Because the best service-learning projects incorporate the ideas and opinions of students at every stage of the process, they will be your partners as well in assessing how well learning goals and service goals are being met.

Principles of backwards design as outlined in *Understanding by Design* by Jay McTighe and Grant Wiggins can be especially helpful when planning assessment and evaluation for service-learning projects.

**Pre-Service**

- Share the content standards and desired learning outcomes, as well as the service goals, with students so they know what’s expected of them.
- Post and review the questions they will explore during the service-learning project.
- Elicit students’ help in listing the important knowledge and skills students will learn during their project.

**During Service**

- At the start of the project, talk with the students about the types of assessments they’ll participate in to show evidence of learning and understanding by the end of the project. What products, performances, and other evidence will you assess? What parts of their work will be assessed individually and what will be evaluated as a group?
- Share the culminating performance tasks and accompanying rubrics so students will know what will be expected and how their work will be judged.
- Whenever possible, show examples of student work on similar tasks so students can see what quality looks like.

**Post-Service**

- Explicitly connect the learning experiences and direct instruction during the service-learning project with the desired results, essential questions, and expected performances.
- Have students regularly reflect on what they are learning and how it will help them with their tasks in the service-learning project as well as in life and other areas of school.