community service events (e.g. walk-a-thons). The basic result of this type of guidance has been two-fold: 1) students are participating in volunteer and community service activities, rather than service-learning, and 2) very few teachers are involved with service-learning initiatives within the school.
2. “Our principal supports my tutoring program because it’s raising students’ math scores, not because it’s service-learning,” reports one teacher. The principal at this high school, like many administrators, focuses primarily on the academic

benefits of service-learning, and seems to disregard the service component of the experience. Because of this, students are primarily involved with structured tutoring programs that are coordinated by teachers (e.g. advanced math students tutor other under-achieving math students before school). There are no learning objectives for the tutors, training for participants or reflection activities. Students are simply encouraged to volunteer and help their peers to learn math skills. Another teacher described the program as “a nice thing to do, but it’s not service-learning.”

3. “Masterminds African-American Studies Community is a close-knit learning collective which uses African-American history, literature, culture, and values to build pride, self-esteem, responsibility, vision, and leadership. Masterminds has a program which is extensive in its incorporation of service-learning as a fundamental component of an education that prepares young people to make a difference in the world around them...[t]hrough a myriad of unique programs, projects, seminars, and numerous off site experiences, Masterminds students are engaged in a learning adventure designed to develop individual talents and strengthen the community at large.”<sup>11</sup> As service-learning is central to Masterminds’ educational mission, service-learning is supported and celebrated by school administration. A school-designated part-time service-learning coordinator is responsible for coordinating and supporting service-learning efforts within the school, as well as training her colleagues. Service-learning is integrated into academic courses at each grade level, and each student is required to complete an intensive service-learning course, “senior exhibition,” in order to graduate. This senior-level course not only challenges students academically, but also builds leadership skills and self-esteem. In fact, senior exhibition proves to be such an empowering and high quality experience that 90% of the senior class felt the course was “the highlight of senior year.”

School administrators must understand service-learning and create a school environment in which service-learning can succeed. They must also equip teachers with the resources (e.g. training and funding) to implement effective projects. School-based service-learning programs will only be as good as the support they receive.

## **2. Intentional Learning**

As with all learning programs, service-learning programs must have intentional learning objectives. As Conrad and Hedin explain, “Learning from service is neither a guaranteed nor automatic outcome of any service activity or any program model.”<sup>12</sup> Whether those objectives are for students to demonstrate the mastery of certain skills such as essay writing or peer mediation, or to simply show a greater understanding of the project’s subject area, the objectives need to be outlined and participants made aware of them at the start of the program. Learning goals must be developed prior to the project, as they

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<sup>11</sup>Masterminds African-American Studies Community, Web Site: <http://www.wphs.phila.k12.pa.us/>

<sup>12</sup> D. Conrad and D. Hedin, *High School Community Service: A Review of Research and Programs*, (Madison, WI: National Center on Effective Secondary Schools, 1989) 30.



“affect both the process and the content of the service experience.”<sup>13</sup> Defining the learning objectives of the project, also gives students goals to work toward and teachers an outline to assess student performance.

Many people equate “intentional learning” with educational terms such as “curriculum connections” or “integrated into academic disciplines.” However, those definitions feel limiting to some service-learning advocates and to the potential and power of service-learning. Those terms often connote that service-learning should only exist or only *can* exist within classroom walls. However, as in the school districts of Chicago and Philadelphia, many school-based service-learning programs partner with community-based agencies and the program takes place in out-of-school time. Many schools sponsor “Service Clubs” that function after school and do not link to a specific academic curriculum, but these clubs do address educational issues such as conflict resolution, action research or multiculturalism. Although not integrated directly into an academic curriculum, these service-learning programs most definitely provide students with intentional and valuable learning.

### **3. Service Addresses a Community Need**

A service-learning project is not just an educational exercise or a tool to create a powerful learning environment. It is also an opportunity to connect schools and community, and affect real social change. This begins with developing projects that address true community needs.

It is critical to involve community members in the identification of needs and the creation of appropriate service projects. Often times this issue is neglected in service-learning projects, particularly school-based projects, as the community is regarded as being “served,” rather than as an active partner in the service experience. One of the benefits of service-learning is the opportunity to bridge school and community and to allow students the opportunity to learn beyond the classroom walls. The high-quality programs in Chicago and Philadelphia report working closely with community-based agencies to assess community needs and select issues to address. Teachers also described facilitating numerous “community investigation” activities that brought students and community members together. Methods such as school and/or community surveys, community walking tours, the use of area maps, personal interviews and student-run focus groups, were all used to gather information and to help define the needs of the community.

### **4. Reflection**

It is crucial that service-learning programs provide structured opportunities for young people to reflect critically on their service experience, including everything from orientation and training to the actual service project. “Since

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<sup>13</sup> Creating Learning Objectives for Service-Learning, (Washington, DC: Points of Light Foundation, date?) 5.

experience by itself does not produce learning automatically and can be ‘mis-educative,’ reflection is essential...without discussion, the significance of the experience may never be put into perspective.”<sup>14</sup>

Through the process of reflection, young people organize and internalize the knowledge and skills they are acquiring, assess the program’s progress, and reiterate and/or redefine program goals. In short, reflection helps young people make meaning of their experience in a way that elevates the value and benefit of their work beyond that of doing community service alone.

Reflection also serves as an assessment tool by demonstrating what students have gained from their service experiences and what they have truly learned. Reflection allows teachers access to both the tangible and intangible skills which students gain through participating in service-learning. Through reflection, “participants can develop a better sense of social responsibility, advocacy, and active citizenship,” (Wingspread, p.4) and this is demonstrated to the teacher through exercises such as student discussions, journal writing and oral presentations.

## **5. Collaboration**

Collaboration with community agencies is often recognized as a critical element of service-learning programs. Many educators are encouraged, or instructed, to form partnerships with community agencies, in order to effectively implement a service-learning project. Unfortunately, that is not such a simple task. These partnerships are merging two very different cultures: school and CBO, and each partner needs to understand the other to make the merge successful. Partnerships must be made on the basis of both the school’s and agency’s needs, resources, expectations and desired outcomes. Roles and responsibilities must be clearly defined and there must be on-going and effective communication between the partners. It is essential that districts and schools offer training regarding school/community partnerships, as these partnerships appear to be critical to the success of the initiative.

All of the high quality school-based service-learning programs in Chicago and Philadelphia report having a strong community partner. In fact, teachers credit their community partners for much of their programs’ success. As one Philadelphia teacher explained, “We call our community-based partners our ‘critical friends’. They are the reason our projects are successful.” Community-based organizations (CBOs) are indeed playing a “critical” role in these projects, and bring a tremendous amount of resources to schools, including training, curriculum content, transportation and funding.

*See page 53 for more information on school/community partnerships.*

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<sup>14</sup> Peter Kleinbard, *Youth Participation: Integrating Youth Into Communities*. Service Learning: The Ninety-sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education. (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1997) 7.

## **ELEMENTS TO CONSIDER**

These elements are more analogous to policy or program objectives than to “essential” or “base” elements of service-learning. The service-learning “elements to consider” directly effect the outcomes of service-learning policies or programs, as they influence teaching strategies, the experience of the participants, and the impact on community. These elements should be integrated into policy design and implementation, depending on the policy rationale and the intended outcomes of the policy, as each element achieves certain results.

### **1. Service Longevity**

The length of students’ service experiences becomes a factor depending upon the goals and objectives of the policy. If a school or district wants to simply provide students with an introduction to service, the implementation of the policy can be much more flexible. However, if trying to attain long-term impacts, policymakers must take certain measures to ensure that happens.

It has been found that an on-going service experience has a greater affect on participants than a one-time chance to serve<sup>15</sup>. Alan Melchior, of Brandeis University, explains that “there is little evidence that short-term, one-time involvement in even a well-designed service-learning program is likely to produce substantial long-term benefits.”<sup>16</sup> In fact, if there is not a continued experience, most of the impacts reported at the completion of the service program disappear within one year.<sup>17</sup> A challenge for hours-based service policies, particularly requirements that are striving for long-term impacts, is to ensure a “continued-experience.”

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) expects long-term student impacts from service-learning and attempts to address the “continued service” issue in their requirement language by recommending that students complete their 40 hours within one school semester. In doing so, the District believes that students would be a part of a more intensive service experience spanning at least a few months. However, as the Brandeis study reports, if students complete the 40 hours in one semester and are never involved in another service experience, much of the skills and impacts gained through the experience are lost by the next school year. If a requirement such as 40 hours is deemed attainable in one semester, it would be more beneficial for students to be required to complete 40 hours of service each school year or to complete three semester-long service projects by graduation.

Rather than a continued service experience, the hours-based requirement in Chicago appears to be fostering more short-term projects (e.g. one-day events). Chicago students report concentrating more on “getting hours done” than on the service-learning

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<sup>15</sup> Richard G. Niemi, *Community Service by High School Students: A Cure for Civic Ills?* (Washington, DC: National Center for Educational Statistics, 1998.)

<sup>16</sup> Alan Melchior, *Impact on Youth and Communities*, State Education Leader (Fall 1999) 6.

<sup>17</sup> Alan Melchior, et al., *National Evaluation of Learn and Serve America: School and Community-Based Programs* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University, 1999).

experience. Service-learning coaches admit to being more apt to publicize community events that “complete a lot of hours at once,” because “the bottom line is students need to graduate.” Even community agencies, such as the American Red Cross, realize the need for students to accumulate hours and have created one-day service activities as a response (Appendix Q). The counting of service hours seems to be a significant stumbling block for many students and teachers, and unless the current policy is altered, Chicago may struggle to ever produce long-term impacts.

Philadelphia addresses the continued service issue by requiring the completion of three different service projects: one project by grade 5, 9 and 12. By distributing the requirement throughout students’ schooling, students have the opportunity to build upon their past service experiences and the skills they have acquired through their projects. With the use of this model, the required service experiences in Philadelphia are more likely to demonstrate a long-term impact on students.

## **2. Youth Voice**

“Gifted, skilled and resourceful,” young people are “ready to contribute their gifts to all of our communities.”<sup>18</sup> Young people are active citizens. They should not be seen as “future” citizens or “developing” citizens. Rather young people should be revered as a critical component of our society and empowered to create the social change of which they are capable. Service-learning is one vehicle to engage and empower students more substantively in their communities and in their learning, and their experience is directly enhanced by the level of youth voice integrated within a project.

If the objective of a service-learning policy or program is to empower participants or provide participants with leadership development, then youth voice needs to be an integral part of the program. Many teachers and/or service-learning supervisors report an increase in students’ confidence and self-esteem during service-learning projects, particularly when students are given the opportunity to interject opinions and assume leadership roles throughout the project. In addition, substantial student responsibility within these projects, develops organizational, analytical and team building skills.

Some service-learning practitioners argue that the ideal service-learning programs are entirely student-driven and the teacher/supervisor takes on the role of facilitator. Students assess their strengths and challenges, as individuals and as a group, define their community’s needs, outline project objectives, engage in meaningful service, and celebrate their efforts. Although these programs may have significant impacts on participants, it should be acknowledged that entirely student-driven learning does challenge traditional notions of teaching and learning. It is a “movement toward inquiry-oriented, project-based...student-active instruction,” rather than viewing the teacher as the dispenser of knowledge.<sup>19</sup> Policies should encourage the integration of youth voice within service-learning projects, but until more general education reform efforts succeed,

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<sup>18</sup> Wingspread Report, 1.

<sup>19</sup> Sheldon Berman, *Integrating Community Service Learning With School Culture*, Network Magazine 7.3 (Spring 1999): 2 (on-line).

entirely student-driven service-learning programs may be more successful in after-school or community-based programs, without the restrictions of the classroom.

### 3. Civic Responsibility

In September 1999, the National Center for Education Statistics reported that the most common reason cited for “encouraging student involvement in service-learning [was] to help students become more active members of the community.”<sup>20</sup> However, fostering a sense of civic responsibility among participants does not occur naturally within service-learning programs. As Suzanne Morse explains, “we need to think deliberately about the civic skills we want to encourage with young people and how the service experience can assist in the process.”<sup>21</sup>

Much of the debate regarding how to make citizenship a product of service-learning programs focuses on two issues: 1) the need to implement service-learning activities in specific curriculums which focus on citizenship (e.g. social studies), and 2) the need to define citizenship as an intentional learning objective of the program.

“Service-learning, carried out in the context of the social studies curriculum, has the potential to foster the skills and sense of civic duty necessary to maintain effective, participatory democracies.”<sup>22</sup> However, it is the word “potential” that is critical to the discussion. As Ben Barber explains, “Service to the community by itself can teach altruism and charity, but to become a tool of civic education it needs to be explained and combined with serious classroom work. Classroom civic education by itself can teach the theory of citizenship, but its practice depends on engagement in the real world.”<sup>23</sup> Without an intentional connection between theory and practice, service-learning programs may never achieve their potential – their ability to foster civic responsibility among students.

Students’ levels of civic awareness, participation and/or responsibility, remain primarily unevaluated and undocumented, which makes it difficult for policies or programs to make civic responsibility a tangible program objective. Many of the teachers in Chicago and Philadelphia report that their students demonstrated an increase in academic achievement, relative to the subject matter incorporated into or addressed by the service project. Teachers also felt that students’ self-esteem and level of confidence also increased as a result of the service-learning experience, but these impacts were not systematically assessed, just observed. However, none of the teachers report student gains in civic responsibility, or the attempt to assess such an impact. If the intent of a service-learning policy and/or program is to foster civic responsibility among

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<sup>20</sup> R. Skinner and C. Chapman, *Service-Learning and Community Service in K-12 Public Schools*, (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 1999) 10.

<sup>21</sup> Suzanne W. Morse, PH.D., *Community Service and Citizenship: Making Clear the Difference*. *Future Choice*, Spring 1992: 100.

<sup>22</sup> Robert Shumer, *Service and Citizenship: A Connection for the Future*, *The High School Magazine* 7.8 (2000): 34.

<sup>23</sup> Benjamin Barber, *Classroom to Community Service: A Bridge to Citizenship*, *Network Magazine*: 1.

participants, then teachers should be equipped with evaluation strategies and tools to assess such impacts prior to implementation.

#### **4. Diversity**

School-based service-learning programs, particularly urban initiatives such as Chicago and Philadelphia, are able to achieve diversity at multiple levels. The requirements affect the entire student population, K-12 in Philadelphia and the High School population of Chicago, and both districts boast a variety of project topics, such as health, literacy, environment, teen parenting, violence prevention and peer mediation.

On the classroom level, service-learning allows participants the opportunity to explore diversity and difference, as well as define and celebrate the various assets individuals contribute to the community. Teachers report that this type of exploration and learning is most often facilitated through reflection activities.

Service-learning policies, particularly those that stipulate out-of-school service activities such as the Chicago requirement, should also be sensitive to other social barriers, such as “lack of transportation, family work and school responsibilities, concern for personal safety, or uncertainty about one’s ability to make a contribution.”<sup>24</sup> These social barriers are particularly pertinent in the cases of Chicago and Philadelphia, as 80% of Philadelphia public school students<sup>25</sup> and 84.5% of CPS students represent low income families.<sup>26</sup> Students must balance the competing demands of family, school and society, and policymakers need to be aware of, and sensitive to, these demands as well.

### **GOOD SENSE ELEMENTS**

These elements enhance service-learning programs by contributing to the quality of the service project and the participants’ experiences. However, these elements apply to more than just service-learning – they are the elements of good teaching and good programming. As educators are already familiar with these concepts, the following is a brief description of the five “good sense” elements and how they connect to service-learning.

#### **1. Evaluation and Assessment**

Creating a service-learning policy, or requiring students to serve, does not ensure high-quality programs or experiences for the students and/or community. Evaluation and assessment needs to be conducted, on both the policy level (e.g. surveys and focus groups) and within the classroom (e.g. journals, tests and oral presentations), to identify

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<sup>24</sup> Ellen Porter Honnet & Susan J. Poulsen, *Principles of Good Practice for Combining Service and Learning*. (Racine, WI: The Johnson Foundation, 1989) 12.

<sup>25</sup> *Realities Converge: the facts about Public Schools in Philadelphia*, (Philadelphia, PA: Office of Government Relations, School District of Philadelphia, 2000) 13.

<sup>26</sup> *CPS at a Glance*, (Chicago, IL: Chicago Public Schools, 1999) <http://www.cps.edu>

the successes and challenges of the programs and influence the future direction of the initiative.

Currently, the majority of school-based service-learning programs concentrate their evaluation efforts on students' development and academic achievement. However, evaluating the community impacts of service-learning is also necessary and should be a higher priority within school-based service-learning programs. Evaluation and assessment of both the "learning" and the "service" should be integral within all projects.

## **2. Preparation**

Through preparation, students are given the chance to learn more about the subject area and gain the skills necessary to create and implement an effective project. Preparation also allows students the opportunity to understand their roles and responsibilities within the project, while allowing teachers to define program objectives and expectations.

## **3. Celebration**

Recognition and celebration of students' effort, validates not only their work, but reinforces their positive roles within society. Celebratory activities also help build participants' self-esteem, as they feel appreciated for their efforts and proud of their contributions to the community. Public recognition events also give community members the chance to learn about students' work and understand the role of young people in society.

## **4. Age Appropriate Activities**

As with all learning programs, students should be involved in developmentally appropriate service activities. Course work, service activities and student tasks should be aligned with students' level of academic, social and physical development.

## **5. Adult Guidance**

Service-learning allows teachers the opportunity to assume more of a "facilitator" role within the classroom, as they "guide" students through a learning process, but do not necessarily determine the content of the project. Students with adult guidance, become active constructors of their learning. To administer effective adult guidance, teachers must be trained in service-learning and understand their role within the initiative.

## PUBLIC EDUCATION

Once service-learning is defined within the community and used within the policymaking process, the definition must be understood and embraced by community members. Again, on many levels service-learning challenges our traditional notions of teaching and learning, and thus may call for more public education than other reform initiatives. As service-learning integrates various sectors of society (e.g. students, families, community agencies) a multi-tier public education effort, as implemented in Philadelphia, appears to be most effective. Philadelphia service-learning personnel have conducted meetings with administrators, coordinated teacher trainings, identified “lead teachers” to act as resources for their colleagues and notified students, families, and other community members of the requirement through public relation materials. By combining these strategies Philadelphia has launched a rather effective public education campaign.

- **Administrators**

According to one Philadelphia District Official, one of the greatest challenges in making this requirement a success, is to “convince administrators...that service-learning can be rich academically and it is not an assault on academic standards.” District personnel went on to report that it has taken over a year of meetings, trainings, distribution of public relation materials (e.g. outline of the requirement, project criteria, example projects, national research) and media coverage to overcome this challenge. But once “decision makers,” at both the district and school level, had a better understanding of service-learning and its potential impacts on students, the service-learning initiative received more staff support and district resources.

- **Teachers**

“Teachers must understand the difference between community service and service-learning,” says one Philadelphia administrator, “and good messaging is the key to making this happen.” Through intensive teacher trainings, the School District of Philadelphia “messed” much more than just the difference between community service and service-learning (Appendix R). Over the past two years, the District Office has offered summer institutes, weekend trainings, and faculty workshops, and District staff members have been available for training and technical assistance upon request. Community-based organizations have also added to the training effort by working with individual schools and teachers, and many agencies have partnered with the District in organizing area service-learning conferences<sup>27</sup>.

- **Students**

Students within the school districts of Chicago and Philadelphia seem to have relatively little knowledge of service-learning or the new graduation requirements. As one Philadelphia teachers explains, “Students need more information and training regarding service-learning. They should be more aware of why they are participating in these programs and what the requirement is all about.” Another teacher reiterated

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<sup>27</sup> Over thirty community agencies have been identified as “Community Partner and Technical Assistance Organizations” to work with Philadelphia public high schools. (March, 2000)



that point and went on to say, “Students are unaware of what is expected of them” within the requirement, and because of this, “struggle to be proactive in fulfilling these expectations.” As students are the people ultimately charged with fulfilling these requirements, it would seem to follow that they would also receive instruction and/or training regarding the requirements.

Some students receive an “orientation” to service-learning, but this happens only on an individual school or classroom basis. Individual teachers report conducting their own orientation sessions, recruiting a community-based agency to conduct an “introduction to service-learning” session, or facilitating service discussions in advisory period or homeroom. However, neither district appears to focus its public education campaign on the students. Without a concentrated effort on the student population, service-learning and related policies may never be truly embraced by students.

- **Families**

Both the Chicago and Philadelphia school districts report notifying students’ families regarding the new graduation requirements. The basic strategy for introducing families to service-learning was through letters and promotional materials. Although a good effort was made, teachers in both districts report that “parents are unaware of their role within the requirement” and “some don’t seem to even know about the requirement.” Schools may wish to consider other public education strategies to supplement the mailings, such as community forums, school assemblies and parent/teacher conferences. In addition to reaching more people, these strategies would offer families a more detailed explanation of the objectives and perceived impacts of service-learning.

- **Community-Based Organizations**

Chicago and Philadelphia boast numerous community partnerships at both the district and school levels. However, the public education tactics of each school district vary due to the nature of their requirements.

CPS informed Chicago community-based organizations of the new service-learning requirement and requested that the organizations designate themselves as “Service Learning Agency Partners.” Each participating agency provides CPS with information on their organization, including what service programs are offered, which neighborhood(s) the agency serves, what (if any) age requirements the organization has for “youth volunteers,” and the number of volunteers the agency is capable of including. There are approximately 150 Service Learning Agency Partners for the 1999-2000 school year, which are available, in varying capacities, for school partnerships. CPS provides the schools with contact and organizational information, as well as a fact sheet on building relationships with service agencies. However, it is the school’s responsibility, specifically the coach’s responsibility, to form partnerships with local agencies. Although 150 agencies is an impressive number, the quality of partnerships varies greatly among the sites. The recruitment effort in Chicago has been a success; however, the public education strategy has not enjoyed

the same results. There is still confusion regarding the District's definition of service-learning, the requirement and the role of these agencies within the initiative.

The School District of Philadelphia developed a more comprehensive public education effort for community partners, which included the definition of the roles and responsibilities of community-based organizations (CBOs) within the initiative. The three basic roles outlined for community partners include: provide training and technical assistance to service-learning projects, involve students in service-learning projects at their site, and/or assist teachers with integrating service activities with their curricula. The District has also outlined a preliminary training/certification program for community partners to ensure a productive working relationship with teachers and a meaningful service experience for the students. Community partners are recruited through a coordinated effort between students, teachers and district staff.

### **CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS**

Chicago and Philadelphia teachers identified "public education" as a critical component to the success of service-learning initiatives. However, public education should begin during the policymaking process, not only during implementation. Administrators, teachers, students, families and community-based staff must share a common understanding of service-learning and align their objectives, expectations, roles and responsibilities. As seen in Philadelphia, this is achieved through a multi-tier public education effort, combined with appropriate trainings.

## **THE STAKEHOLDERS: WHO SHOULD CREATE THE POLICY?**

In committing to the practice of service-learning, a school, district, or state, is declaring a commitment to and respect for the community. Members of the community, such as school administrators, teachers, community-based organizations (CBOs), students and their families, should be convened during policy development and integrated into the policy making process. These constituents are often viewed as critical to the implementation and success of education policy, but not necessarily critical to policy development. However, as we can learn from Chicago and Philadelphia, the entire community must be engaged in the development of service-learning policy for the policy to have a chance at success.

### **ADMINISTRATION**

State or district administrators are charged with the responsibility of establishing policy and convening advisory groups to assist in the development of policy. Administrators are also advocates for the policy and resulting programs, and must provide the state or district with the proper support and resources to bring the desired programs to fruition. For a service-learning policy to succeed, support is needed in various forms, including financial backing, teacher training and technical assistance, evaluation and assessment, public education and infrastructure.

Administrators are also responsible for establishing supporting policies, such as flexible curriculum frameworks and block scheduling. The need for supplemental, supporting policies is something that both Chicago and Philadelphia teachers expressed concern with. These policies are particularly necessary within school districts that are integrating service-learning into course curriculum, such as Philadelphia. Philadelphia teachers report that the current system of class scheduling, and even field trip regulations, are restrictive and make it difficult to facilitate project-based learning in their classes. Many of the teachers in Philadelphia report the “need to be creative within the current scheduling system” and attempt to schedule service-learning projects during the last period of the day or the period before lunch, to allow students more time to work on their projects if need be. Such creativity would not be necessary if supporting policies were established and “schools allowed for flexible class scheduling,” which many Philadelphia teachers maintain is a key component of successful school-based service-learning.

School administrators are also critical to the success of service-learning policy and should be included in policy development. The Chicago and Philadelphia schools that report high-quality service-learning programs, also report having school administrators who are committed to service-learning and supportive of teachers’ work. As one teacher described, “School administrators must understand and embrace service-learning, and know their roles and responsibilities within the service-learning initiative. They must help teachers get involved and provide leadership for the students” for service-learning to be a success.

## TEACHERS

If a policy mandates school-based service-learning (i.e. service integrated into the academic curriculum) teachers are being required to adopt and support a new school program and teaching strategy. Teachers must commit time and energy to professional development, program preparation, and student support, for the requirement to even have a chance at success. Not only are teachers essential to policy and program implementation, but they are critical to the policymaking process as well. As School District of Philadelphia personnel explain, “teachers must feel ownership of the policy...they are the lynch pins to success.”

To foster a feeling of “ownership,” teachers must be allowed to share their expertise and insights during policy development. Teachers have a great understanding of the needs of their schools and students, and the additional policies necessary for initiatives to succeed within the classroom. By integrating teachers into the policymaking process, a school, district or state, will also be able to gauge the present level of knowledge among teachers regarding service-learning, and in turn, the amount of professional development needed.

All of the teachers in this study agreed with allowing students the opportunity to participate in and experience service-learning before they graduate from high school. 50% of the teachers support “requiring” service-learning. The majority of those teachers are involved in high-quality programs and have been involved with service-learning for some time, as they believe it is an effective teaching strategy. Therefore, the new requirement does not significantly effect their work. As one teacher explained, “I’ve always taught this way, just never called it service-learning. Now that the District put a label on [how I teach], I’m getting recognition for the work.”

36% of the teachers were hesitant to support mandatory service and would only agree with requiring service-learning with certain stipulations, such as “strict project quality control” or “every teacher in the district would be trained in service-learning before the requirement went into effect.” These teachers emphasized the need for additional “supporting” policies (e.g. block scheduling) and felt many school districts are requiring service activities before the proper infrastructure is in place to support the initiatives. Chicago teachers also expressed concern with supporting the current CPS policy, which mandates service in out-of-school time. As one teacher explained, “These kids have so much on their plates, that I would hate to force them to do more after school. But I also see how much our kids get out of service-learning activities. So, I would support service-learning programs that took place during school.”

As teachers in Chicago and Philadelphia demonstrated, teachers’ feedback and insights into service-learning are not solely focused on the classroom. Rather, most teacher recommendations within this study, addressed the larger issues of service-learning policy development, such as the opportunity to serve versus required service, whether service should take place during school or in out-of-school time, and whether policies should be achieved through service hours or service projects. These are some of the basic and critical issues that need to be addressed during policymaking, and teachers provide an essential perspective to these policy discussions.

## STUDENTS

Students should be involved in policy development, as they are the people who are directly influenced by the policy, and in the cases of Chicago and Philadelphia, are the people ultimately charged with fulfilling the requirements. Student voices are often heard only during the evaluation and assessment of a fully implemented program, rather than during policy or program development. As Wendy Lesko, Executive Director of the Activism 2000 Project, explains, “The long tradition of making decisions for youth without youth has failed. It’s time for young people to have a say in policies and services that impact them.”<sup>28</sup>

Neither Chicago nor Philadelphia report incorporating students into their policymaking processes. At the classroom level, teachers refer to students as “decision makers” or “leaders” within specific service-learning projects, but it does not appear that students were integrated into planning and/or programming at the district level. This is not unusual, as integrating young people into positions of leadership within society is a relatively new movement. However, because of the nature of service-learning and the growing number of policies being created across the country, the opportunity to effectively integrate students into the policymaking process seems to be particularly ripe.

In general, students across the country seem to oppose service requirements.<sup>29</sup> This student resistance has been expressed in the schools, through the media and even in the courtroom. Some may argue students are likely to resist any sort of required activity that is placed upon them during adolescence; however, the resistance to service-learning appears to be more complex than just teenage rebellion. Students’ reactions to various service requirements or policies seem to be spurred by the intricacies of the policies, not by the general idea of “giving back” to one’s community. Looking more closely at these reactions will offer a great deal of insight into how policies should be developed and implemented.

The following “student reactions” were found in this study<sup>30</sup> and should be explored further as service-learning policies are developed in the future:

- Students demonstrated more support for policies that encourage, rather than require students to serve.
- Students were more likely to resist service-learning requirements that mandate service activities in out-of-school time.
- Students seemed more accepting of project-based service-learning policies, than of hours-based requirements.

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<sup>28</sup> Youth on Board Web Site: <http://www.youthonboard.org>

<sup>29</sup> Brandeis, Kahne.

<sup>30</sup> Approximately 100 students were observed during site visits to Chicago and Philadelphia High Schools. The students represented a wide array of service-learning projects and were all observed within the context of their class or after school service club. “Student reactions” were recorded from student conversations with their teachers and one another. No formal student interviews were conducted.

- Students appeared to be more supportive of service-learning projects in which they had chosen to participate, rather than assigned to a project.
- Students appeared to be most supportive of service-learning projects that had a leadership component.
- Students participating in high quality service-learning programs, rather than community service projects, seemed more likely to support service-learning policies (e.g. a requirement).

## **COMMUNITY**

Large service-learning initiatives, such as the requirements of Chicago and Philadelphia, have a tremendous impact on the targeted community, and particularly on community-based organizations (CBOs). Both Chicago and Philadelphia boast numerous community-based partners and teachers cite these partners as one of, if not *the* critical components of successful service-learning programs. The CBOs provide a tremendous amount of resources to school-based programs, including service opportunities, student and teacher training, curriculum content and funding. Most of these organizations have been coordinating and implementing service-learning programs for years and know the community, are aware of the community's needs and most have built networks within the community to address the identified needs. All of this expertise should be utilized not only within individual service-learning projects, but also within service-learning policy development.

One of the greatest results of the service-learning policies of Chicago and Philadelphia has been an increase in school and community partnerships. Both the school districts of Chicago and Philadelphia encourage teachers to form partnerships with community agencies, often times a not-for-profit organization, in order to effectively implement service-learning projects. Unfortunately, that is not such a simple task. These partnerships are merging two very different cultures, school and CBO, and each partner needs to understand the other to make the merge successful. Partnerships must be made on the basis of both the school's and agency's needs, resources, expectations and desired outcomes. Roles and responsibilities must be clearly defined and there must be on-going and effective communication between the partners. Ideally, these two sectors should be brought together during policy development, so the partnership can begin on a base of equality, understanding and commitment.

## **FAMILY**

Family input appears to be often neglected in the service-learning policymaking process. However, it seems only natural to include the voices of parents or care takers in policy discussions, as their children's education is directly influenced by these policies and resulting programs. Families also provide multiple-perspectives to the policymaking

process, “because parents bring their perspective as primary caretakers of children and as knowledgeable residents of the larger community in which the school is located.”<sup>31</sup>

It is also likely that students will be involved, at some point, in service activities during out-of-school time. This issue needs to be addressed with families, ideally during policy development, to avoid resistance during implementation. Particularly in large urban areas such as Chicago and Philadelphia, many students and parents express concern with school requirements that effect the after school hours. Both cities report a rather high poverty rate, and many students noted that they are expected to assist with the child rearing of younger siblings or hold a wage-earning job to support their family. These societal factors must be recognized by policymakers and policies should be reflective of such issues. Service-learning policies should help strengthen and build community, not impart additional societal pressures on our young people.

A parent service-learning advisory group would be one way to incorporate family voice into policy. Whether convened at the school or district level, a parent advisory group could help develop and implement appropriate policies and programs for the school and surrounding community. Involving families in the discussion of service-learning is not only practical and effective, but it “reinforces the notion and spirit of collaboration and partnership that we espouse as a society in addressing issues that affect us all, and especially the lives of our children.”<sup>32</sup> Schools and districts should create the means to integrate parents in the development of future service-learning policies.

## **CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS**

Who should create public policy and through what processes are complex issues, which deserve more attention than these few pages. However, the major stakeholders of service-learning policies are clear, as seen in the Chicago and Philadelphia initiatives. It is also apparent that these constituents are not always convened or utilized during the policymaking process. Because of this, as in the case of Chicago, a policy may experience resistance from the community during implementation. Much of that resistance could be avoided if a more complete group of stakeholders were convened during policy development. As service-learning engages and impacts the entire community, it is critical to involve community members in the policymaking process.

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<sup>31</sup> Norris M. Haynes and James P. Comer, *Service-Learning in the Comer School Development Program*, *Service Learning: Ninety-sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*. (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press): 82.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*

# IMPLEMENTATION

Chicago Public Schools and the School District of Philadelphia are both in their second year of policy implementation. Within this short time, strengths and weakness of the policy development and implementation processes have emerged, and some of the critical aspects of policy implementation have become apparent. As seen in both districts, issues such as public education, teacher training, funding, staff size and evaluation directly influence the implementation of a policy, and in turn the impacts of a policy. Policy implementation, as it is on “the ‘backend’ of the [policymaking] process...is often overlooked and undervalued.”<sup>33</sup> However, without careful implementation, a policy may never achieve its intended outcomes. Schools, districts or states that have developed a service-learning policy, must also create the infrastructure, funding and leadership necessary to carry out the policy.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

### STAFFING: ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The individuals charged with implementing a service-learning policy (e.g. District personnel, school administrators and teachers) need to know how and why the policy was developed. They must understand the intentions and stated objectives of the policy, as “without an application consistent with its intent, policy has neither substance nor significance.”<sup>34</sup> A framework for application must also be developed, supplemented by adequate resources to support the initiative.

### DISTRICT

Service-learning is not just a “good thing to have students involved in.” Rather, it is education reform. School districts need to recognize this and appoint a full-time director, and support staff, to effectively implement a district-wide service-learning policy. The district service-learning staff is ultimately responsible for creating a network of people and information to support the policy and the resulting programs. As seen in Philadelphia, “strong leadership and good messaging are key” to the success of a large service-learning initiative.

The Directors of Service-Learning in both Chicago and Philadelphia believe that their greatest responsibility, as well as their greatest challenge, is to “convince administrators (both district and school level) and teachers that service-learning can be rich academically and it is not an assault on academic standards.” Service-learning is still viewed by many as an extra-curricular or community program, rather than a teaching strategy that will foster academic achievement. As demonstrated by Chicago and

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<sup>33</sup> Gerston, 97.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.



Philadelphia, district staff time and energy must be dedicated to public education and professional development to overcome this challenge. Philadelphia reports success with addressing the “academic value” of service-learning, after two years of teacher trainings (both district-wide and for individual schools), principal meetings, individual meetings with other district-level administrators and the development of clear initiative objectives and projected outcomes.

Teachers defined the District’s greatest responsibility as the need to create an “educational environment where service-learning can succeed.” This included advocating for supplemental policies and education reform initiatives, including block scheduling, greater accessibility to substitute teachers, flexibility to schedule field trips, more funding designated for service-learning activities, and an overall movement from standardized testing toward experiential learning. As one teacher explained, “the current educational environment within this country is contradictory to service-learning...it’s too difficult for teachers to meet the demands of the district, have their students prepared for the state and city standardized tests, and facilitate service-learning projects within their courses. It’s just too much.”

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) has attempted to implement a service-learning policy on less than a skeleton staff. One part-time coordinator cannot possibly support an educational initiative within the country’s third largest school district. The lack of district resources allocated to service-learning (e.g. staff, training and funding) has had significant repercussions in the schools and for the future of service-learning in Chicago. Many CPS teachers explained that they “don’t take the requirement that seriously,” because “CPS has done very little teacher training” regarding service-learning and “there’s not even a full-time coordinator” for the initiative. One teacher went on to say, “I’m sure, like other CPS programs, service-learning will eventually go away.” District personnel refute this by saying, “service-learning is not going away, it’s just going to get stronger.” But CPS will need to show more of a commitment to service-learning to change teachers’ and students’ minds. Teachers are already calling for increased staffing (both at the district and school level), training and technical assistance, and funding. Even in Philadelphia, which has a director and small support staff, teachers feel that “there needs to be more support and more resources for service-learning” to be a successful initiative.

## **SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION**

“We wouldn’t be able to do much without a supportive principal,” says one Philadelphia teacher. Many teachers reiterated this statement and noted that a supportive school administration is critical to the success of their service-learning programs. However, it is the responsibility of the school district to adequately train and support school administrators, so they in turn are able to support their faculties. As one teacher explained, “Principals must understand and embrace the district’s service-learning policy...and help teachers get involved. If they don’t support it, [teachers] will continue to struggle” with the initiative.

For service-learning to be successful, school administrators will need to implement other school policies to support the initiative. Teachers in Chicago and Philadelphia have identified the following “supporting policies” needed to effectively implement service-learning:

- **Full-time school service-learning coordinator:** One staff member designated to support projects, maintain partnerships, secure additional funds and coordinate/identify professional development opportunities.
- **Professional development:** On-going training
- **Block scheduling:** More time is needed to effectively facilitate project-based learning within the classroom. Block scheduling would also allow more flexibility for off campus trips and service projects.
- **Technology:** Regular access to telephones, faxes and the Internet to connect with the “outside world and community partners.”
- **Funding:** Funds allocated specifically to support service-learning projects.

## TEACHERS

Service-learning policies appear to have the greatest effect on the roles and responsibilities of teachers. For most teachers, adopting service-learning as a teaching strategy requires additional training, revising curricula and, in some cases, adapting their current style of teaching. Although many service-learning policies are targeted at students (e.g. graduation requirements), it is the teachers who are responsible for implementing the policy and are “the keys to success” to a successful program, as one service-learning coordinator described. “Service-learning won’t be successful unless the teachers are invested. Teachers are the ones that make it happen.”

School-based service-learning creates numerous roles and responsibilities for classroom teachers. They must teach the course curriculum and meet academic standards, facilitate the service project (from preparation to celebration), connect the service experience to the academic curriculum, recruit partners and maintain community partnerships, and evaluate the service-learning project, including student learning and community impact. By assuming these numerous and varied roles, teachers become the primary determinant in the quality and success of each service-learning project.

An additional role/responsibility of teachers, as identified by Chicago and Philadelphia educators, is the role of “advocate.” For service-learning to be embraced district-wide, teachers within the “best practices” high schools felt it was their responsibility to “guide colleagues” and “train peers” in the methods of service-learning. District administrators in Philadelphia agree saying, the experienced service-learning “teachers must champion the movement...and become leaders within the schools.” The District has supported this statement by including such teachers as trainers within various professional development workshops and by establishing the “Teacher Leaders” program, in which teachers become “in-house experts” and resources for their colleagues.

## **TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

Administrators and teachers continually stress the importance and necessity of on-going professional development opportunities. As one teacher explains, “Teachers must be trained and supported by their schools and districts...the knowledge base regarding service-learning must continue to expand and grow.” Before implementing a service-learning policy, whether in a state, district, or school, a professional development strategy and specific training opportunities should be established.

The School District of Philadelphia outlined a rather comprehensive training structure and has trained approximately 1,200 teachers in the past two years. The following training models have proven to be successful within Philadelphia initiative:

### **LEAD TEACHERS**

Many teachers suggested that a “peer training” system be developed within the school district. Once teachers have been trained, those trainees would become the trainers of their colleagues. Teachers in both Chicago and Philadelphia feel that “more teacher training is desperately needed” and that school districts should concentrate on creating an “army of service-learning educators” before a district-wide policy is implemented. This “army” or corps of teachers would create a support network within the district for training, technical assistance and the sharing of resources.

The School District of Philadelphia has begun to build a peer training system, which began with the identification of “lead teachers.” These teachers are experienced service-learning professionals who volunteer to be trainers at District workshops and serve as individual resources to their colleagues. There are approximately twenty-five lead teachers and their service-learning expertise has been categorized as follows: literacy projects, intergenerational projects, working with community agencies, technology and service-learning, special education, elementary projects, middle school projects, high school projects, violence prevention and safety, citizenship/activism/community organizing, service-learning and the census, foreign languages, project-based learning and instructional method, ESL, bilingual education, portfolios, reflection methods, developing youth voice and essential questions<sup>35</sup>. Other teachers are encouraged to call upon their identified colleagues and use them as service-learning resources.

### **MASTER TEACHERS**

The School District of Philadelphia employs two “master teachers,” whose primary function is to facilitate and support service-learning projects throughout the District. One master teacher focuses on elementary schools, the other on secondary, and both teachers are available to work with and guide administrators, teachers or students through the service-learning process. The master teachers work with schools in varying capacities,

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<sup>35</sup> *Teacher Leader Resource List*, adapted from the “Spring Professional Development Workshop” handouts, March 2000.

including the role of teacher trainer, project facilitator, team teacher and school/community partnership broker. Other teachers report that the master teachers are “very helpful,” but also articulate the need for a greater number of such support personnel.

### **SUMMER INSTITUTES**

The School District of Philadelphia, in partnership with the National Youth Leadership Council and numerous other community agencies, coordinated week-long service-learning summer institutes during 1998 and 1999. These institutes trained approximately 300 teachers (each), and contributed significantly to the “service-learning knowledge base” within Philadelphia. Both administrators and teachers describe the institutes (or as some call them, “service-learning camps”) as an “intense experience” in which they gained “a substantial amount of information ...and a solid understanding of service-learning.” Topics addressed during the institutes included project criteria, reflection, evaluation and assessment, and community partnerships.

### **OTHER TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

Throughout the school year District staff coordinate and conduct various professional development opportunities, such as in-services and weekend workshops. (Appendix R) Staff members are also available on request for faculty trainings or to provide assistance to individual teachers.

The multi-tier training approach implemented in Philadelphia has reached a number of educators, but even more work needs to be done. Schools and districts not only need to train new teachers, but conduct follow-up trainings and provide opportunities for continuous professional development. Unfortunately, districts have limited funding and staff, which makes extensive teacher training a challenge. Because of this, both Philadelphia and Chicago have reached out to the community and partnered with various agencies on training initiatives.

Community-based organizations (CBOs) are a tremendous resource for service-learning trainers and training opportunities. The School District of Philadelphia utilizes CBO staff members within almost every service-learning training they offer, and CBOs report conducting teacher workshops in addition to the District trainings. Chicago CBOs have also made significant contributions to the CPS service-learning initiative. For example, the one district-wide professional development opportunity in Chicago, during the first two years of the requirement, was developed by a community organization committed to service-learning. The Constitutional Rights Foundation Chicago (CRFC), in cooperation with CPS, provided an opportunity for all interested educators to learn more about service learning, share progress to date, and exchange effective service learning methods. As CRFC is part of a national network of law-related and service-oriented organizations, they were able to schedule national trainers for the conference as well.

For service-learning to become an integral component of our educational system, teacher training will have to move beyond the weekend workshop or summer institute. Teacher education programs will need to include service-learning and prepare teachers for school district initiatives as in Chicago and Philadelphia. Unless service-learning is institutionalized within teacher education programs, the under-resourced school districts will continue to struggle to support extensive, or even adequate, teacher training.

## **FUNDING**

Learn and Serve America is the primary funding resource for service-learning initiatives. Both the School District of Philadelphia and Chicago Public Schools (CPS) receive funding through Learn and Serve grants (\$100,000 and \$260,000 respectively), from the Corporation for National Service (CNS).

A majority of the CPS funds are distributed through two types of mini-grants: School Grants and Instructional Grants. Administrators or coaches may apply for the School Grant, and may request up to \$2500, which supports the overall service-learning initiative at the school. Individual teachers or teams of teachers may apply for up to \$1500 through the Instructional Grant to support their service-learning programs in the classroom. Teachers report that these grants are critical to the success of their programs, as they find it difficult to receive monetary support from their school administration and do not have enough time to research and apply for other private grants. Although the funds allotted to coaches and teachers are helpful, most teachers hope for larger grants to be available in the future.

Philadelphia does not offer mini-grants to schools, hence administrators and teachers are charged with the responsibility of securing their own program funds. Most Philadelphia teachers, as in Chicago, find it difficult to balance teaching and grant writing. Teachers suggest that each school be equipped with a full-time service-learning coordinator who would assist with grant research and writing. Not only would this alleviate the teachers' workloads, but with a more concentrated effort, programs will most likely garner more monetary resources.

## EVALUATION

Evaluating service-learning programs and policies is a complex and consuming process. Service-learning programs often have multiple impacts and expected outcomes, such as raising students' grades, positively influencing behavior, teaching critical thinking and analytical skills, promoting civic responsibility and instilling an ethic of service in participants. Because programs are often multi-dimensional, and include a diverse group of participants (e.g. varied ages, developmental stages and ethnic backgrounds), evaluation presents quite a challenge to school administrators and teachers. However, there are a growing number of resources for administrators and teachers regarding effective service-learning evaluation, and school districts, such as Chicago and Philadelphia, are beginning to develop and utilize effective evaluation methods.

It is also critical to evaluate the effectiveness of the policy: Has the policy achieved its stated objectives? What levels of satisfaction/dissatisfaction developed as a result of the policy? Has the implementation of the policy resulted in additional issues or policies? Without this sort of summative evaluation, the credibility and outcome of the policy will remain uncertain.<sup>36</sup>

An evaluation strategy, including both summative and formative evaluation, should be in place before the implementation of a service-learning policy. A "combination of formative and summative assessment, whether done on a small or large scale, helps ensure that programs remain responsive to their purposes and participants."<sup>37</sup> If a school district is implementing a policy, as in the cases of Chicago and Philadelphia, the district needs to establish an evaluation strategy for the overall initiative, as well as offer guidance to the schools regarding evaluating students' work and community impact.

### PHILADELPHIA

The School District of Philadelphia has focused primarily on formative evaluation, concentrating at the school and classroom level. One of the challenges, identified by District staff, of evaluating service-learning, is allowing for subjectivity and accepting that it is part of the process. Each service-learning project is unique, consisting of unique individuals in a unique community. This makes it very difficult to assess programs through a standardized system of evaluation, as is often the practice within education. Instead, evaluation is done at the discretion and direction of the classroom teacher, and it becomes the responsibility of the teachers and students to accurately assess the service-learning experiences. This is not to say that school districts cannot guide or facilitate the evaluation practices within the schools. In fact, Philadelphia has provided school faculty with project criteria (Appendix J) and performance indicators (Appendix K), which allow for the development of creative and unique projects, while creating a fair standard of assessment for student work. In order to determine whether or not students successfully complete their promotion/graduation requirement, the District requires specific project

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<sup>36</sup> Gerston, 120.

<sup>37</sup> ASLER, *Standards of Quality for School-based and Community-based Service-Learning*, (Alexandria, VA: Close Up Foundation, 1995) 7.

components and a certain level of student academic performance. However, determining the academic content (i.e. the students' coursework) of the projects and the related service activities are left up to the students and teachers.

A majority of the teachers concentrate on evaluating students' academic growth. Some teachers report observing social growth (e.g. increase in self-esteem) in their students, but no formal measures have been taken to assess this outcome. Teachers report using numerous evaluation methods, including tests, essays, journal writing, art work and oral presentations, throughout the projects to gauge students' academic progress. By employing a variety of evaluation measures, teachers are more apt to gather accurate data while also remaining sensitive to the diversity within the group of students being evaluated.<sup>38</sup> The assessments of student work are recorded and included in student portfolios, which are intended to provide a summary of "student work, academic development and personal growth." The District requires that each student document his or her service-learning project through the creation of a portfolio, whether they have participated in an individual project or a group project. The portfolios will eventually be used by the teacher to evaluate students' achievement of the service requirement.

Portfolios also provide the District with a snapshot of the success of the overall initiative. Reviewing the portfolios from a district-wide perspective provides summative data, including how many students have completed the requirement, what types of projects are being developed (e.g. environmental projects or oral histories), which projects/teachers appear to be most successful and which schools are struggling with the implementation. In addition to examining student portfolios, the School District of Philadelphia plans to conduct a district-wide assessment of the service-learning initiative. This assessment strategy is currently being discussed and developed.

## CHICAGO

CPS contracted Professor Joseph Kahne of Mills College, Oakland, CA (formerly of University of Illinois at Chicago), to conduct *The Chicago Public Schools Service Learning Initiative: A Formative and Summative Evaluation*, during the first year of the requirement. Data for the report included interviews and observations at ten schools, surveys completed by the service coach at each school, and surveys completed by 268 students who participated in a broad array of programs. The purpose of the evaluation was to examine whether the CPS service-learning initiative was moving in a productive direction, rather than assessing whether or not the program was fully implemented.

As seen in Chicago, evaluating a policy or program in the initial year of implementation can be an effective practice. Although the ultimate impact of the Chicago service-learning requirement could not yet be assessed, Kahne was able to assess the successes and challenges of the first year, and offer recommendations for the future of the initiative. Kahne advised CPS to concentrate second year efforts on teacher involvement and professional development, as well as increasing the number of student participants. "If the quantity of service-learning programs" and/or opportunity to participate in such

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<sup>38</sup> Mary C. Sengswick, Ph.D. and Melanie Hwalek, Ph.D. *Research and Practice: Issues to Be Considered in Evaluating Programs for Children and Youth*, New Designs for Youth Development, Spring 1999.

programs “does not grow dramatically, many students’ plans for graduation may be compromised.” The challenging component of Kahne’s recommendation is for CPS to increase the number of *high-quality* service-learning opportunities. If quality programs are not maintained, the overall district service-learning initiative will most likely have little impact.

Other than the Kahne study, there has been little assessment of the CPS service-learning policy or the resulting school-based programs.

## **CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS**

Neither Chicago, nor Philadelphia, has a comprehensive evaluation plan. Chicago has attempted to attain some summative data, while Philadelphia has concentrated on more formative evaluation strategies. However, both districts are in the early stages of policy implementation, and district personnel agree that more assessment is needed and report that evaluation will be a high priority for the coming years. As the service-learning field is relatively new, it is critical that we continue to share successful strategies and “provide aggregate information on the overall effectiveness” of various programs.<sup>39</sup>

Conducting policy and program evaluations calls for more staff time, as well as additional funding. Neither of which is overabundant in the public school system. However, there are a growing number of resources for administrators and teachers regarding effective service-learning evaluation. Also, a number of community-based service-learning programs report working with graduate students or local institutes of higher education regarding assessment and evaluation. Graduate schools of Education and/or Public Policy could prove to be rich resources for schools and districts, and should be utilized when possible.

There appears to be much attention devoted to participant development within school-based service-learning projects, but an equal amount of energy should be focused on the service component and what effect and/or influence students have on the community. A majority of the evaluation, in both Chicago and Philadelphia schools, focuses on “service effort,” rather than “service outcomes.” Schools record the number of student service hours and/or concentrate their evaluation efforts on student learning or impacts on participants. However, outcomes other than student impacts need to be assessed: What impact does the project have on the community? Did the attitudes of students, teachers and community members change throughout the project? What did program partners learn from the experience? Has a sustainable program been created or just a “quick-fix” solution for the community?

There is little evidence of evaluation of service outcomes or the effects of the service activities within the community in Chicago and Philadelphia. If this trend continues, and schools do not recognize service-learning as a reciprocal relationship with the community, we run the risk of never tapping the true potential of service-learning.

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<sup>39</sup> ASLER, 6.



Ideally, all program participants (e.g. students, teachers and community members) should be partners within the service-learning experience. One of the most powerful components of service-learning is that it can be a holistic learning experience, equally beneficial to all program partners. We need to challenge teachers to reach that level of programming, by not only designing such programs, but also evaluating them for impacts other than student/participant development.

## CONCLUSION

Currently, service-learning policies are being developed and implemented in an educational system that is governed by stringent curriculums and standardized tests. When urban school districts, such as in Chicago or Philadelphia, attempt to implement these policies, additional layers of resistance to the initiative exist: overcrowded classrooms, poor socio-economic conditions and schools in desperate need of repair. It becomes very difficult for service-learning to succeed in such an educational environment. In fact, it seems clear, that some schools and districts are simply not yet prepared to take on the system-wide integration of service-learning.

By mandating service-learning in a district that does not possess the adequate resources or infrastructure to support such a policy, the district is doing a disservice to its students and community. Additional funding, professional development, flexible class scheduling, expanded staffing structures, technology, and more are necessary to develop and sustain school-based service-learning. Without these structures in place, neither students nor the community will experience true service-learning or its beneficial impacts. Service-learning must be viewed as a larger educational reform movement for it to succeed within the public school system.

After examining the Chicago and Philadelphia service-learning policies, it is clear that high quality school-based service-learning programs are not the result of graduation requirements or mandatory service-learning. Rather, the high quality programs surfacing within school districts: (1) are primarily student- or teacher-driven; (2) have a teacher committed to service-learning as a teaching strategy; and (3) have participants who want to be a part of the project and/or have personal investments in the subject matter. Top-down, blanket policies such as requiring students to serve have yet to produce high-quality programs. Rather than continue this trend, districts should give schools the option to develop and implement service-learning policies that are appropriate to their respective communities.

## SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

*Conclusions/Recommendations are listed in the order in which they appear within the report.*

1. Chicago Public Schools has designed and implemented a “community service” requirement, rather than service-learning. An hours-based requirement, which restricts service activities to out-of-school time, combined with little teacher training, has resulted in primarily community service projects. However, this is not to say that CPS cannot move toward service-learning from this base of community service. CPS needs to use this base as a starting point, revise the current graduation requirement (e.g. allow service-learning to take place during school hours), and implement a comprehensive teacher training strategy, in order to achieve the district’s outlined service-learning goals.
2. The School District of Philadelphia appears to have established a solid service-learning policy and has begun to reap some quality results. The District focused on designing a more “teacher-driven movement,” by making the requirement project-based, in-school time and focusing on teacher training for the first two years of implementation. However, teachers within the “best practices” high schools caution that there are only a limited number of high-quality service-learning programs within the school district, and there is much work to be done.
3. A. Advocates for school-based service-learning often stress the importance or necessity to fully integrate service-learning into the academic curriculum. Although service-learning does enhance many subject areas, and some would argue service-learning enhances *all* learning, complete school integration is not necessary for schools to provide students with quality service-learning experiences. Six basic models of service-learning can be found within the “best practice” high schools of Chicago and Philadelphia: single course, single discipline, multi-disciplinary, elective course, service club and individual project.  
  
B. These models provide administrators and teachers with various avenues to integrate service-learning into their schools. It should be the responsibility of school administrators and staff to determine which service-learning model(s) to implement, depending on the assets and needs of their students and surrounding communities. Currently, schools seem to be having the greatest amount of success (i.e. producing the highest quality programs) with service clubs and elective courses. Particularly in schools that service-learning is a rather new concept, clubs and electives provide a manageable starting point for personnel. Both models allow for working with a relatively small number of students and offer intentional learning, without strict course curriculum constraints. Teachers and students within both models are involved on their own accord; they have chosen to participate. This is a fact that deserves more attention and the possible correlation between the choice to serve and the quality of the service program needs to be explored further.

4. Five “base elements” have been identified as necessary to build quality school-based service-learning programs: a commitment to service-learning, intentional learning objectives, the service project must address a real community need, reflection, and collaboration.
5.
  - A. Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are playing a critical role in the development, implementation and evaluation of service-learning programs across the country. Whether the policy involves community service or service-learning, schools are depending on community partners to make their initiatives successful. The service-learning field needs to define and understand the roles of CBOs and provide the appropriate support, training and funding.
  - B. If a state or school district designs a service-learning policy, which primarily relies on the resources of CBOs (e.g. Chicago Public Schools), then policymakers need to understand this constituent, including their capabilities and limitations. For CBOs to effectively partner with schools, particularly in school districts as large as Philadelphia and Chicago, a dramatic increase in funding and resources is necessary. Rather than increase service-learning funds to the schools, it may be more effective to allocate state and/or federal funds to the community agencies that are providing the programs.
6. Chicago and Philadelphia teachers identified “public education” as a critical component to the success of service-learning initiatives. However, public education should begin during the policymaking process, not only during implementation. Administrators, teachers, students, families and community-based staff must share a common understanding of service-learning and align their objectives, expectations, roles and responsibilities. As seen in Philadelphia, this is achieved through a multi-tier public education effort, combined with appropriate trainings.
7. Members of the community, such as school administrators, teachers, community-based organizations (CBOs), students and their families, should be convened during policy development and integrated into the policy making process. These constituents are often viewed as critical to the implementation and success of education policy, but not necessarily critical to policy development. However, as we can learn from Chicago and Philadelphia, the entire community must be engaged in the development of service-learning policy for the policy to have a chance at success.
8. The following “student reactions” were found in this study<sup>40</sup> and should be explored further as service-learning policies are developed in the future:
  - Students demonstrated more support for policies that encourage, rather than require students to serve.

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<sup>40</sup> Approximately 100 students were observed during site visits to Chicago and Philadelphia High Schools. The students represented a wide array of service-learning projects and were all observed within the context of their class or after school service club. “Student reactions” were recorded from student conversations with their teachers and one another. No formal student interviews were conducted.

- Students were more likely to resist service-learning requirements that mandate service activities in out-of-school time.
  - Students seemed more accepting of project-based service-learning policies, than of hours-based requirements.
  - Students appeared to be more supportive of service-learning projects in which they had chosen to participate, rather than assigned to a project.
  - Students appeared to be most supportive of service-learning projects that had a leadership component.
  - Students participating in high quality service-learning programs, rather than community service projects, seemed more likely to support service-learning policies (e.g. a requirement).
9. Without careful implementation, a policy may never achieve its intended outcomes. Schools, districts or states that have developed a service-learning policy, must also create the infrastructure, funding and leadership necessary to carry out the policy.
10. For service-learning to be successful, school administrators will need to implement other school policies to support the initiative. Teachers in Chicago and Philadelphia have identified the following “supporting policies” needed to effectively implement service-learning:
- **Full-time school service-learning coordinator:** One staff member designated to support projects, maintain partnerships, secure additional funds and coordinate/identify professional development opportunities.
  - **Professional development:** On-going training
  - **Block scheduling:** More time is needed to effectively facilitate project-based learning within the classroom. Block scheduling would also allow more flexibility for off campus trips and service projects.
  - **Technology:** Regular access to telephones, faxes and the Internet to connect with the “outside world and community partners.”
  - **Funding:** Funds allocated specifically to support service-learning projects.
11. For service-learning to become an integral component of our educational system, teacher training will have to move beyond the weekend workshop or summer institute. Teacher education programs will need to include service-learning and prepare teachers for school district initiatives as in Chicago and Philadelphia. Unless service-learning is institutionalized within teacher education programs, under-resourced school districts will continue to struggle to support extensive, or even adequate, teacher training.
12. A. As the service-learning field is relatively new, it is critical that we continue to share successful strategies. Conducting policy and program evaluations calls for more staff time, as well as additional funding. Neither of which are overabundant in the public school system. However, there are a growing number of resources for administrators and teachers regarding effective service-learning evaluation. Also, a number of community-based service-learning programs report working with graduate students or local institutes of higher education regarding assessment

and evaluation. Graduate schools of Education and/or Public Policy could prove to be rich resources for schools and districts, and should be utilized when possible.

- B. There is little evidence of evaluation of service outcomes or the effects of the service activities within the community in Chicago and Philadelphia. If this trend continues, and schools do not recognize service-learning as a reciprocal relationship with the community, we run the risk of never tapping the true potential of service-learning. Ideally, all program participants (e.g. students, teachers and community members) should be partners within the service-learning experience. One of the most powerful components of service-learning is that it can be a holistic learning experience, equally beneficial to all program partners. We need to challenge teachers to reach that level of programming, by not only designing such programs, but also evaluating them for impacts other than student/participant development.
13. Service-learning challenges the traditional notions of teaching and learning. Matters such as class scheduling, standardized testing and curriculum constraints will be contested when a school or district implements a service-learning initiative. For policies and programs to be truly successful there will need to be a larger educational reform effort within the public schools.
14. Service-learning policies need to be about process, not replication. Successful service-learning strategies, both in policy and practice, should be shared throughout the field. However, these strategies should act as a guide for schools and communities, rather than a prescription for service.
15. Top-down, blanket policies, such as requiring students to serve, have yet to produce high quality programs. Rather than continue this trend, districts should give schools the option to develop and implement service-learning policies that are appropriate to their respective communities.

