## Service-Learning by the Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>299.4</td>
<td>Estimated U.S. population in millions. ¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53.3</td>
<td>Estimated U.S. population in millions of youth (ages 5-17). ¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>Percentage of youth in the total U.S. population. ¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1,045</td>
<td>Campus Compact member colleges or universities. ⁵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>377</td>
<td>Service hours in millions logged by 2005-2006 Campus Compact participants. ⁵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Monetary value in billions of dollars of service performed annually by Campus Compact participants. ⁵</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55</td>
<td>Percentage of U.S. residents who support increasing federal funding for national service programs including AmeriCorps, VISTA, and Peace Corps. (30 percent oppose.) ⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Estimated millions of U.S. K-12 students engaged in service-learning. ²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Number in millions of 2005-2006 K-12 students supported by Federal Learn and Serve America grants. ³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Investment in 2005-2006 Learn and Serve programs in millions of dollars. ³</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:1</td>
<td>Monetary value of service provided by Learn and Serve participants to their communities, compared to Learn and Serve money spent. ⁴</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>Percentage of U.S. principals who reported that service-learning has a positive impact on the larger community’s view of youths as resources. ²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>Percentage of U.S. principals who reported that service-learning has a positive impact on academic achievement. ²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Percentage of national 2006 General Election turnout of voters age 30 and older. ¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Percentage of national 2006 General Election turnout of voters under the age of 30. ¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Percentage of former service-learning youths (ages 18-29) who voted in a local, state, or national election. ⁷</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Percentage of former service-learning youths (ages 18-29) who report that voting in elections is important. ⁷</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>Percentage of principals from U.S. schools with service-learning programs who reported that service-learning has a positive impact on students’ civic engagement. ²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>Percentage of U.S. youths ages 8-21 who report that they want to be involved in making the world a better place. ⁸</td>
</tr>
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Growing to Greatness 2008
THE STATE OF SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT

A report from the National Youth Leadership Council

JAMES C. KIELSMEIER, PH.D., PROGRAM DIRECTOR
MARYBETH NEAL, PH.D., RESEARCH DIRECTOR
NATHAN SCHULTZ, RESEARCH ASSISTANT
THOMAS J. LEEPER, RESEARCH ASSISTANT
Everybody can be great, because everybody can serve.

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

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Writing the acknowledgments to this, the sixth issue of *Growing to Greatness: The State of Service-Learning*, cannot fully capture the wonderful adventure in learning nor the depth of gratitude to those who helped us along the way. We are especially grateful to State Farm Companies Foundation for their continuing investment in this important work.

Thank you to all our authors for their contributions, to the organizations they represent, and to the people who make their work possible. Randy Horick and Patti Reilly of America’s Promise Alliance; Jennifer Piscatelli and Terry Pickeral of the Education Commission of the States; and Rob Shumer offered valuable insights in shaping and reviewing articles.

We are fortunate for the diversity of researchers and practitioners who participated in the two Advanced Strategy Labs in collaboration with Harris Interactive, exploring the potential service-learning has to make a positive contribution in the lives of young people and their communities.

The Corporation for National and Community Service staff helped in many important ways: Liberty Smith of the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse with the creation of the glossary; Kimberly Spring and Nathan Dietz, CNCS researchers with questions involving the interpretation of data; Elson Nash, who generously provided data for this volume; and Tracey Seabolt and Amy Cohen with arrangements for the Advanced Strategy Lab.

It was both an honor and an inspiration to develop the state profiles in consultation with the State Educational Agency staff and to interview service-learning program leaders who provided the accompanying state project examples.

Our *Growing to Greatness* Editorial Board has given us good insight and we are grateful for their guidance. We are fortunate for the great team of dedicated, energetic, and insightful individuals at NYLC. Nathan Schultz and Thomas Leeper, research assistants; Maddy Wegner, communications director; Caryn Pernu, managing editor; and Vicky Goplin, editorial consultant, all gave generously of their time and talents. Jacqueline Heap, executive assistant, provided exceptional translation of María Nieves Tapia’s contribution; Cynthia Reitzel gave valuable assistance in plumbing the richness of the National Youth Leadership database; and NYLC Project Ignition Coordinator Michael Van Keulan thoughtfully reviewed articles.

We feel very fortunate this year to have enlarged our circle of people and organizations interested in documenting the scale, scope, and impacts of service-learning. We are all enriched by their company and look forward to including still more voices and perspectives on service-learning.

Marybeth Neal, Ph.D.
Research Director
National Youth Leadership Council
Dear Reader,

It is our pleasure to bring you the sixth volume of *Growing to Greatness*, an annual report on the state of service-learning from the National Youth Leadership Council. State Farm Companies Foundation has proudly supported this series on the current state of service-learning research, policy, and practice since the publication’s inception in 2003. We are delighted to see it reaching more educators, policy-makers, and researchers each year.

State Farm® helps sustain service-learning initiatives nationwide because of the student achievement results associated with the practice and the transformational way that service-learning impacts students and learning. The research supports the impact of service-learning as a teaching/learning strategy. The documentation of the scale, scope, and impacts of service-learning in *Growing to Greatness* is essential to the continued advancement and sustainability of service-learning as pedagogy. The findings published here will help schools rethink how they deliver education to diverse populations and move toward making service-learning available to all young people.

With the release of the *K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice* in this volume, we believe the publication may become a research staple, where researchers exploring the nuances of effective pedagogy find new ways to collaborate and corroborate their findings.

We hope you will find yourself in this publication, and discover new ways to engage in your community — whether as a partner to a service-learning initiative, a policy-maker lobbying for supportive legislation, a researcher helping build the case for its effectiveness, or an educator seeking new ways to engage youth leaders.

May *Growing to Greatness* prove a catalyst for your own involvement in community strengthening through service-learning!

Sincerely,

Kathy Payne
Sr. Director – Education Leadership
State Farm Insurance
In the 2003 inaugural issue of *Growing to Greatness: The State of Service-Learning*, Senator John Glenn, chair of the National Commission on Service-Learning, reminded us of the Commission’s challenge to the country, “to ensure that every student in kindergarten through high school participates in quality service-learning every year as an integral and essential part of the American education experience. … Documenting the impact is essential to realizing this challenge.” Thanks to State Farm Companies Foundation and to this year’s contributors, the sixth volume of *Growing to Greatness* provides an important next step in measuring the contributions of young people to society as they grow to greatness through service-learning.

Alma Powell and Marguerite Kondracke, leaders of America’s Promise Alliance, begin *Growing to Greatness 2008* by discussing the importance of published research in demonstrating empirically how service-learning links to all Five Promises. In particular they note service-learning’s contribution to the Fifth Promise — giving young people the opportunity to contribute to their communities — is foundational to youth development and a key strategy for dealing with our school drop-out crisis.

This volume is informed by reports from two areas of inquiry undertaken by the National Youth Leadership Council in collaboration with respected partners:

- The **Advanced Strategy Labs** convened in collaboration with Harris Interactive to gather the insights of members of the broader service-learning movement on how to improve our ability to discern and measure the scope, scale, and impacts of service-learning.
Suzanne Martin and George Carey further explore the level of interest in helping others exhibited by young people in their study of altruism among young children. In their research design, suitable for gathering the perspectives of children aged 6-14, they found that young people have a great interest in giving that rivals their interest in getting. They conclude by suggesting the possibility of new partnerships emerging between businesses, their young customers, and non-profit organizations.

At the program level Theresa Sullivan presents a careful analysis of problem-solving strategies among middle school aged young people involved in City Year’s Youth Heroes program and offers suggestions for how practitioners can help expand the problem-solving repertoires of their students.

The increasing scope and scale of service-learning is further suggested in the article by Maria Nieves Tapia on service-learning in Latin America. In addition to helping U.S. readers know that service-learning is part of a worldwide movement, I believe readers will be inspired by this article’s compelling examples of service-learning and intrigued by the ways issues, such as mandatory vs. voluntary service, have been addressed in other countries.

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Liberty Smith and Heather Martin document how service-learning is becoming a part of the way we think and act by reviewing how — and to what extent — service-learning is used as a focus of research among newly-minted academics. We present their article on recent dissertations and theses on service-learning that have been gathered by the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse.

Part of our goal in presenting an annual volume on scope, scale, and impacts is to report on how the movement is evolving and maturing. An important feature of this process is institutionalization. Institutionalization refers to the extent to which service-learning is embedded into everyday practice — as reflected in the concepts we use, the decisions we make, and the actions we take. Kimberly Spring, researcher for the Corporation for National and Community Service, presents the first report using the new LASSIE data collection to document institutionalization among Learn and Serve America program grantees over a three-year period.

Dana Markow and Marybeth Neal describe how the Advanced Strategy Labs were helpful in suggesting a common language for further sharing of insights and information from diverse perspectives. Ideas suggested include identifying key research measures, seeking existing data sources to address the need for measurement, and collaborative research using common definitions that increase the possibilities for comparison and aggregation across studies.

We are therefore very pleased to include the new service-learning standards to help establish this common language that articulates common sets of understandings and associated practices. Shelley Billig and Wokie Weah document the result of nearly two decades of collective work of communities around the country on earlier versions, including a national review process involving reactor panels from across the country.

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The article on Latin American service-learning helps to give us the broad perspective needed to examine policy as it relates to service-learning in the United States. Policy Matters, the next section of Growing to Greatness, is devoted to policy and why policy matters. Stina Kielsmeier recounts NYLC’s 25-year history of policy work on service-learning. An article by Jon Schroeder, one of the authors of the 1993 legislation that created the Corporation for National and Community Service, discusses the relevance of service-learning to policy discussions involving questions of current concern such as school autonomy, student assessment, and teacher quality.

Peter Levine, of the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, suggests the kinds of research that will be most useful to policy-makers. He reminds us that research, while important, is not the ultimate goal. The goal is the creation of caring, capable, and civically engaged young people who will strengthen and renew democracy.

Thomas Leeper of NYLC reviews a sampling of state-level policy initiatives and presents a checklist that has been created through the collaborative efforts of the Education Commission of the States and the National Youth Leadership Council. This checklist can be used to assess the state of policy in a given state and provides an outline of where there is room for service-learning policy growth for the future.

And finally, Nathan Schultz of NYLC introduces our updated profiles of service-learning for 23 states and the District of Columbia. These profiles illustrate some of the ways policies have shaped and inspired service-learning practice at state, district, and program levels.

Growing to Greatness is documenting a growing, evolving, vital movement. At its heart remain a set of core presuppositions that have guided us from the outset and that motivate our continuing inquiry.

Key Assumptions and Principles for the Growing to Greatness Initiative

- A major structural shift in human development has occurred and will continue, extending the period between childhood dependency and full adult responsibility.

- Transition into adulthood has become particularly problematic for young people and their communities, as reflected in extensive measurement surveys.

- Nearly all systematic collection of information on adolescents measures their deficits, not their positive participation in society.

- Most resources directed at this age group support traditional education, employment, and entertainment — with mixed results.

- Emerging approaches that authentically engage young people as citizens contributing to communities — especially when linked with well-designed learning and youth development content — are a credible structural response to issues of adolescent dissonance and community decline.

- The Growing to Greatness project is a systematic strategy for measuring engagement of young people in service-learning and youth development programs and defining the passage to adulthood as a period of engaged citizenship and active learning.

James C. Kielsmeier, Ph.D.
President and CEO
National Youth Leadership Council
Dr. Angela Diaz, Director of the Mount Sinai Adolescent Health Center in New York, tells of a somewhat humbling experience that helps keep our work in perspective. Shortly after joining the board of the America’s Promise Alliance, Dr. Diaz was explaining to her mother that our work revolves around ensuring that young people experience a critical mass of five key developmental resources: caring adults, safe places, a healthy start, effective education, and opportunities to help others. Research, Dr. Diaz continued, demonstrates that these five “Promises” — which align with the Search Institute’s “40 Developmental Assets®” (Search Institute 2007) — correlate closely with success in both childhood and adult life.

“You mean you all are just now figuring that out?” her mother interjected.

That remark serves as a reminder that recent research has not so much revealed a startling new truth as validated and deepened our understanding of age-old wisdom. Of course children need caring adults in their lives as family members, teachers, coaches, and mentors. Of course they need safe places and a healthy start in order to thrive. Obviously, it’s crucial to receive an effective education that builds marketable skills. Last, but far from least, most of us understand that service-learning teaches us how to become engaged, productive contributors to our communities. In fact, service has always been part of an informal American social compact; we share an obligation to give back, just as others have given for us.
Yet research has done much more than merely reconfirm what our parents and grandparents already knew. Rather, a growing body of research is revealing, in highly specific ways, how service-learning in childhood is a critical building block for success in youth and adulthood. With increasing confidence, we can demonstrate quantitatively what traditionally was understood intuitively or anecdotally. Moreover, research-based evaluations of specific learning programs increasingly reveal best practices that make for effective efforts. More and more, we can pinpoint what works. And the ability to demonstrate the importance of service-learning has been vital to our efforts to build a coordinated national movement to improve the well-being of our young people.

Building an Evidence-Based Case

*Growing to Greatness* is the only annual forum for compiling and disseminating research on the value of service-learning and the impact of successful implementation strategies. For that reason, the National Youth Leadership Council performs a vital role as a convener and champion of collaboration. For those of us seeking to improve the well-being of America’s young people, studies such as NYLC’s own “National Survey on Service-Learning and Transitioning to Adulthood” are invaluable in building an evidence-based case for service-learning to policy-makers, funders and potential partners (Markow et al. 2006; Martin et al. 2006).

Thanks to the kinds of research published in *Growing to Greatness*, for example, we can demonstrate empirically how service-learning links to the rest of the Five Promises. In particular, G2G helps us show that well-designed service-learning programs improve educational outcomes. That ability is of vital importance as we build broad, cross-sector support for our Alliance’s top priority of raising high school graduation rates.

Among business and community leaders, funders, and policy-makers alike, there is a growing awareness that our nation faces a dropout crisis. Today, nearly one in three students fails to complete high school. Among African American and Hispanic youth, the dropout rate is closer to 50 percent (Silent Epidemic 2007). The human and social costs of this “silent epidemic” are staggering. Dropouts are twice as likely as high school graduates to live in poverty. They are three times more likely to be unemployed. They are eight times more likely to wind up in prison. Four in ten will depend on some form of government assistance (Silent Epidemic 2007). In a globally-interdependent world, the dropout crisis also has profound implications for America’s economic competitiveness. It is equally obvious.
Organizations are coming to recognize service-learning as more than a laudable activity. It is a vital activity for the positive development of our young people.

that reversing this tide will have profoundly positive effects upon our communities, in ways ranging from reduced crime and criminal justice costs to higher tax revenues resulting from higher incomes and increased consumption.

Along with a growing sense of urgency, the America’s Promise Alliance and others have worked to create growing awareness that the solution lies not merely in “better” schools but in a holistic approach that necessarily involves all sectors of our society. Over the past decade, America’s Promise has grown to become the nation’s largest cross-sector alliance focused on the well-being of young people. We bring together more than 160 national partners representing business, nonprofit organizations, foundations, educators, policy-makers, community leaders, and the faith community. Our policy affiliate, First Focus, has become a forceful advocate for children and families in Washington and at the state level. By helping organizations move out of traditional silos and channeling the power of our partners into coordinated action, we can accomplish much more together than any of us can achieve alone.

**Moving Toward Action**

The growing body of research collected in recent years in *Growing to Greatness* has helped us make an increasingly compelling case for action. More organizations are coming to recognize service-learning as more than a laudable activity. It is a vital activity for the positive development of our young people. It offers demonstrable benefits going far beyond those recipients of service projects. It engages more adults as crucial role models and mentors, providing a gateway to other developmental resources. It can help change the odds for children who are now most at risk.

Our own research, summarized in the 2006 report *Every Child, Every Promise*, shows only 55 percent of 6-17 year-olds engage in any volunteer activities during a given year, and fully one-third lack adult role models who volunteer and help others. A separate study by the Corporation for National and Community Service found teens are three times as likely to volunteer regularly if a parent sets the example (CNCS 2005). Other research showed just 13.2 percent of 12th grade students and barely 9 percent of 8th grade students volunteer at least once a month (America’s Promise 2006, 38-39). Clearly, America’s children need more well-conceived opportunities to reap the benefits of helping others.

**A Coordinated Approach**

For all these reasons, a growing coalition of partners and practitioners is embracing service-learning as a key element in a coordinated approach to halting the epidemic of high school dropouts and improving a number of other indicators of youth well-being. Last year, nearly 100 Alliance partners — ranging from the United Way and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to the Boys & Girls Clubs of America and Communities In Schools — met to select national strategies we would pursue collaboratively over the next five years. Our top priority is to see that more kids graduate high school ready for college and work. Our overarching goal is to
reach at least 15 million disadvantaged young people with more of the Five Promises. Every Child, Every Promise revealed that less than one-third of our young people have enough of these resources to be confident of success, while more than 20 percent are experiencing only one or zero Promises and are headed for failure (America’s Promise 2006, 24).

One of the three strategies our partners chose centers around engaging the 11.7 million middle school children in this country in meaningful opportunities for service-learning and career exploration. Following best practices validated by research and experience, they will work through schools as well as state and local organizations to expand service-learning and career exploration opportunities for middle school youth. The other two strategies involve using schools as hubs to coordinate and deliver a variety of key services, and ensuring all children eligible for Medicaid or SCHIP are enrolled. With the help of our partner networks, we are implementing all of these strategies nationwide.

Our partners’ reason for including service-learning was simple. They recognize that, for the sake of our children and for America’s future, we must reverse the tide of despair and failure leading 3,000 young people to drop out of school each day. They recognize most of those who leave say they became increasingly disengaged from school during grades 6-8 (Silent Epidemic 2007), and that most of all, our partners have come to recognize service-learning helps young people connect with their world and achieve in school during a pivotal time in their lives.

We believe systematic emphasis on proven service-learning practices — integrated into the work of schools and community-based organizations and coupled with mentoring by adults — will make a significant impact. We expect to see them bear fruit in higher graduation rates and in other indicators of youth well-being. But what is most exciting is that this is only the leading edge of a movement promising to foster a new culture of service.

As this movement takes root and grows, more Americans are seeing evidence proving what so many of us have long taken as an article of faith: that service is not just a virtue but a developmental necessity. And as more Americans turn the evidence found in Growing to Greatness into action, this nation will grow even greater year by year.

To learn more about America’s Promise Alliance, visit www.americaspromise.org.

REFERENCES


In *Growing to Greatness 2007*, we presented the history of the development of standards for service-learning and shared promising research-based practices to improve student outcomes. For decades, the echoes of “quality matters” were evident in many evaluations and research studies. Without fidelity to quality, service-learning does not live up to its promise of positive outcomes; but with quality, significant impacts on participants have been found in the areas of academic performance, civic engagement and responsibility, personal and social skills, career aspirations, reduction of risky behaviors, and more (Billig 2007; Weah 2007).

Over the years, quality has been defined in various ways, but only recently has the research base provided strong direction. In last year’s volume, we presented the Principles of Effective Practice. With this volume of *Growing to Greatness*, we celebrate the collective work of many communities around the country in refining those original principles and translating them into the new K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice.

**The Process**

The road to these standards and indicators began in 1989, with a Wingspread Conference on the principles of practice for combining service and learning. Subsequent significant efforts included the ASLER standards in 1993 (Alliance for Service-Learning Education Reform 1995) and the Essential Elements of Service-Learning in 1998 (National Service-Learning Cooperative 1999). With new research supporting the predictors of impact, new principles of effective practice were drafted last year (Billig 2007).
The reactor panels used the same standards-setting process that has been used in many states to develop content standards in reading/language arts, mathematics, and science. Each of these panels considered the edits of previous panels, revising the standards and indicators to ensure they included the strongest aspects of quality, and to make them clear, measurable, and actionable. The result of this convergence of research and practice was the development of standards and indicators of quality service-learning practice. In the end, the original eight principles of effective practice and the original 75 indicators became the following eight standards and 35 indicators. While the journey was long, the results were a set of crystallized ideas set forth in simple, attainable, and measurable forms.

Since then, the research has been synthesized and extended, and experts convened to draft new standards and indicators based on research and professional judgments. These new standards and indicators then were vetted through a series of “reactor panels” made up of young people, teachers, school and district administrators, community members, staff from community-based organizations, policy-makers, and others interested in service-learning. These gatherings, all of which followed the same format, were held across the country — from Washington DC to Hawaii, from Maine and Minnesota to Florida. The heartland held the most reactor panels: two in Ohio, one in Michigan, one in Illinois, and one in Nebraska. In all, 21 panels took place from July to January. Participation ranged from as few as seven people to as many as 250 in each panel.

**Implications for Key Audiences**

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<td>– Provides a common set of well-defined expectations for high quality practice.</td>
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<td>– Prompts in-depth discussions of practice to help educators reflect on and improve their practice.</td>
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<td>– Provides framework for outside evaluation of practice (e.g. the Certificate of Excellent Practice).</td>
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<td>– Provides professional development guidelines for pre-service and in-service teachers and for professional development of community members and community-based organizations.</td>
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<td>– Provides guidelines for monitoring progress and sustaining continuous improvement.</td>
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<td>– Provides consistent language to use for discussing quality.</td>
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<td>– Provides guidance for operationalizing practices and testing constructs that serve as moderators or predictors of impact.</td>
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<td>– Promotes the formation of a common research agenda for improving impacts.</td>
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<td>– Helps researchers engage in hypothesis testing and asking additional questions about practice to promote understanding.</td>
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<td>– Provides additional guidance for evaluations.</td>
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<td>– Provides guidance for policy creation at local and state levels.</td>
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<td>– Provides criteria for evaluating funding proposals and programs — locally, and at the state and federal levels.</td>
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<td>– Provides guidance for teacher licensure and recognition.</td>
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<td>– Suggests consistent language for policy change and advocacy.</td>
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**Service-Learning:** A philosophy, pedagogy, and model for community development that is used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or content standards.
### K-12 Standards and Indicators for Quality Service-Learning Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration and Intensity</th>
<th>Link to Curriculum</th>
<th>Partnerships</th>
<th>Meaningful Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service-learning has sufficient duration and intensity to address community needs and meet specified outcomes.</td>
<td>Service-learning is intentionally used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or content standards.</td>
<td>Service-learning partnerships are collaborative, mutually beneficial, and address community needs.</td>
<td>Service-learning actively engages participants in meaningful and personally relevant service activities.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Indicators:**

1. Service-learning experiences include the processes of investigating community needs, preparing for service, action, reflection, demonstration of learning and impacts, and celebration.
2. Service-learning is conducted during concentrated blocks of time across a period of several weeks or months.
3. Service-learning experiences provide enough time to address identified community needs and achieve learning outcomes.

**Indicators:**

1. Service-learning has clearly articulated learning goals.
2. Service-learning is aligned with the academic and/or programmatic curriculum.
3. Service-learning helps participants learn how to transfer knowledge and skills from one setting to another.
4. Service-learning that takes place in schools is formally recognized in school board policies and student records.

**Indicators:**

1. Service-learning involves a variety of partners, including youth, educators, families, community members, community-based organizations, and/or businesses.
2. Service-learning partnerships are characterized by frequent and regular communication to keep all partners well-informed about activities and progress.
3. Service-learning partners collaborate to establish a shared vision and set common goals to address community needs.
4. Service-learning partners collaboratively develop and implement action plans to meet specified goals.
5. Service-learning partners share knowledge and understanding of school and community assets and needs, and view each other as valued resources.

**Indicators:**

1. Service-learning experiences are appropriate to participant ages and developmental abilities.
2. Service-learning addresses issues that are personally relevant to the participants.
3. Service-learning provides participants with interesting and engaging service activities.
4. Service-learning encourages participants to understand their service experiences in the context of the underlying societal issues being addressed.
5. Service-learning leads to attainable and visible outcomes that are valued by those being served.
## K-12 Standards and Indicators for Quality Service-Learning Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Youth Voice</th>
<th>Diversity</th>
<th>Reflection</th>
<th>Progress Monitoring</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service-learning provides youth with a strong voice in planning, implementing, and evaluating service-learning experiences with guidance from adults.</td>
<td>Service-learning promotes understanding of diversity and mutual respect among all participants.</td>
<td>Service-learning incorporates multiple challenging reflection activities that are ongoing and that prompt deep thinking and analysis about oneself and one’s relationship to society.</td>
<td>Service-learning engages participants in an ongoing process to assess the quality of implementation and progress toward meeting specified goals, and uses results for improvement and sustainability.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Indicators:

**Youth Voice**

1. Service-learning engages youth in generating ideas during the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes.
2. Service-learning involves youth in the decision-making process throughout the service-learning experiences.
3. Service-learning involves youth and adults in creating an environment that supports trust and open expression of ideas.
4. Service-learning promotes acquisition of knowledge and skills to enhance youth leadership and decision-making.
5. Service-learning involves youth in evaluating the quality and effectiveness of the service-learning experience.

**Diversity**

Indicators:

1. Service-learning helps participants identify and analyze different points of view to gain understanding of multiple perspectives.
2. Service-learning helps participants develop interpersonal skills in conflict resolution and group decision-making.
3. Service-learning helps participants actively seek to understand and value the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of those offering and receiving service.
4. Service-learning encourages participants to recognize and overcome stereotypes.

**Reflection**

Indicators:

1. Service-learning reflection includes a variety of verbal, written, artistic, and nonverbal activities to demonstrate understanding and changes in participants’ knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes.
2. Service-learning reflection occurs before, during, and after the service experience.
3. Service-learning reflection prompts participants to think deeply about complex community problems and alternative solutions.
4. Service-learning reflection encourages participants to examine their preconceptions and assumptions in order to explore and understand their roles and responsibilities as citizens.
5. Service-learning reflection encourages participants to examine a variety of social and civic issues related to their service-learning experience so that participants understand connections to public policy and civic life.

**Progress Monitoring**

Indicators:

1. Service-learning participants collect evidence of progress toward meeting specific service goals and learning outcomes from multiple sources throughout the service-learning experience.
2. Service-learning participants collect evidence of the quality of service-learning implementation from multiple sources throughout the service-learning experience.
3. Service-learning participants use evidence to improve service-learning experiences.
4. Service-learning participants communicate evidence of progress toward goals and outcomes with the broader community, including policymakers and education leaders, to deepen service-learning understanding and ensure that high quality practices are sustained.
Next Steps

While the standards have been established, important dissemination, implementation, and research steps lie ahead. Some next steps include:

- Workshops on standards and indicators at the annual National Service-Learning Conference, and other professional conferences
- A set of white papers that summarize the research behind each of the standards
- New professional development offerings
- New self-assessment tools

In addition, researchers will need to test the standards and indicators as predictors of outcomes, and the variations that appear to work best — for whom and under what conditions. Young people, educators, community partners, policy-makers, and researchers all have vital roles in this next phase.

Conclusion

Practitioners have known that service-learning has the potential to be a strong catalyst for change. Increasingly, research confirms that high quality service-learning experiences strengthen people, schools, and communities (Billig 2004).

These standards are offered with the hope that they will prove to be a significant tool in achieving the larger goals of service-learning: educational improvement, community development, and social change.

The reference edition of the K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice is available for free download at www.nylc.org/standards.

REFERENCES

This bibliography contains studies and research summaries that were analyzed to help develop the original draft of the standards and indicators.


Scope, Scale, and Impacts of Service-Learning
The Challenges of Measurement

DANA MARKOW
Harris Interactive
MARYBETH NEAL
National Youth Leadership Council

As a leader in the service-learning movement, the National Youth Leadership Council has worked with its partners to build knowledge and awareness of service-learning and to extend its impact on young people and their communities. Through its Growing to Greatness: The State of Service-Learning Project, NYLC continues to explore data that suggests the scope, scale, and impacts of service-learning on national and state levels.

As part of efforts to address questions of scope, scale, and impacts, NYLC engaged a group of leaders in the service-learning and youth development fields in a strategy session facilitated by Harris Interactive and utilizing Harris Interactive’s proprietary research tool, the Advanced Strategy Lab®. Gary Homana (University of Maryland), James Kielsmeier (NYLC), Peter Levine (CIRCLE), Suzanne Martin (Just Kid, Inc.), Marybeth Neal (NYLC), Terry Pickeral (Education Commission of the States), Jennifer Piscatelli (Education Commission of the States), Stan Potts (University of Wisconsin), Cynthia Robins (Westat), Geri Romero-Roybal (Consultant for NM Commission on Community Volunteerism), Rebecca Saito (University of Minnesota), Kimberly Spring (Corporation for National and Community Service), Ellen Tenenbaum (Westat), Wendy Wintermute (New Mexico Forum for Youth and Community), Jon Zaff (America’s Promise) participated along with others who preferred to remain anonymous.1

1 The session discussed in this report was preceded by an in-person Advanced Strategy Lab® in September 2007 and discussions throughout the fall. We thank Shelley Biling (RMC Research Corporation); Nelda Brown (National Service-Learning Partnership); Gary Homana and Britt Wilkenfeld (University of Maryland); Joseph Kahne (Mills College); Richard Lerner (Tufts University); Alan Melchior (Brandeis University); Kris Minor (America’s Promise Alliance); Gene Roehlkepartain (Search Institute); Fran Rudoff (Kids Consortium); Joselle Shea (National Crime Prevention Council); Kimberly Spring (Corporation for National and Community Service); and Ellen Tenenbaum (Westat). The diversity of perspectives they contributed greatly assisted in identifying key outcome measures of service-learning and framing the questions explored in the November ASL Online session.
The ASL platform utilizes a variety of powerful and flexible questions and methods:

- **Open brainstorming** questions are posed and sent simultaneously to all participant screens. Each participant can provide multiple anonymous responses. All participants see the full set of responses as they occur, establishing a highly interactive and innovative environment of focus, energy, and in-depth response.

- While the brainstorming is occurring, Harris ASL team members create a summary by **categorizing key themes** within the data. These summaries can then be reviewed, discussed, and added to by the participants during open discussion.

- **Mini-surveys** assess key issues where a mix of question types can be posed and results displayed in real time.

The method section is as follows:

**Method**

Harris Interactive conducted an Advanced Strategy Lab® Online session on November 13, 2007. Doug Griffen, director of strategy and facilitation at the Advanced Strategy Center, facilitated the two-hour session. Participants were individuals identified by NYLC as leaders in the service-learning and youth development fields and represented a variety of non-profit organizations, research companies, and universities. A total of 17 individuals, all of whom were recruited by NYLC, participated in the session, including two staff members from NYLC. Monetary incentives were not offered.

The Harris Interactive Advanced Strategy Lab combines interactive technology with expert facilitation to engage participants on critical issues. It allows for fast and open electronic brainstorming where all participants provide their experiences, views, and insights in a fair and confidential manner. Participants see the responses offered by others, but do not know the identity of the authors. The facilitators, working in real time, identify key themes in the brainstorming and have participants prioritize and assess these themes and their impact. This enables participants, while still in session together, to add additional experiences and insights to the rich set of data and immediate assessments.

The goals of the session were as follows:

- To better understand the aspects of service-learning and healthy youth development activities that motivate and interest service-learning leaders
- To identify and prioritize measures of service-learning and positive youth development efforts that best capture the scope, scale, and impacts of such efforts
- To identify sources of information for current and future measurement
- To identify key stakeholder audiences interested in data demonstrating the success of service-learning
- To gauge interest in continued collaboration around measuring the success of service-learning and positive youth development activities
- To provide information to help shape the research agenda for Growing to Greatness

While the brainstorming is occurring, Harris ASL team members create a summary by **categorizing key themes** within the data. These summaries can then be reviewed, discussed, and added to by the participants during open discussion.

Once the set of themes has been categorized, they can be immediately assessed via a variety of voting methods (a 1-10 assessment of their impact/value, a rank order vote, a criteria analysis, or a selection of the most important ideas). Voting results are **instantaneous** and create a real-time picture of participants’ reactions and input.
Advanced Strategy Labs have been conducted in a variety of corporate and not-for-profit settings, mainly as a research tool assisting groups in reaching consensus on tough issues or setting direction for a particular issues management campaign. Not-for-profits supplement their strategic planning process with data collection using ASLs, because the results provide both directional data and context for the data. Harris Interactive recently used ASL technology with Edison Schools’ teachers and administrators from three incubator locations as the school system began rolling out new initiatives. ASLs typically follow a format that asks questions — and then categorizes the answers — regarding each participant’s emotional, rational, and perceptual context for a given issue or answer.

**Major Findings**

**PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS IN SERVICE-LEARNING**

The participants’ personal and professional interests in service-learning cover a variety of areas, including civic engagement, community connections, educational issues, and policy or programmatic issues related to service-learning. Participants are interested in the intersection between these areas and service-learning’s benefits to young people, to teachers and schools, and to the community as a whole. As might be expected from a group of service-learning leaders, the list of interests generated during the session was long and diverse. Topping participants’ lists was the issue of civic engagement, particularly regarding youth civic involvement:

“Preparing youth for civic engagement”

“Getting students engaged in their schools and communities”

“Builds civic and social responsibility”

“Relationship to the transition to full adult responsibility”

The next most common area mentioned was the educational aspect of service-learning. Participants mentioned ways in which service-learning benefits students by engaging young people in active learning, providing a rich learning environment, and potentially providing better results than traditional teaching — particularly with young people who “may otherwise be bored with school.” Participants are also interested in how service-learning develops life-long skills such as critical thinking, collaboration, and creativity. Participants saw engagement of teachers as a conduit for school reform.

Participants also expressed interest in intersections between service-learning and community. Participants would like to better understand the connection between school and community, and emphasize “the richness of grassroots participation”:

“I see service-learning as a very rich and positive strategy for accomplishing a whole variety of important ends that our world needs. These include creating the conditions for people to connect across their differences, building community and enhanced understandings and skills …”
Finally, participants also have an interest in exploring more policy or programmatic issues related to service-learning. This includes increasing the scope and reach of service-learning — internationally, to non-formal/non-school areas, and in urban community-based organizations.

**RESEARCH INTERESTS IN SERVICE-LEARNING**

Participants’ interests in directions for service-learning research are also diverse. Their interests center on increasing the levels and depth of practice; understanding the effectiveness of service-learning methods as compared to other teaching methods; and, of particular importance, identifying and quantifying the benefits of service-learning. In this area participants are interested in measuring the overall impact of service-learning on young people and on particular types of students; identifying long-lasting and short-term benefits; identifying best practices based on the audience, context, and available resources; and examining the factors and conditions that contribute to effective service-learning experiences.

**CURRENT RESEARCH**

Nearly three-quarters (12) of the participants engage in research that includes a definition of service-learning. Their definitions focus on service, reflection, and hands-on learning. Some definitions emphasize process (e.g. how service-learning is implemented) and others emphasize outcomes (e.g. the benefit to the community or the student):

“… curriculum-based community service done through the schools that integrates classroom instruction with community service activities. The service must: be organized in relation to an academic course or curriculum; have clearly stated learning objectives; address real community needs in a sustained manner over a period of time; and assist students in drawing lessons from the service through regularly scheduled, organized reflection or critical analysis activities, such as discussions, presentations, or directed writing.”

“A combination of community service with learning and reflection on the same topic.”

“The combination of a learning activity with a service component that puts learning into action — regardless of program context (school, non-school) and regardless of explicit connection to a curriculum or set content.”

“Hands-on learning with a giving dimension.”

“Youth contribution to a community that includes a didactic component.”

“Community service-learning involves individuals in organized community service that addresses local issues, while developing academic skills, sense of civic responsibility, and commitment to the community.”

“Service-learning is a teaching and learning methodology that combines service and learning in ways that benefit both the student and the community.”

“Community service with a component of reflection.”

“… either using the Learn and Serve statutory definition of service-learning (for teachers and administrators), or through a multi-step process (for participants) that asks about a number of aspects of service-learning (e.g. community service as part of a class, reflection, planning)

“If we’re looking at school-based service-learning then we ask about that, if community-based or driven then we use a much broader definition.”

“Considered broadly, as a teaching methodology that integrates academic study with real community needs to enhance student learning, and civic and social responsibility.”

“Service-learning is a teaching and learning strategy where students apply what they’ve learned in educational settings to identify and address community needs.”
### FIGURE 1

#### Measures of Service-Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean Rating</th>
<th>Potential Service-Learning Measures</th>
<th>Mean Rating</th>
<th>Potential Service-Learning Measures</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Importance to Participants Work</td>
<td>Importance to Policy-makers</td>
<td>Importance to Participants Work</td>
<td>Importance to Policy-makers</td>
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<td>8.3</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7.4</td>
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<td>8.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>6.65</td>
<td>7.29</td>
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</table>

Overall Average Importance Rating
While 12 participants indicated their research includes a **definition** of service-learning, only eight participants include **measures** of service-learning quality. For those who do, the quality attributes measured center around the essential elements of service-learning, most commonly: reflection, partnership with community, and curriculum integration. Duration of service is another frequently-measured attribute.

**MEASURES OF SERVICE-LEARNING AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT**

Participants were asked to evaluate a list of 33 potential service-learning measures. The list included measures identified in a previous ASL session with service-learning leaders and augmented with measures identified by the current ASL’s participants. Participants assessed each potential measure according to the importance to their own work and the importance in terms of “making the case” for service-learning to policy-maker and education stakeholders. In addition, participants discussed sources of data, or the lack of data, for the measures.

Of most importance to the participants is measuring the direct impact of service-learning in affecting intended outcomes. Using a 10-point scale, where a “10” indicates “extremely important” and a “1” indicates “not at all important,” participants rated the measurement of the direct impact of service-learning in affecting intended outcomes as 8.3 in terms of its importance to their own work. This measure is, in itself, an overarching or “meta-measure” that emphasizes the overall consensus of what constitutes valuable research — meaning that it contributes to the understanding and documentation of the benefits resulting from service-learning. Standards for service-learning practices leading to the greatest positive outcomes for young people, based on the best research available, appear on pages 10-11. According to participants, the next most important measures are level of engagement among students and community (8.0), civic outcomes (7.9), and youth taking active leadership role in the community (7.9). In contrast, other measures are of considerably less importance to leaders’ own work, including number and type of education partnerships developed (5.1), level of spiritual commitment and identity (5.1), and parents/families requests for service-learning opportunities (4.9). (See Figure 1.)
### FIGURE 2
Importance of Measures to Participants vs. Stakeholder Audiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quadrant I</th>
<th>Quadrant II</th>
<th>Quadrant III</th>
<th>Quadrant IV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Greater</strong> Importance to Participants’ Work and <strong>Greater</strong> Importance to Stakeholder Audiences</td>
<td><strong>Lesser</strong> Importance to Participants’ Work and <strong>Greater</strong> Importance to Stakeholder Audiences</td>
<td><strong>Lesser</strong> Importance to Participants’ Work and <strong>Lesser</strong> Importance to Stakeholder Audiences</td>
<td><strong>Greater</strong> Importance to Participants’ Work and <strong>Lesser</strong> Importance to Stakeholder Audiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Direct impact of service-learning in affecting outcomes</td>
<td>– Academic achievement (test scores)</td>
<td>– Depth of knowledge of material</td>
<td>– Number of participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Level of engagement among students and community</td>
<td>– Improvement in job skills</td>
<td>– Students helping each other</td>
<td>– Level of involvement from the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Civic outcomes</td>
<td>– Impact on teachers (retention, quality, satisfaction, etc.)</td>
<td>– Enriched oral and communication skills</td>
<td>– Youth self-confidence/personal pride</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Youth taking active leadership role in the community</td>
<td></td>
<td>– Application of learning in social situations to academics</td>
<td>– Policy change around incentivizing service-learning activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Impact on communities</td>
<td></td>
<td>– Improvement of family relationships</td>
<td>– Adults’ respect for kids’ opinions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Leadership skills</td>
<td></td>
<td>– Dollars leveraged/ saved</td>
<td>– Instilment of vision for the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Expected political participation (voting)</td>
<td></td>
<td>– Number and type of education partnerships developed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participants also indicated the measures important to their work are not always the measures they perceive as most important when persuading key stakeholders of the value of service-learning. Charting the importance of each of these measures to service-learning leaders against the importance to policy-makers and education stakeholders provides a clearer picture of these differences. (See Figure 2.)

Quadrant I reveals the measures participants consider of greater importance to their own work and to persuading key stakeholder audiences of the value of service-learning. This analysis suggests the development of these measures deserves higher priority than other measures in the list. In contrast, Quadrant III indicates measures considered less important to service-learning leaders as well as policy-makers, and therefore requiring the lowest priority for attention.

As indicated in Figure 2, participants identified 15 potential service-learning attributes whose measurement is of highest importance to both the work of service-learning professionals as well as key stakeholder audiences. Participants discussed the current state of available sources of information for these, as well as other, service-learning attributes. The sources identified are not exhaustive, but represent their best thinking during the two-hour Advanced Strategy Lab® session. The identified sources can be categorized broadly into two types:

1. Data sets available for possible secondary analyses — longitudinal or cross-sectional
2. Validated instruments for gathering the required measurements

Figure 3 lists potential available sources of information for the 15 service-learning attributes of highest priority. Participants provided at least some information on 10 of these most critical attributes; however, data sets or instruments were not identified for five of the attributes of service-learning deemed most important to measure. This gap is similar among the remaining, lower-priority service-learning attributes. In addition, potential sources of information were questioned by participants as to their direct applicability or validity. These questions illustrate the value of entering into discussions concerning the best use of available data and instruments for understanding the scope, scale, and impacts of service-learning.

**FUTURE COLLABORATION**

Participants expressed support for and interest in future collaboration efforts among service-learning and youth development leaders in efforts to better measure service-learning on a large scale. They believe such collaboration could benefit their own work by developing consensus around a common set of measures, improving the system of measurement, creating professional learning communities, and broadening the knowledge base. The challenges to such collaboration efforts are identified as limited resources, lack of a common national vision of the most useful data, inclusion of a broad group of contributors, narrow definitions of service-learning, and unwillingness to set aside individual parochial views. Despite these challenges, a majority of participants indicated they would be extremely or very likely to contribute articles to collective publications, share new insights about other programs and measures, and contribute data on an annual basis.
### Figure 3
Data sources and instruments identified at Advanced Strategy Lab®

| Youth taking active leadership role in the community | Data set: “National Survey on Service-Learning and Transitioning to Adulthood.” Available at www.nylc.org/transitioning. |

### Leadership skills
Data set: “National Survey on Service-Learning and Transitioning to Adulthood.” Available at www.nylc.org/transitioning.

### Expected political participation (voting)
Data set: “National Survey on Service-Learning and Transitioning to Adulthood.” Available at www.nylc.org/transitioning.

### Teamwork skills

### Positive relationships with adults

### School attendance
Instrument: School attendance records.

ASL participants identified the above data sets available for possible secondary analyses and instruments useful in researching measures shown in Quadrant 1 of Figure 2. Participants identified sources for only 10 of the 15 measures in the time allotted for this exercise. Thus, this figure is useful for identifying both existing research as well as possible gaps that should be filled. A complete listing of suggested data sets and instruments for Quadrants 1-4 of Figure 2 can be found at www.nylc.org/asl.
Summary and Recommendations

Convening a group of leaders in the service-learning and youth development community provided important information and guidance for the future development of this field overall and, specifically, investigations into the scope, scale, and impacts of service-learning and related activities. Participants expressed a strong support and desire for valid, reliable measurements of the impacts of service-learning. In addition to being important to the leaders themselves, participants believe identifying and quantifying the benefits of service-learning is an important component of persuasive communication to policy-makers and educational stakeholders. The stakeholders identified as benefiting the most from measurement information include leaders of non-profits and foundations (particularly those focused on education), education policy-makers at the state and other levels, school district administrators, community business leaders, and the media.

While many measures of service-learning are possible, the participants identified the measurement needs having the highest priority, both for themselves and for influencing stakeholders. This list of 15 service-learning measurements provides a direction for research efforts in the field. Next steps should include mining the existing data sets regarding level of engagement, civic outcomes, and positive relationships with adults. In addition, measures such as school attendance are easily defined and efforts should be made to gather the appropriate data. However, one-third of the service-learning attributes may have no known data sets or validated instruments. These areas require further efforts to identify whether any such resources exist. If not, primary research is required to provide necessary supporting data.

The results of the strategy session recommend identifying and creating research speaking directly to outcomes measurement. This includes:

- Encourage researchers from many fields to use service-learning as a prism for research, discovering how service-learning intersects with many critical outcomes important for healthy youth development, community development, and foundations of democracy.

- Mine existing data sets, assessing their utility in providing data related to service-learning.

- Encourage collaboration so data sources can be pooled to create a national picture of the scope, scale and impacts of service-learning.

- Encourage researchers to use definitions of service-learning that include measurements of the attributes of quality service-learning.

This last point also addresses the need for effective communication across the service-learning community.

The needs identified by the group are extensive and will require substantial resources. However, these service-learning leaders believe future collaboration among service-learning and youth development leaders will help meet these needs. And, the majority is willing to participate in such efforts. Such collaboration would benefit the development of service-learning measures, extend the knowledge base, and ultimately, help to “make the case” for the value of service-learning to those best positioned to help broaden its reach.
While an analysis of recent dissertations and theses in service-learning may seem to fall beyond the scope of interest for a collection on the state of service-learning in primary and secondary school, what happens in higher education classrooms often shapes the practice of service-learning in K-12 schools. Today’s undergraduate and graduate students are tomorrow’s practitioners and scholars who will refine the field of service-learning. In addition, the research conducted by graduate students mirrors the state of the service-learning community as a whole.

Learn and Serve America’s National Service-Learning Clearinghouse has compiled dissertation abstracts of service-learning and related topics from the early 1970s through the present. These collections trace the history of graduate research in service-learning and reflect the increasing prevalence of service-learning in graduate research, with the last six years bringing more total dissertations than were written in the 20 preceding years.

The dissertation collections offer opportunities to reflect on the state of and trends in graduate level research on service-learning, how these trends are influencing research and teaching in service-learning, and how that influence could be harnessed to advance both practice and scholarship. The study reports on findings from an analysis of the most recent collection — abstracts from 2004-2006.

Universities, Civic Engagement, and Graduate Study

Stanton and Wagner (2006) identify current renewed attention to the civic mission of universities with a “fourth wave” of higher education civic engagement initiatives. This movement goes beyond efforts to bring civic engagement to individual campus classrooms.
This is not to say that conversations on engaged scholarship and scholarship of engagement in graduate education are not taking place. In an article that appeared in February 2007, KerryAnn O’Meara outlines the recent emphasis on civic engagement initiatives for graduate students. She points to a February 2006 University of Minnesota forum and an April 2006 California Campus Compact Symposium, both on civic engagement, as well as regional, university-specific, and discipline-specific initiatives.

Two larger collaborative initiatives started in 2007 have also contributed to engaged scholarship and scholarship of engagement. With support of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the National Service-Learning Partnership at the Academy for Educational Development and the National Youth Leadership Council created the Service-Learning Emerging Leaders Initiative to provide support to 22 young service-learning professionals. In addition, the Service-Learning students experience a lessening of community engagement as they transition from undergraduate to graduate study (O’Meara 2007; Stanton and Wagner 2006). Since graduate teaching assistants are teaching 13.9 percent of all liberal arts classes, and 19.8 percent of introductory courses (USDE/NCES 1999), the lack of involvement in and support for service-learning means graduate students who teach undergraduates are unlikely to use service-learning in their classrooms and are therefore unlikely to be prepared for service-learning instruction after they graduate.

The lack of exposure to and support for service-learning in graduate school likewise diminishes the potential for graduate students to pursue research on service-learning. This results in future scholars who have less experience with the positive impact of service-learning and it reduces their scholarly contribution to service-learning’s research base.

The impact of these efforts is a clear increase in service-learning and civic engagement initiatives in institutions of higher education across the United States (O’Meara 2007). For example, Campus Compact, a national service-learning organization for colleges and universities founded in 1985, now boasts 1,045 members (one-third of higher education institutions) making an institutional commitment to civic engagement. Service-learning is no small part of this work. The 2006 Campus Compact Membership Survey showed 91 percent of respondents reported their campuses offered courses that incorporated service-learning (Campus Compact 2007).

Even with this encouraging picture of higher education’s increasing civic engagement and service-learning, there still tends to be relatively little focus on the civic engagement of graduate students. Since efforts typically focus on the engagement of institutions or of undergraduate students or faculty, many of these collections trace the history of graduate research in service-learning, with the last six years bringing more total dissertations than were written in the 20 preceding years.
However, the conditions under which research takes place and the limits of particular studies often interfere with generalizability (Howard 2003). While it is possible to extrapolate some information about the state of service-learning experiences in graduate education from the dissertations and theses considered here, the data provide the most compelling information about the state of graduate research and, to a lesser extent, graduate teaching. By increasing the knowledge base on the state of graduate research on service-learning, it is hoped this study will contribute both to efforts to grow service-learning in graduate school and to set the research agenda for the field as a whole.

**Findings**

Dissertation and thesis abstracts considered for this study were gathered by searching the UMI ProQuest Digital Dissertation Abstracts database for dissertations and theses addressing service-learning and related topics produced from 2004-2006. Search terms used were: “service-learning,” “community-based learning,” “community engagement,” “civic engagement,” “community partnerships,” and “service.” Because the last four terms do not include the element of pedagogically-based service inherent in the first two search terms, they were included in the search. In addition, the Emerging Scholars initiative — created by CIRCLE, Brandeis University, and the University of California, Berkeley — is convening groups of new and established researchers with goals of providing newer researchers with support and improving the quality of service-learning research overall. Recent conferences, including the 2007 International Association for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement and the Western Regional Campus Compact Continuums of Service Conferences, have included several sessions on topics of engaged scholarship and the scholarship of engagement.

As attention to graduate education in service-learning has increased, there has been a call for improving the quality of service-learning scholarship generally — both in quantitative and qualitative research (Bringle and Hatcher 2000; Howard, Gelmon, and Giles 2000; Shumer 2000). For the most part, these have been calls for research studies, not simply program evaluations or anecdotal descriptions (Billig 2000; Billig 2003; Eyler, Giles, and Gray 2000). Many researchers are looking for “quantitative research from which casual inferences about meaningfully measured outcomes can be made” (Bringle and Hatcher 2000, 74). In addition to causal inferences, there is great interest in work that can be generalized (Howard 2003; Bailis and Melchior 2003).
terms, they were combined with the search terms “education,” “teaching,” and “pedagogy.” After removing duplicates, these searches returned a total of 246 dissertation and thesis abstracts. These 246 abstracts were then analyzed for relevance to service-learning and 112 were removed, resulting in a collection of 144 dissertation and thesis abstracts. Every effort was made to include all pertinent dissertations and theses, but it is quite possible that there are additional studies that would warrant inclusion.

STATE REPRESENTATION

The analyzed abstracts included 144 master’s thesis (13) and doctoral dissertation (131) abstracts on service-learning and related topics. These dissertations and theses emerged from 111 different institutions of higher education and from 38 states, the District of Columbia, and five Canadian provinces. These institutions were public and private, ranging from relatively small campuses such as Drew University, with 2,500 students, to large research institutions like the University of Minnesota, with more than 65,000 enrolled students.

While the data did not reflect any discernible state-by-state pattern, Florida produced the most dissertations, making up 7 percent of the overall collection. Closely following were Massachusetts and Ohio, with 6 percent of the collection each. Because the distribution was fairly even, with the rest of the states each representing 1-5 percent of the collection, this does not seem particularly meaningful.

ACADEMIC DIVISIONS AND DEPARTMENTS

Of the 131 doctoral dissertations considered, 83 were submitted in Ph.D. programs, 47 in Ed.D. programs, and one in a D.Min. program. An exploration of the various academic areas of study in which the dissertations and theses were produced shows an overwhelming majority came from the division of education, with much smaller representation from the humanities, social sciences, physical sciences, and interdisciplinary areas.

Given education’s prevalence in these studies — 108 (75 percent) of the entire collection — this analysis has separated it from the other social/applied sciences. Education was further broken down into subsets including departments of education, administration, counseling, and leadership. (See Figure 1.) The 13 studies in leadership, representing 12 percent of education studies and 9 percent of the total collection, were the next largest producers of service-learning dissertations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Department</th>
<th>Number of Dissertations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Sciences</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal Justice</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family &amp; Consumer Sciences</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education Administration</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical Sciences</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Studies</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Sciences</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Humanities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divinity/Theology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fine Arts</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interdisciplinary</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross-disciplinary Studies</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Studies</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Department not known</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These results show a strong preference for qualitative analysis. Within the quantitative research, few studies used experimentation, with a much greater emphasis on quasi-experimental studies or non-experimental analysis of existing conditions.

Physical sciences provided 7 percent of the total. Humanities and social/applied science divisions were less represented, at 4 percent and 6 percent of the total collection, respectively. This collection included no studies from degree programs in the fine arts. All other departments fell between 1-5 percent. (See Figure 2.)

**SECTORS**

Dissertations and theses were analyzed based on the sector of service-learning studied. (See Figure 3.) Dissertations focusing on the higher education sector made up 65 percent of the collection, with just under half that amount (27 percent) addressing K-12 service-learning. There is a much smaller representation of works on community-based organizations (6 percent) or those that are explicitly cross-sector (2 percent). The collection included no works related to the tribal sector.

**RESEARCH METHODS**

Dissertations and theses were analyzed for the research methods used. (See Figures 4-6.) This determination was made by reading the abstracts for explicit statements or implicit evidence about methodology. For example, such evidence might have been the mention of interviews, indicating qualitative methods, or pre- and post-tests indicating quantitative research. In abstracts in which no conclusion could be reached, the full dissertation was consulted. Research was considered to be qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods (employing both approaches). Dissertations utilizing a theoretical or historical approach or consisting solely of a literature review were considered separately from the other approaches.

Qualitative and quantitative research methods were further broken down by study design. Qualitative studies were classified as being interview-based or multi-modal, that is employing two or more qualitative
approaches (e.g., interviews and participant observation). Quantitative studies were classified as being experimental, quasi-experimental, or non-experimental. Experimental research was considered to be any study in which an intervention was deliberately introduced in order to observe its effects and in which a random process was used to select individuals or groups to a control or treatment group. Quasi-experimental studies were considered to be those with some experimental structural design such as control groups or pre- and post-testing, but in which conditions or treatments were not assigned randomly and instead may have been self-selected. Non-experimental quantitative studies were considered to be those in which causation and variability were studied using quantitative measures but without randomization or intervention from the researchers (Schutt 1999; Shadish, Cook, and Campbell 2002).

A large majority of dissertations and theses employed qualitative methods (48 percent). Half that number (24 percent) used quantitative methods. Mixed methods were used in 20 percent of studies. Dissertations and theses predominantly using theoretical analysis, historical review, or literature review accounted for 6 percent of the entire collection.
These results show a strong preference for qualitative analysis. Within the quantitative research, few studies used experimentation (15 percent), with a much greater emphasis on quasi-experimental studies (38 percent) or non-experimental analysis of existing conditions (44 percent). (See Figures 4-6.)

**SUBJECT**

For the purposes of analysis and indexing of the collection, a limited number of subject terms were selected from the current classification system of Learn and Serve America’s National Service-Learning Clearinghouse library. These were then modified according to need and prevalence.

The dissertations in the collection were coded for topical content. In the 102 studies addressing more than one discipline, there was a wide array of topics with no single predominant focal area. Column 1 in Figure 7 identifies the topics studied in these mixed-discipline studies. Column 2 lists the frequency with which each topic was addressed. The most frequently studied areas were: service-learning in higher education, civic engagement, multiculturalism, and partnerships.

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### Figure 7

**Dissertation and Thesis Topics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topical Content</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Topical Content</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service-Learning — Higher Ed</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>At-Risk Youth</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Engagement</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Civic Education</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiculturalism</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Literacy</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnerships</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mediation/Conflict Resolution</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impacts &amp; Outcomes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Service-Learning — Community Based</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service-Learning — K-12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Social Justice</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutionalization</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Special Education</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Youth Development</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogy</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Assessment/Evaluation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith-based</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Community Development</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character Education</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Disabilities</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>ESL</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intergenerational</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Leadership Development</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Service-Learning — General</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Dissertations and theses treating more than one subject area are reflected under multiple subject headings.
Some dissertations and theses also reflected service-learning experiences occurring across disciplines at the graduate level. There were 14 works, approximately 10 percent of the entire collection, discussing graduate experiences in service or service-learning in some respect. Approximately 6 percent of the collection reflected graduate students explicitly using, or preparing to use, service-learning pedagogies in their teaching, particularly at the K-12 level.

**DISCIPLINE-APPLIED SERVICE-LEARNING**

Not precisely a subject in its own right, discipline-applied service-learning emerged as an area deserving analysis. Studies were considered to be discipline-applied if they emphasized an application for service-learning in a particular disciplinary area. Often, but not exclusively, these were presented in the form of a case study. Twenty-nine percent of dissertations (42) in the collection were identified as discipline-applied. While the majority of service-learning dissertations and theses were produced in education departments, studies of discipline-applied service-learning address a much broader range of academic areas.

Figure 8 shows health sciences, teacher education, art, and composition/writing were the most researched disciplines in which service-learning was applied and studied.²

**Implications for Future Research**

While it would be a mistake to draw too many conclusions from this brief analysis of the doctoral dissertation and master’s thesis abstracts written between 2004 and 2006 that treat service-learning, it is possible to make some observations and articulate some needs of the service-learning community based on these findings. If graduate student research is to be understood both as a research contribution in its own right and as an indicator of the teaching and research future service-learning scholars are prepared to conduct, it is worth thinking about how graduate student research intersects (or fails to intersect) with the service-learning research agenda laid out by scholars over the last decade. Faculty and funders have the opportunity to influence the type of research conducted by graduate students that will meet the research needs of the service-learning community.

Note: In addition to 22 dissertations and theses primarily treating the application of service-learning in a particular discipline, considered here are 20 additional dissertations and theses focusing on other subjects but through a specifically discipline-applied lens.

---

**FIGURE 8**

**Discipline-Applied Dissertations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disciplines</th>
<th>Number of Dissertations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Composition/Writing</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer Science</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Studies</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family &amp; Consumer Sciences</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Science</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Education</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Work</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Education</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theology</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Planning</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Studies</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Given the call within the field for more quantitative and large-scale research, the strong preference among authors of these studies for qualitative methods and small-scale studies may be considered disheartening. However, given the fundamental dissertation objective of demonstrating a doctoral student’s research skills in a contained and singular study, it seems unlikely that this distribution across methods will change much over time. In other words, the scale of a dissertation study does not often lend itself to large-scale experimental works.

This analysis demonstrates that even when quantitative research is performed, it rarely involves a truly experimental study design. Given the value of determinable causality associated with this type of research, more quantitative and experimental studies are needed to accurately measure the impact of service-learning. Once again, as with quantitative research generally, for such an increase in these studies to take place, barriers of scale, time, funding, and guidance would need to be removed.

Also, it is important to consider what it means for the field as a whole that the majority of studies are not only qualitative, but also are largely anecdotal — documenting the practice of service-learning, but not necessarily contributing to the production of service-learning theory or even the production of broadly applicable practice. Even if qualitative research remains the dominant paradigm, the field would generally benefit from more rigorous methods that better operationalize measures of service-learning impact.

While it is encouraging that so many education departments are embracing service-learning enough to support graduate research on the topic, the distribution of theses and dissertations across disciplines reflects a need for more support for service-learning scholarship at the graduate level in other fields. One might wonder, moreover, why it appears far easier to conduct graduate research in education on applications of service-learning to a different disciplinary context, for example, health sciences, than it is to conduct such research from within the health sciences field.

It also seems worth considering why several areas that seem to be of special interest to the service-learning community at large appear underrepresented in the dissertation collection. This void included studies of at-risk young people, literacy, and assessment/evaluation in service-learning. It may be that this simply represents the reality of research — that is, research takes time — and studies in these areas of current special interest will emerge as more popular dissertation and thesis topics in subsequent years. There may also be a communication gap between the service-learning field as a whole and the graduate students producing dissertations and theses. Whichever the case, as networks of communication within the field develop between emerging and established scholars and practitioners, the areas of perceived research need and areas of graduate research will more closely coincide.
REFERENCES


For more than 15 years, Learn and Serve America has provided support for service-learning throughout the United States. Each year, the program supports more than one million young people as they contribute to their communities in ways that build academic and civic skills. However, given the highly decentralized structure of the program, it has been difficult to capture the full scope and impact on students, teachers, and organizations participating in Learn and Serve-funded service-learning activities. As part of the process of improving our understanding of the scope and impact of Learn and Serve funds, the Corporation for National and Community Service, with the assistance of Abt Associates and Brandeis University, launched the online version of the Learn and Serve program survey known as LASSIE (Learn and Serve Systems and Information Exchange) in the spring of 2004.1

Each year since 2004, approximately 2,000 schools, school districts, colleges and universities, and community-based organizations receiving Learn and Serve funds have reported on their service-learning activities through the online LASSIE system. The system is designed to track the path of Learn and Serve funds from the initial grantee to the local schools, school districts, colleges, and community-based organizations operating service-learning projects. The LASSIE system also provides unprecedented information on the reach of Learn and Serve grants. From the data gathered we can see how the institutionalization of service-learning is impacted within organizations receiving Learn and Serve

1 The LASSIE website at www.lsareports.org allows the public to access copies of the LASSIE survey instruments, online reports, and Public Use data sets.
Programs funded for consecutive years tend to become more cost-effective in their activities and are better equipped to expand the scope of their program.

In addition, data are gathered on the number and demographic characteristics of service-learning participants, the types of service activities performed, and the perceived impact of the funds on participants and community organizations.

This article looks at the characteristics of programs receiving funds between 2003 and 2006 using the information reported through the LASSIE system. In 2003 Learn and Serve began a new three-year grant cycle: Grantees were awarded an initial one-year grant with the possibility of a renewal of the grant for two additional years based on progress toward program goals and completion of the grant requirements. Therefore, over these three years, Learn and Serve grantees remained the same, while organizations to which the grantees subgranted their funds may or may not have received funds over the entire three-year period. In analyzing the data, we are able to look at differences between subgrantees receiving funds for all three years and those receiving funds for only one or two years of the grant cycle. We are also able to look at changes over time for subgrantees receiving funds for all three years.

The findings from this analysis are presented in five sections:

1. An overview of grantees, subgrantees, and sub-subgrantees during the 2003 grant cycle
2. A report on the growth and institutionalization within organizations receiving funding for all three years
3. A comparison correlating the number of years of funding to institutional support for service-learning within programs receiving funding in the final year of the grant cycle
4. A look at the relationship between institutional supports and program quality
5. An overview of the findings on perceived impacts of Learn and Serve funds on participants and community organizations
Overview of the 2003 Grant Cycle

During the 2003 grant cycle, Learn and Serve America made 143 grants under its three grant programs: K-12 School-Based Grants, Higher Education Grants, and Community-Based Grants. In turn, these Learn and Serve grantees subgranted (and, in some cases, sub-subgranted) these funds to thousands of schools, school districts, colleges, universities, and community-based organizations. While approximately 2,000 organizations receive Learn and Serve subgrants each year, about half of these organizations receive funds for multiple years. Among the 2,902 distinct organizations receiving funds over the course of the 2003 grant cycle, 23.7 percent (687 organizations) were subgranted funds for all three years, while an additional 28.3 percent (821 organizations) were subgranted funds for two years. This leaves 1,394 subgrantees and sub-subgrantees receiving Learn and Serve funds for only one year.4

Subgrantees receiving funds under the Higher Education Grant program were most likely to receive funds for all three years, while those funded through the Community-Based Grant program were the least likely to receive multiple years of funding. (See Figure 1.)

Growth and Institutionalization among Organizations Receiving Three Years of Funding

In looking at changes in scope and institutionalization among organizations receiving Learn and Serve funds for all three years, we included grantees, subgrantees, and sub-subgrantees directly operating service-learning programs and completing the LASSIE survey for both the 2003-2004 and the 2005-2006 program years.3 This includes 633 entities: 448 schools and school districts, 125 colleges and universities, and 60 community-based organizations.6

We find programs receiving three consecutive years of funding experienced growth in the size of their service-learning programs despite no increase in amount of grant funds received or their overall service-learning budget. This growth is seen in the number of participants, faculty, teachers, and staff involved in service-learning activities and the...
We also find, along with the growth of the programs, the availability of institutional supports for service-learning increased over the three years programs received Learn and Serve funds. Organizations receiving funding for three years were more likely to:

- Include service-learning in professional development plans, orientations, and evaluations for teachers, faculty, and staff in the third year of funding than in the first year.
- Provide financial and technical support to teachers, faculty, and staff who have service-learning projects.

These increases occurred in spite of no corresponding growth in the percentage of organizations with a service-learning coordinator. In fact, the amount of time service-learning coordinators spent on service-learning activities decreased over the course of the grant cycle: Whereas 57.9 percent of coordinators spent at least 20 hours per week on service-learning activities in the first year of the grant cycle, only 42.9 percent spent as much time in the third year. While determining the reasons for this decrease requires additional research, this finding may be due to the increased efficiency of organizations as service-learning activities become more institutionalized.

4 While we connected organizations across years within the same Learn and Serve grant, a few organizations may have received funds from more than one Learn and Serve grantee. Funds provided to the same organization through different grants or for different programs are considered distinct for the purposes of analysis. Missing data and errors in reporting may underestimate the number of organizations that received Learn and Serve funds for more than one year.
5 The vast majority of programs (91.6 percent) in this analysis received Learn and Serve funds as subgrantees. A small number (4.9 percent) were grantees that operated service-learning projects, while the remaining (3.5 percent) received funds as sub-subgrantees.
6 There were 696 programs that operated service-learning programs and were identified as receiving funds for all three years of the grant cycle, leaving us with a 90.9 percent response rate (633/696) for those who completed the first- and third-year LASSIE survey.
7 The LASSIE survey defines a service-learning coordinator as a teacher, faculty, or staff member whose efforts or support of service-learning extend beyond his or her own classroom, courses, or programs.
Correlation between Years of Funding and Institutionalization

By focusing on the 1,700 programs operating service-learning activities during the 2005-2006 program year and reporting on those activities in LASSIE, we looked at differences among these programs based on the number of years of funding they received during the 2003 grant cycle. As in the previous analysis, we included grantees, subgrantees, and sub-subgrantees directly operating service-learning programs. (See Figure 2.) The majority of organizations (70.9 percent) were schools or school districts, while 14.8 percent were higher education institutions and 14.2 percent were community-based organizations.

While this analysis compares programs by the number of years of Learn and Serve funding, it is important to note that the majority of programs — regardless of the number of years they received Learn and Serve funds — have a history of service-learning in their organization. For example, among programs receiving their first Learn and Serve grant during the 2005-2006 program year, 65 percent had service-learning activities prior to the grant, and 30 percent reported having service-learning activities in their organization for six years or more.

We do find significant differences between programs based on the number of years of Learn and Serve funds that they receive. For example, programs are larger and more institutionalized in organizations receiving three years of funding, when compared to those only receiving one or two years of funding.

- Those funded for three years were more likely to receive a larger grant for the 2005-2006 program year: While 36.3 percent of programs receiving three years of Learn and Serve funding received a grant of $20,000 or more, only 15.8 percent of programs with one year of funding received such a large grant.

- Organizations with three years of funding had a greater diversity of financial and community supports for their service-learning activities. They were half as likely as programs with only one year of funding to rely solely on Learn and Serve funds; about 50 percent more likely to have a service-learning advisory board; and more likely to have more community partners and collaborations with AmeriCorps and Senior Corps that supported their service-learning activities.

The number of years of Learn and Serve funding was also correlated with the presence of a service-learning coordinator and several supports for teachers, faculty, and staff.

- Whereas the majority (59.6 percent) of programs with one year of funding operated without a service-learning coordinator, only 21.3 percent of programs with three years of funding lacked a coordinator.

- Likewise, 25.2 percent of coordinators in programs with one year of funding spent at least 20 hours a week on service-learning activities, compared to 43.1 percent of coordinators in programs with three years of funding.
Programs with three years of funding were also significantly more likely than those with one year to have service-learning as an improvement strategy in their strategic plan and to provide supports for teachers, faculty, and staff who implement service-learning projects. (See Figure 3.)

While our analysis suggests the programs receiving three years of funding are more likely to be larger and more institutionalized, it is not able to establish a causal connection between the number of years of funding and the presence of service-learning policies and supports or to conclude programs are larger and have more supports because they received three years of funding.

Learn and Serve grantees are more likely to subgrant funds for multiple years to organizations having the capacity to support larger programs and provide assistance to teachers, faculty, and staff. In addition, organizations with greater capacity are probably more likely to seek funding, as seen in their greater diversity of funding sources for service-learning. They are also more likely to have the necessary capacity to fulfill the requirements accompanying a federal grant program. While the continuous funding of these larger programs may mean funding does not reach smaller organizations, these larger programs often serve as mediating organizations for organizations lacking the capacity to manage a federal grant. As mediat-

---

**FIGURE 2**
Learn and Serve Programs in the Third Year (2005-2006) of the 2003 Grant Cycle

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Funding</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Number of Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Year</td>
<td>26.1%</td>
<td>444 programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Years</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
<td>579 programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Years</td>
<td>39.8%</td>
<td>677 programs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIGURE 3**
Institutional Supports for Service-Learning by Number of Years of Learn and Serve Funding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional Support</th>
<th>1 Year of Funding</th>
<th>3 Years of Funding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial support for planning, training, and implementation of service-learning</td>
<td>57.9%</td>
<td>67.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>** Reduction in teaching load to allow time for service-learning program development or supervision</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>20.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical assistance on planning or implementation of service-learning activities</td>
<td>49.1%</td>
<td>63.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition or rewards for teachers, faculty or staff for quality service-learning practice</td>
<td>41.2%</td>
<td>47.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Difference is statistically significant at the .01 level or lower.
** Difference is statistically significant at the .05 level or lower.
schools and school districts has such a person who devotes a considerable amount of time to coordinating service-learning activities.

**SERVICE-LEARNING COORDINATOR AND QUALITY SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECTS**

In our analysis of LASSIE data, we looked at the extent to which programs involve participants in high-quality service-learning. Using findings from research looking at the relationship between the quality of service-learning and impacts on participants (Melchior and Bailis 2002; Billig 2000), the Corporation for National and Community Service identified service duration and intensity of at least one semester and 20 hours of service as an indication of quality service-learning. We find when a program has a service-learning coordinator, they are more likely to have service-learning projects meeting these quality indicators; however, we do not find any further increase in number of service hours when the service-learning coordinator spends at least 20 hours per week on service-learning activities.

Furthermore, we do not find a significant difference in the percentage of participants within a Learn and Serve-funded program taking part in quality service-learning activities when a program has a service-learning coordinator. That is to say, programs with a service-learning coordinator are more likely

---

**FIGURE 4**

Presence of Service-Learning Coordinator during 2005-2006 Program Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presence of Service-Learning Coordinator</th>
<th>All Learn and Serve Programs</th>
<th>K-12 Schools and School Districts</th>
<th>Higher Education Institutions</th>
<th>Community-Based Organizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of programs with a service-learning coordinator</td>
<td>70.8%</td>
<td>65.8%</td>
<td>89.3%</td>
<td>76.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of programs with a coordinator spending at least 20 hours a week on service-learning activities</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>63.2%</td>
<td>37.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**Relationship between Institutional Supports and Quality of Programs**

**PRESENCE OF A SERVICE-LEARNING COORDINATOR**

Service-learning coordinators (defined through LASSIE as a teacher, faculty, or staff member whose efforts to support service-learning extend beyond their own classroom, coursework, or programs) often provide assistance to teachers in the development and implementation of service-learning projects, serve as a liaison with service-learning community partners, secure funding for service-learning activities, and manage the evaluation of service-learning projects. The majority of programs, 70.8 percent, reported having a service-learning coordinator responsible for the service-learning activities in the organization; however, only 27.3 percent of programs have a service-learning coordinator who spends at least 20 hours per week on service-learning activities. (See Figure 4.) As we see in Figure 4, higher education institutions are very likely to have a service-learning coordinator who devotes at least 20 hours to service-learning activities, while a majority of K-12 organizations, they take fiscal responsibility for the grant funds and provide mini-grants — as well as training and technical assistance — to smaller programs, allowing them to implement service-learning projects and build their own internal capacity.

---

**Table:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presence of Service-Learning Coordinator</th>
<th>All Learn and Serve Programs</th>
<th>K-12 Schools and School Districts</th>
<th>Higher Education Institutions</th>
<th>Community-Based Organizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of programs with a service-learning coordinator</td>
<td>70.8%</td>
<td>65.8%</td>
<td>89.3%</td>
<td>76.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage of programs with a coordinator spending at least 20 hours a week on service-learning activities</td>
<td>27.3%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
<td>63.2%</td>
<td>37.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
to have multiple projects of varying durations; while they are more likely to have a project lasting at least a semester and engaging students in at least 20 hours of service, they are also more likely to simultaneously engage students in short-term projects.

**SERVICE-LEARNING COORDINATOR AND THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF SERVICE-LEARNING**

When we look at the relationship between the presence of a service-learning coordinator and several indicators of service-learning institutionalization, we find a number of significant relationships. Programs with a service-learning coordinator are more likely to:

- include service-learning in professional development plans, orientations, and evaluations for teachers, faculty, and staff
- provide technical and financial support for teachers, faculty, and staff
- have a diversity of service-learning funding
- have a service-learning advisory board
- include service-learning in the official core curriculum (for K-12 schools)\(^{12}\)
- provide workload reduction for teachers, faculty and staff

— involve youth in decision-making roles
— engage family members as volunteers

Furthermore, when a service-learning coordinator spends at least 20 hours a week on service-learning activities, we find there is an even greater likelihood that the programs will work toward the first five bullets cited in the preceding paragraph. However, the likelihood programs will engage students in decision-making, involve family members as volunteers, and provide reductions in workload were not affected by the amount of time a coordinator devoted to service-learning activities.

**FIGURE 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Support Given to Teachers, Faculty, and Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial support for planning, training, and implementation of service-learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical assistance on planning or implementation of service-learning activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in teaching load to allow time for service-learning program development or supervision</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORTS FOR TEACHERS, FACULTY, AND STAFF**

Finally, we looked at the relationship between supports for teachers, faculty, and staff who implement service-learning activities and the likelihood these programs will engage participants in sustained activities. The supports we studied included financial support, technical assistance, and the reduction in workload for those who develop or implement service-learning activities. While the majority of programs frequently or always provide financial and technical support, only a minority of programs regularly provide a reduction in workload. (See Figure 5.)

---

\(^{12}\) This finding was significant overall and among K-12 schools and school districts. When looking at higher education institutions separately, significance is lost. This is most likely caused by the fact that there are very few colleges and universities that do not have a service-learning coordinator.
Perceived Impacts of Learn and Serve Funds on Participants and Community Organizations

As noted above, the LASSIE survey is designed to primarily gather data on the institutional support for service-learning, while also collecting information on the demographics of service-learning participants and their service activities. Given the majority of respondents to the survey are administrators, collecting direct information on the impacts of the service-learning activities on students and community organizations is not possible. The LASSIE survey does, however, ask respondents to indicate their perceptions of the impact of service-learning activities on students and community organizations. Given the subjective nature of these responses, we did not include these responses in the above analysis, but provide the responses for the 2005-2006 program year in Figure 6. As the table shows, the vast majority of programs believe that the Learn and Serve-funded service-learning programs have a positive impact on participants and community organizations.

![FIGURE 6 Perceived Impacts of Service-Learning Activities on Participants and Community Organizations](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Impacts</th>
<th>Substantial negative impact</th>
<th>Moderate negative impact</th>
<th>No impact</th>
<th>Moderate positive impact</th>
<th>Substantial positive impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic performance of service-learning on participants</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
<td>47.2%</td>
<td>47.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habits of participants (including attendance, participation in class, etc.)</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>46.8%</td>
<td>51.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participants’ civic engagement</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
<td>38.3%</td>
<td>59.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizations served</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>29.0%</td>
<td>70.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All three supports increased the likelihood that a program had quality service-learning activities lasting at least one semester and engaging participants in at least 20 hours of service. Programs with all three supports, however, were also more likely to have multiple projects of varying durations. This means we do not see a significant difference in the percentage of participants in a program who participate in quality service-learning activities, when compared to programs without these supports.

We also find that programs providing a reduction in the teaching load are more likely to engage service-learning participants in more hours of reflection and service, although we did not find a similar correlation with financial and technical supports.

13 The correlation between workload reduction and average service hours is only significant at the .10 level.
Conclusion

Although Learn and Serve grant funds reach a broad range of schools, school districts, higher education institutions, and community-based organizations, only a minority of these organizations receive funding for multiple years. Those who do receive funds for multiple years show growth in the scope of the programs and improvements in some organizational policies and supports for service-learning. Programs receiving three years of funding have a greater capacity for service-learning activities than those organizations receiving one or two years of funding. These organizations with greater capacity are more able to provide assistance to programs without a similar capacity, and, therefore, are in a good position to serve as mediating organizations. Targeted efforts to build the capacity and increase the institutionalization of service-learning in organizations are important to increasing opportunities for students to participate in high-quality service-learning. Furthermore, the analysis demonstrates service-learning coordinators are central to the institutionalization of service-learning. While the data are not able to determine whether having a service-learning coordinator led to the institutionalization of service-learning or the institutionalization of service-learning led to the hiring of a coordinator, the analysis does show service-learning coordinators who contribute substantial time to service-learning activities can:

- facilitate supports to teachers, faculty, and staff,
- strengthen partnerships with community organizations, and
- diversify financial support for service-learning.

These supports are invaluable to ensure service-learning participants experience high-quality service-learning and that these activities remain a part of the organization once Learn and Serve funding ends.

TECHNICAL NOTES

LASSIE is a census of Learn and Serve-funded programs; no sampling strategy was used in implementing the survey. The census of programs is acquired through reporting by Learn and Serve grantees, who are required to provide contact information for all organizations receiving a Learn and Serve subgrant. In turn, Learn and Serve subgrantees provide contact information for all sub-subgrantees to whom they provide Learn and Serve funds. The response rate for the 2003-2004 program year was 89.8 percent; 86.9 percent for the 2004-2005 program year; and 92.8 percent for the 2005-2006 program year. The response rate is based on the known universe of Learn and Serve subgrantees and sub-subgrantees. The response rate for programs receiving funds for all three years of 2003 grant cycle was 90.9 percent. In accordance with OMB guidelines, given that the survey is a census and that response rates for data analyzed was over 90 percent, no weights were used in the analysis. Unless otherwise noted, the findings presented here are significant at the .01 level or lower.

Additional Notes on LASSIE: The online system provides connections between grants, subgrants, and sub-subgrants within a given program year. The connection of programs under the same grant across program years was completed manually. In a minority of cases, organizations received multiple subgrants, either under the same grant or from different grants; programs funded under different grants were treated as distinct in the analysis. Data collected through LASSIE is self-reported and, in some cases, based on estimates.

REFERENCES


Altruism in Children

Consumer Behavior and Responsible Business Practices

Suzanne Martin has conducted all aspects of the research process with a main focus on youth studies. She earned a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from University of Arizona and completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the Annenberg Public Policy Center at University of Pennsylvania.

George Carey founded Just Kid Inc., a strategic youth research and new product development agency, in 1993. He has conducted numerous social marketing campaigns and research initiatives for a wide variety of clients including both for-profit businesses and non-profit foundations and government agencies.

Noting the growing interest in youth service among older youths and the desire of organizations to understand the consumer behavior and attitudes of young children and adults, Just Kid Inc.’s research division recently completed a series of studies. The study began with an environmental scan of programs that give children an opportunity to serve in order to get an idea of the landscape and characteristics of programs available. In addition, we conducted focus groups with service and non-service children to generate survey questions and interpret survey findings, a national online survey of 600 mothers of 6-14 year olds, and nationally representative online surveys of 2,000 6-14 year olds and their caregivers, resulting in the major findings that:

- **The altruistic impulse among children is strong and their desire to give sometimes rivals their desire to get.** (See Figures 4 and 5.)
- **There is a huge unmet need for service opportunities for children.**
- **Practitioners seeking support for service-learning for young people should consider knocking on the door of marketing departments rather just the corporation’s foundation.**

In the following pages, we provide a more in-depth description of each of these findings and recommendations, and present a sampling of supporting evidence from our research. This report presents children through the lens of an asset model, as having the power to make positive changes in their schools, communities, nation, and world (Checkoway 1994). To ensure a more beneficial experience for all,
About 9 out of 10 kids believe that it is extremely, very, or somewhat important to help others or give back to their community.
The study shows youth service varies by age, gender, household income, parental age, and even the region of the country in which young people reside. (See Figure 2.) In general girls are more likely than boys to feel empowered to make changes in their world, as reflected by their choice of the following statement “I believe that all it takes is just one person my age to make a positive change in the world” well ahead of the alternative: “It’s too hard for just one person my age to make a difference in the world” (56% girls vs. 51% boys). An even greater gap was seen among 6-8 year olds (52% girls vs. 45% boys).
Growing to Greatness 2008

When youth are asked what actions they would take to help the cause they care most about, over half (51%) would buy a product or ask their parents to buy a product that donates money toward helping their cause with each purchase. This is the second highest action youth report willing to take in support of their cause. (See Figure 3.) Children report they are more likely to purchase a product or brand that is linked to an issue or cause they care about (38%) over one with a cool commercial (22%). (See Figure 4.)

A DESIRE TO GIVE OVER GET

A strong example of kids’ desire to give rather than receive occurs when we asked children if they were more likely to ask their parents to purchase a box of cereal that gave them the opportunity to win money or donate money to a cause. Our results indicate that kids are more willing to ask their parents to purchase a product that gives to a cause than the same product that gives them an opportunity to get something for themselves. (See Figure 5.)

The greater a child’s household income, the more likely kids are to give back to their community: household income of $175,000 or more has 75% involvement vs. household income of less than $20,000 with 46% involvement. Further research may illuminate how socio-economic status influences definitions of what it means to “give back.” In addition, as parental age increases, so does the likelihood of child service. Forty-three percent of children whose caregivers are aged 20-29 report participating in service versus sixty-three percent of children whose caregivers are aged 60-69.

HOW KIDS WANT TO HELP

We were interested in the causes that children perceive as important to them. The list of causes was originally generated from youth in focus groups. A refined list was then shown to the children in an online survey and they were queried with the following: “Please tell us if any of the items below are problems, concerns, or causes you care a lot about.” Based on their answers they were shown a shortened list of the issues they cared about and then were asked, “Which of these is most important to you — that is, which of these is something that you would most want to do something about or help make better?” When youth are asked what actions they would take to help the cause they care most about, over half (51%) would buy a product or ask their parents to buy a product that donates money toward helping their cause with each purchase. This is the second highest action youth report willing to take in support of their cause. (See Figure 3.) Children report they are more likely to purchase a product or brand that is linked to an issue or cause they care about (38%) over one with a cool commercial (22%). (See Figure 4.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE 3</th>
<th>Which would you be willing to do to help with the (problem that was most important to you earlier)?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hang posters in your school or community about ...</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy a product (or ask your parents to buy a product) that donates money toward helping with ... with each purchase</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give up one Saturday to help with ...</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give a half hour of your time to help with ...</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give some of your own money to help with ...</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go online to find out more about ...</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in a weekly program to help with ...</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Get people to sign a petition about ...</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Send a letter/email to a politician about ...</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start a club or program yourself to raise money or awareness about ...</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend a protest, rally, or demonstration about ...</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous Comments</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of these</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=2,000 Ages 6-14 (Participants offered multiple responses.)
Altruism in children: Consumer behavior and responsible business practices

Buy their child’s favorite food if it gave the child an opportunity to help others (35%) than if it had a fun toy or contest (6%) or featured a favorite character (5%). Another interesting aspect to note is the cause described in the example above (donation for injured tigers). The children’s willingness to donate to this “cause” might indicate their generous nature could be far greater than their understanding of the scope and scale of the problem, and reflect a tendency to simply trust that the cause on the box is worthy of

Cause-related products would benefit the company and provide funding for the cause, which could in turn be used to offer children a chance to give through a long-term program in their community or offer the instant opportunity to purchase something that allows them to give. Mothers say they would be far more likely to agree to a purchase request from their child if the product did something to help issues or causes (76%) instead of having a giveaway (21%) or cool commercial (3%). Mothers would also be more likely to buy their child’s favorite food if it gave the child an opportunity to help others (35%) than if it had a fun toy or contest (6%) or featured a favorite character (5%). Another interesting aspect to note is the cause described in the example above (donation for injured tigers). The children’s willingness to donate to this “cause” might indicate their generous nature could be far greater than their understanding of the scope and scale of the problem, and reflect a tendency to simply trust that the cause on the box is worthy of
their support. Businesses have a responsibility to not take advantage of this apparent tendency for children to be uncritical and unconditional in their good will.

**Developing More Effective Youth Service Programs**

**PROVIDE YOUTH WITH MORE PROGRAMS AND OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE BACK TO THEIR COMMUNITY**

Though almost all kids would like to be more involved, only about half are actually participating in giving back to their community. There is much less opportunity for the younger kids to fulfill this need in their community and they simply don’t take this initiative on their own, as seen in previous research (Independent Sector 2001). Young people need to be led to service; our study shows that, more often than not, it is someone else’s idea to help (63%). Young children are genuinely glad to do it from the start (88%) rather than having to be convinced to help by someone (12%). Rather than being initiators of volunteer activities on their own (19%), young people often participate in an existing group that gives them a chance to help (81%).

**INVOLVE THEIR FRIENDS**

Overall, young people also tell us that they would be more engaged in service if their friends were involved (49%), if there were more programs or opportunities for kids their age (42%), if their family was involved (40%), or if someone asked them to help (37%). Thirty-seven percent (37%) of kids, 44% of tweens, and 46% of teens express they would do more in their communities if they were given the opportunity. When it happens, almost all youth (99%) report being at least somewhat satisfied with their chosen service activities.

**ENGAGE THEIR PARENTS**

Parents’ service status has a big impact on the child. If a parent takes part in some community service, their children are most likely to follow suit. Children definitely do not initiate service activities on their own, with only 2% of kids participating in some sort of service if their parents are not active. Kids taking part in service are usually joined by their family (52%), followed by people from their school (45%), their church, synagogue or mosque (35%), their friends (29%), an organization or club (25%), or else they serve alone (14%). (See Figure 6.)

**FIGURE 6**

Relationship of Parental Service Participation to Child Service Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Number of Kids</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Both Parent and Child Participate in Service</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>18,821,096 Kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither Parent nor Child Participates in Service</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>5,429,163 Kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Participates in Service and Parent Does Not</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>723,888 Kids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent Participates in Service and Child Does Not</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>11,220,269 Kids</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=2,000 Ages 6-14 (Number of kids is a population estimate for November 2007 from the 2000 United States Census.)
Encourage children to engage in activities that go beyond simply buying a product that supports a cause to finding other ways to work together to support that cause. (See Figure 3 on page 49.) Service, especially quality service-learning, enables our youths to feel pride in what they accomplish — learning new skills or achieving a goal — along with meeting important social needs, such as having fun and meeting other people. Figure 7 shows the causes most vital to kids, varying slightly by age and gender. Motivation for volunteering is reported in Figure 8.

### CAUSE MARKETING

In testing the idea of cause marketing we asked kids for their suggestions about how to design a program/strategy. Their responses (see Figure 9) suggest that kids want a wide array of choices and avenues to pursue. Furthermore, they want companies to show how kids’ involvement makes a difference. Feedback is key to authentic service-learning, allowing students to gain a critical understanding of how their actions affect the world around them.
A Path Forward

CHILDREN

- have a great desire to give to their communities
- have specific causes they appreciate and value
- would like to go beyond just donating, to be involved in a learning experience
- have a social desire to have this experience involve family and friends
- need to be asked and offered programs to become involved
- long to see the real impact of their efforts

There are opportunities for positive, mutually respectful and beneficial partnerships with young people, their families, schools, nonprofits, and businesses. The altruistic disposition of young people that is evidenced in this study is something to respect, and it is the responsibility of all adults to honor and support this as they work side-by-side.

When businesses interact with children it is important to instill a sense of hope and empowerment. Children and adults must remember problems are not resolved simply with the purchase of a product; but this can be a piece of a solution. One way to demonstrate respect for children and one’s responsibilities to help them grow is to go beyond service projects and fundraising to design service-learning opportunities.

Consideration of the K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice on pages 10-11 can help guide businesses in thinking strategically and creatively about how to connect with kids in positive ways that build on their interest and developmental needs to

|FIGURE 8| Why do you volunteer, help others, or give back to your community? |
|---|---|---|---|
|Among volunteers| 6-8 n=315| 9-12 n=501| 13-14 n=290|
|It makes me feel good inside| 73%| 75%| 73%|
|I have fun doing it| 63%| 60%| 59%|
|I want to make the world a better place| 57%| 62%| 57%|
|Someday I may need help myself| 40%| 43%| 39%|
|I get to meet new people| 41%| 39%| 40%|
|I get to learn new things and develop new skills| 36%| 39%| 35%|
|I get to be with my friends| 42%| 34%| 34%|
|It makes my parents happy| 40%| 35%| 32%|
|I am very interested in the issue or cause| 30%| 37%| 34%|

(30% Response Rate and Above Displayed)
help make their world a better place. Instead of giving funds to a particular cause, a business could create a fund for youth-led service-learning projects or create an advisory board of young people who, in the role of philanthropists, decide projects to fund. Criteria for funding could be based on the extent to which the applicant demonstrates the project meets one or more of the service-learning standards — address genuine community needs or include opportunities for reflection to ensure that both learning and service objectives are of high quality.

These are only some of the ways in which the new service-learning standards can be implemented to create engaging, positive opportunities for young people. Perhaps instead of the pictures of missing children on products that portray children as victims, there might be examples that portray kids as contributors addressing community needs. An avenue to support the growth of service-learning programs could involve building a network of service-learning providers, businesses, and children. This, in turn, could produce a societal paradigm shift we can all get excited about: one in which we see kids as an integral solution to creating a better world.

---

**FIGURE 9**
If companies or brands came up with new opportunities for you to help others and make a difference in the world, which of the following would make you most likely to participate?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>%</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>53%</td>
<td>The company or brand showed me how my involvement and help made a difference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td>There were lots of different ways to sign up (e.g., website, 1-800 number, in person sign up, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37%</td>
<td>There was more than one company or brand working together supporting the issue or cause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35%</td>
<td>The company or brand included something about the issue or cause in their product — that is, they changed their product in some way to include a tie-in to the issue or cause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35%</td>
<td>The company or brand tied an issue or cause to a popular product I already like anyway</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35%</td>
<td>The company or brand didn’t just stick an issue or cause on a product box but really made a long-term commitment to helping the issue or cause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32%</td>
<td>The company or brand didn’t tell me what to issue or cause to care about but gave me lots of options to choose from</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29%</td>
<td>The company or brand gave me something for my participation that I could show my friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19%</td>
<td>The company or brand put a lot of thought into the name of a new product or program that helped the issue or cause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Miscellaneous comments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7%</td>
<td>None of these</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n=1,334 Ages 9-14 (Participants offered multiple responses.)
REFERENCES


YMCA of the USA. (2004). The YMCA Service-Learning Guide: A Tool for Enriching the Member, the Participant, the YMCA, and the Community (2nd ed.). Chicago: YMCA.
Middle School Youths as Problem-Solvers

How do individuals acquire real-world, adaptive problem-solving skills? We know these skills are critical to the development of a new generation of effectively engaged citizens, workers, and leaders (Haste 2003; Search Institute 2007; Stanford Center on Adolescence 1999; Twenty First Century Skills 2006; Wheeler 2007). It is particularly important that this problem-solving be inclusive, deliberative, and collaborative. Yet we know relatively little about how problem-solving skills develop (Berti 2005; Covington 1987; Larsen and Hansen 2005).1

City Year has embarked upon research to fill this gap, to learn how to maximize its capacity to promote the development of real-world problem solving through its Young Heroes program. Young Heroes engages about one thousand middle school young people across the country each year in a five-month Saturday program of community issues education and hands-on community service.

The study focuses on middle school youths because this is when young people begin to develop the abstract cognitive capacities required to think about themselves in relation to “a larger unit, vague in its outline and yet immediate in its demands … ‘society’” (Erikson 1968, p. 128; Fischer and Bidell 2006; Youniss and Yates 1997; Kegan 1994). Strategic skills developed at this age may provide a “gateway” to expertise needed to be

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1 Strategic thinking requires the integration of knowledge and process skills to develop action alternatives for attaining a goal (Byrnes 2005; Covington 1987; Davidson 2003; Perkins 2001). Past studies have analyzed the sociopolitical knowledge of young adolescents (Berti 2005; Connell 1991; Furth 1980; Gallatin 1980; Greenstein 1965). There is also a wealth of research on the development of general problem solving processes in children and adolescents, most often based on their performance in solving fictional problems in a laboratory setting. However, there has been little research to learn how these come together as young people develop strategies for solving problems in the real world of their own schools and communities (Byrnes 2005; Covington 1987; Davidson 2003; De Lisi 1987; Dreher and Gerter 1987; Ericsson 2003; Larsen and Hansen 2005).
The taxonomy can inform educational efforts aimed at expanding young people’s strategic repertoires by offering a theoretical framework for considering the kinds of sociopolitical strategies they tend to construct, and the kinds of strategies we want to challenge them to learn more about. The taxonomy can facilitate reliable scoring of the data for future studies using quantitative statistical methods, including analysis of the impact of specific service-learning experiences on young people’s strategic repertoires.

**Research Design**

**SAMPLE**

This study is based on in-depth interviews completed by 91 diverse middle school young people (age 11-14) in Columbus, Ohio who participated in or requested information about the Young Heroes program. Sixty percent of the study participants receive free or reduced-price lunch at school. Forty percent do not. Sixty percent are girls; forty percent are boys. About half identified themselves as African-American, one fourth as Caucasian, ten percent as mixed race, two percent as Asian, and one percent as Latino. The remaining young people did not specify race or ethnicity.

**DATA COLLECTION METHODS**

Strategies analyzed for this study were suggested by young people during a “Self-in-Community” interview, adapted from the “Self-in-Relationship Interview” originally developed by Harter and Monsour (1992) and later adapted by Kennedy and Fischer (Kennedy 1994, 1995; Fischer and Kennedy 1997), which explores young people’s ideas about their close interpersonal relationships. The SIC interview goes beyond the realm of interpersonal relationships to explore young peoples’ ideas about their relationships with organized groups to which they belong (a team, club, or after school program), as well as their schools and communities.

The interview is highly structured, asking specific questions grounded in young people’s own experience. This includes what they like; what they wish was different in organized groups to which they belong; and what they wish was different in their schools and communities. The interview asks questions about their relationships with organized groups and how they wish to change things. The interview also asks questions about their schools and communities and how they wish to change things. The interview is highly structured, asking specific questions grounded in young people’s own experience. This includes what they like; what they wish was different in organized groups to which they belong; and what they wish was different in their schools and communities.

Effective agents of social and political change throughout youth and adulthood (Berti 2005; Larsen and Hansen 2005, p. 346).

The qualitative study presented here includes a taxonomy of strategies suggested by 91 middle school young people for changing things they wish were different in their schools and communities. Most commonly, study participants suggested “unilateral” (Loomer 1975, 14) or vertical strategies in which someone with power and influence does something directly to help, asks or tells others to do something, or instigates some formal institutional change to address the issue. While less common, some young people in the study also suggested “relational” (Loomer 1975, 20) or horizontal strategies critical to problem-solving across diverse groups in a multi-cultural society. Horizontal strategies suggested by middle schoolers included negotiation, compromise, and collaboration.

Skills developed at this age may provide a “gateway” to expertise needed to be effective agents of social and political change throughout youth and adulthood.
Data-driven categories of middle school students’ sociopolitical change strategies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31%</td>
<td>Direct Actions</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>Enhance social connection</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>Increase or redistribute resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17%</td>
<td>Change one’s own behavior (follow the rules, don’t litter, don’t instigate fights).</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>Be friendly, respectful, nice to others.</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>Enhance infrastructure (fix deteriorating school buildings or roads, build a new community center).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14%</td>
<td>Do something directly to help (stand up for victims, pick up litter, stop fights).</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>Organize, lead others in collective action (neighborhood clean up, a petition, a boycott).</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Donate money or materials.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29%</td>
<td>Directly influence the ideas and/or actions of others.</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Change formal social structures.</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Sell products or services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Voice my opinions, talk to others.</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Develop two-way, reciprocal relationships.</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Purchase products and services (buy things at a fundraiser, pay for participating in programs).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7%</td>
<td>Ask or tell others to do something.</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Make friends.</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Organize fundraising events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4%</td>
<td>Persuade others to do something.</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Get to know others.</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3%</td>
<td>Model the desired behavior (treat others respectfully, hoping others will notice and do the same).</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Collaborate, work as a team.</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3%</td>
<td>Make an impression (do well academically in order to enhance the reputation of the school).</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Enhance social cohesion (develop relationships, trust, reciprocity among many people).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Encourage or inspire others to do something.</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>Change formal social structures</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>Solicit ideas from others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Dialogue, negotiate, compromise.</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Change rules, rewards, or punishments.</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Ask others for thoughts, ideas, input.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Improve security.</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Listen to others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>Create or improve activities or opportunities (afterschool programs, opportunities for student voice).</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Generate ideas in a group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>Change the location or schedule of a program.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>Raise public awareness</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data-driven categories of middle school students’ strategies for making their organized groups, schools, and communities more like they want them to be, and the frequency with which each type of strategy was suggested as a percentage of all the strategies suggested in interviews with 91 young people. (N= 6,914 strategies)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Examples drawn from participant interviews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Transforming</strong></td>
<td>Strategies that involve changing one’s own ideas or behaviors to impact an issue directly (e.g. pick up trash, donate money, be respectful of others, break up fights).</td>
<td>“Donate money.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Treat everybody in my neighborhood like they’re my best friend.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other-Transforming</strong></td>
<td>Strategies aimed at affecting the ideas or behaviors of another individual or group...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive</td>
<td>Without doing anything to or with them (e.g. model the desired behavior, make a good impression);</td>
<td>“If you see one person doing it then you know ... that it's okay for them to do it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unilateral</td>
<td>Without consideration of the perspective of the other (e.g. ask or tell someone to do something);</td>
<td>“People that provoke fights, tell 'em to stop.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative</td>
<td>Taking into account another’s perspective to more effectively influence him/her to do as the actor wants (e.g. persuade someone to do something).</td>
<td>“Ask the school board that we need recess because the kids are too hyper after lunch and they won't listen.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative Self-Transforming</td>
<td>Strategies that involve learning the interests, needs, or perspectives of others to inform one’s own ideas and behaviors (e.g. Ask others for ideas, opinions, input).</td>
<td>“Try to listen to somebody else first. Then see how I can make it better.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual Transforming</td>
<td>Strategies which involve both parties changing their ideas or behaviors, co-constructed based on the interests, needs and perspectives of both (e.g. dialogue, negotiation, compromise; develop reciprocal relationships; mediate conflict).</td>
<td>“A couple of students get together with all the teachers and discuss what's going on in the school ... come to a compromise.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal System-Transforming</td>
<td>Strategies which involve the co-construction of ideas and/or changing collective behavior and social dynamics among many people or groups of people (e.g. generate ideas in a group; create informal social events; collaborate; enhance social cohesion; organize for collective action, such as a fundraiser or neighborhood cleanup; influence those with informal power to influence others; communicate through flyers, posters, lawn signs, or door-to-door canvassing).</td>
<td>“Have everybody meet in one place and have everybody do a community thing to help out all the senior citizens.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal System-Transforming</td>
<td>Strategies designed to change the rules or structure of formal systems (e.g. schools, clubs, community centers, churches, or government) which, in turn, affects the behaviors of those within the system and the political and social dynamics among them (e.g. change rules/rewards/punishments; change the curriculum; take on a formal leadership role; improve security; raise/redistribute taxes; find a corporate sponsor; communicate via newspapers, radio, television; change the pricing structure; improve infrastructure, such as school buildings and parks).</td>
<td>“Send 'em home if they're acting foolish ... because if we had better punishments, then they wouldn't do it again.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Do after school programs there and stuff like that so the little kids can stay out of trouble and stuff like that.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Lower the rent on the houses and lower the price on cars.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
groups, schools, and communities; what they and others already do to make these places better for all; and what it would take to change things they wish were different.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

A “grounded theory” (Strauss and Corbin 1998, 12) or “data-driven” (Boyatzis 1998, 41) approach and a “theory-driven” (Boyatzis 1998, 37) approach were combined in the qualitative analysis of study participants’ sociopolitical change strategies. First, a data-driven approach was used to identify patterns and themes that emerged among the strategies expressed by study participants in the interviews. This avoided constraining interpretation of the data to suit theoretical frameworks borrowed from other disciplines or other age groups, and allowed for a consideration of sociopolitical change from the perspective of middle school students themselves.

As categories and sub-categories of young people’s sociopolitical strategies that emerged in our data-driven analysis were refined, similarities among the sub-categories became apparent across several of these broader categories. (See Figure 1.)

Some strategies involved young people doing something directly to help. For example, if the school is littered, young people might pick up trash. If there are too many fights at school, young people stop instigating fights. If there are families in the neighborhood that are homeless, young people give them money to help buy a house. Other strategies involved getting other people to pick up trash, stop fighting, or donate money.

Still other strategies called for parties getting to know each other and negotiating or helping each other to the benefit of all involved. Other strategies across several categories involved many people in coming together to organize a neighborhood clean-up, a fundraising event, or to generate ideas. Finally, there were strategies that involved changing formal institutional structures, such as changing punishments for fighting to reduce the behavior or making sure there is more affordable housing in the neighborhood to reduce homelessness.

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**FIGURE 3**

**Strategies and Percent of Study Interviews**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Type</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self Transforming</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unilateral Other Transforming</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative Other Transforming</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive Other Transforming</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative Self Transforming</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual Transforming</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal System Transforming</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal System Transforming</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The percent of study participants that suggested each type of strategy at least once during interviews. (N=91 study participants.)
These new categories were helpful in considering fundamental strategic concepts that could be taught to help young people expand their strategic capacities across content areas, leading to the development of the taxonomy of strategies described in Figure 2. Data coded using the first data-driven coding scheme were reorganized into these new theory-driven categories.

Prevalence of Strategy Types
As shown in Figure 3, all or nearly all of the young people in this study suggested at least one active, self-transforming strategy (e.g. changing one’s own behavior, doing something directly to help), unilateral other-transforming strategy (e.g. asking others to do something), formal system-transforming strategy (e.g. changing rules, rewards or punishments), or informal system-transforming strategy (e.g. generating ideas in a group, organizing for collective action). Half or more of study participants suggested each of the other types of strategies at least once.

Figure 4 shows the prevalence of each strategy type as a percentage of all the strategies suggested by study participants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy Type</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self Transforming</td>
<td>2671</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unilateral Other Transforming</td>
<td>1471</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative Other Transforming</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passive Other Transforming</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative Self Transforming</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual Transforming</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal System Transforming</td>
<td>523</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal System Transforming</td>
<td>885</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The frequency with which each type of strategy was suggested by study participants, as a percent of all the strategies suggested by all participants. (N=6,914 suggested strategies.)
UNILATERAL SELF- AND OTHER-TRANSFORMING STRATEGIES

As a percentage of all the strategies study participants suggested, the most common by far were self-transforming strategies (44 percent) in which young people suggest changing their own behavior to directly affect an issue (e.g. pick up trash, not instigate fights, donate money). For example: “We have many different races on my block. Hispanics, and, you know, things like that. So I don’t treat anybody differently than what I would want to be treated …”

The second most commonly recommended strategies were unilateral, other-transforming strategies (24 percent), in which the actor tries to get others to change their ideas or behaviors by voicing his or her opinions or by asking or telling others to do something. For example: “People that provoke fights, tell ‘em to stop.”

The third most common strategies involved transforming formal institutional systems (14 percent). Common among these strategies were changing rules, rewards, and punishments; providing new extracurricular activities; and increasing security. For example: “… Do after school programs there and stuff like that so the little kids can stay out of trouble and stuff like that. They get help with their homework and stuff.”

The fourth most common type of strategies (8 percent) involved changing informal systems. Common among these were building teamwork or cooperation within a sports team or other organized group, organizing fundraising events, or organizing others for collective action (like a neighborhood cleanup). For example: “[What else do you think it would take to make more kids help out senior citizens?] … have everybody meet in one place and have everybody do a community thing to help out all the senior citizens and not let the senior citizens come to the meeting as a surprise for them.”

Another less-commonly suggested type of informal system-transforming strategy was bringing people together to generate ideas in a group. This involved people working together to construct goals and ways of achieving those goals, instead of the actor trying to get others to see or do things his or her way. For example: “You don’t have to have your own idea … you’ll get all of ‘em together, and say, ‘What could we do to help our community? What could we do?’ Then you give your idea, they give theirs, and when you have that idea that you just want, and you all agree with, you go with it like that.”

LESS COMMONLY SUGGESTED STRATEGIES

Passive other-transforming strategies were less common as a percentage of all strategies suggested (2 percent). Most of these strategies involved changing one’s own actions — working harder at school, for example, in the hope that doing so will encourage others to do the same. For example: “I shouldn’t like, like skip and stuff like that, like miss my classes … because I am a higher eighth grader, showing the sixth graders, it’s like fun to skip, you should skip too … next thing you know everybody’s out in the hallways skipping and that just gives a bad role.”

Strategies that were not suggested by all study participants were also less common as a percentage of all the strategies, including cooperative other-transforming strategies (3 percent); cooperative self-transforming strategies (2 percent); and mutual transforming strategies (3 percent). However, as discussed earlier, up to half of study participants suggested each of these types of strategies at least once.

Cooperative other-transforming strategies suggested by study participants (3 percent) took into consideration the wants, needs and/or perspectives of others in order to persuade them to do what the study participant wanted them to do. For example: “[What do you think is the best way to change the recess thing?] Talk to the school board. [And what would you talk to the
When you get to know another person, you won’t be like, ‘I don’t like her because that outfit she’s wearing is so lame.’ And then like, other people’ll be like, ‘Don’t talk to me like that!’ And get into this little fistfight or catfight. And then, like, it’ll stop arguments … it doesn’t reduce most fist-fights, but it reduces, like, not all of it but it does some of it. Just piece by piece until you get it all done. So it helps it out.”
To effectively inform programming that promotes the development of a full repertoire of social and political change strategies, further research is needed to learn how these repertoires are impacted by the experiences, challenges, and supports to which young people are exposed as they transition to adulthood. The study presented here offers a qualitative analysis of study participants’ change strategies. The taxonomy of strategies developed in this study will facilitate future research using a mix of quantitative and qualitative methods to measure differences in the strategic repertoires of young people growing up in different social contexts, and to explore pathways through which those differences emerge, including participation in a service-learning program.

Ultimately this future research can inform educational efforts to meet diverse young people where they are and help them expand their strategic repertoires to include strategies that are critical for affecting social and political change.

**Discussion and Implications**

All the strategies represented in the taxonomy are important for effective citizens and leaders to consider in their efforts to affect political and social change. There are a multitude of examples in which formal policies failed because policy-makers didn’t consider the need to build the specific relationships and broad-based social cohesion required to make those policies effective. Similarly, the impact of grassroots relational initiatives is sometimes limited by a failure to identify strategies for formal system change that could help leverage the impact and sustainability of their efforts.

Yet the strategies that were less commonly suggested by participants in this study are of particular importance for citizenship and leadership in the 21st century. Democracy in a multi-cultural age requires that citizens with diverse interests, values, and experiences come together to find common ground, to identify shared social and political goals, and to construct workable plans to achieve those goals (Search Institute 2007; Wheeler 2007; Youniss et al. 2002; Haste 2003; Stanford Center on Adolescence 1999). Achieving these goals requires cooperative, mutually transforming, and informal systems-changing strategies.

A Young Hero beautifies an outdoor play area in partnership with the Sustainable South Bronx in New York City.
REFERENCES


In the United States, many authors have written histories of service-learning with relatively few references to developments in other parts of the world. Yet service-learning is part of a worldwide educational reform effort. From the Mexican servicio social program to the vast student service programs of India, the peraj tutorial program in Israel to National Youth Service in Kenya, the development of youth service programs with educational content has grown exponentially in the last century, especially in Latin America (IANYS 2002; ICP 2007).

The following pages present a history of service-learning or aprendizaje-servicio in Latin America within the context of key developments in other parts of the world, recognizing both the external influences that have shaped its growth and the contributions that the many forms of aprendizaje-servicio have made to the greater service-learning movement.

Background on “Aprendizaje-Servicio”

International antecedents of the theory and practice of service-learning are numerous and arise from various cultural contexts. From a theoretical standpoint, service-learning in Latin America has been informed and inspired by the confluence of diverse theoretical influences from John Dewey to Paulo Freire, from constructivism to the theory of multiple intelligences (Tapia 2006).

Actual service-learning practices in this region have generally arisen from the interaction of innovative practices that were initiated by educational institutions and nongovernmental organizations. Furthermore, in each national context, educational policies have contributed to the legitimization, visibility, and strengthening of these practices — or, in some cases, to their discouragement.
Early Latin American Antecedents

The first significant manifestations of service-learning practice in Latin America can be found at the turn of the twentieth century with the diffusion of the “university extension movement,” which set the stage for the development of social activism in the field of higher education (Gortari 2004). In the context of the student revolt and subsequent university reforms born in Argentina at the Universidad de Córdoba in 1918, three central functions of the university were defined: instruction, investigation, and “extension.” While the majority of community projects that developed from the area of university extension service were not linked with formal academic content, the projects generally allowed for the application of curricular goals through the practice of professional internships. These opportunities to serve the community opened the door, in many cases, to projects that have since been described as service-learning.

Before delving further into this history, it is important to recognize that cultural and historical circumstances influence how service-learning is thought about in Latin America, and the words used to describe it (Tapia 2003). Often referred to as aprendizaje-servicio solidario, the idea of solidaridad is a key concept in Latin American service-learning. As a “pedagogical methodology whereby students develop solidaridad,” aprendizaje-servicio is meant to “serve a real need of the community, improve the quality of academic learning, and spur the formation of personal values and responsible citizenship,” but also strives to “overcome the usual power differentials established in the donor/recipient relationship, distancing itself from patterns of beneficence or patronage” (CLAYSS; Tapia 2003). This focus on working hand-in-hand for a common cause is a prevalent characteristic of service-learning in Latin America.

Another of the earliest developments in Latin American service-learning is the creation of “servicio social” in Mexican universities at the beginning of the twentieth century. Within the framework of the Mexican Revolution, the Constitution of 1910 established servicio social obligatorio or obligatory social service to be rendered by graduating university students. Beginning in 1945 university students were required to complete between 100 and 300 hours of social service before receiving a diploma, a requisite that is still in effect today (Gotari 2004). Although servicio social has experienced a number of challenges in its actual application and does not always generate service-learning projects in the strictest sense, it is nevertheless one of the most prominent antecedents of service-learning (SEP 2001; ANUIES 2000).

1 Aprendizaje-servicio is the term most commonly used for the theory and practices of service-learning. However, Brazil generally refers to this concept as voluntariado educativo (Faça P Arte 2007).

2 It is difficult to translate solidaridad into English. In terms of service, solidaridad (solidariedade in Brazil) means working together for a common cause, helping others in an organized and effective way, standing as a group or as a nation to defend one’s rights, facing natural disasters or economic crisis, and doing it hand in hand. Solidaridad is one of the values South Americans cherish most, and it is the common flag of both new and old volunteer organizations in our emerging civic societies (McBride et al. 2003). It means “serving together” more than “doing for others” (Tapia 2003).
Meanwhile, in other parts of the world, efforts were emerging that traced similar but unique paths to service-learning. In 1906, four years before the Constitution of Mexico sanctioned social service, William James — psychologist, philosopher and one of the inspirations of modern pacifism — published an article entitled, “The Moral Equivalent of War” (James 1906). While James condemned war and militarism, he also noted that obligatory military service allowed young people to develop values such as the desire to serve one’s country and a sense of belonging and cooperation. James postulated the creation of a “civil service” that would be the “moral equivalent” of military service and would provide an avenue for young people to feel empowered and inspired to contribute valuable services to society. James’ ideas heavily impacted the conscientious objector movement that spread after WWI, in Latin America and elsewhere, and inspired diverse forms of youth service and volunteerism — direct antecedents of service-learning (Eberly 1988; Eberly and Sher- raden 1990; Puig-Palos 2006).

Interestingly, the ideas that James outlines in his work were not limited to the Americas. These concepts were put into practice during the Second Boer War (1899-1902) by a 30-year-old Indian lawyer named Mohandas K. Gandhi. Living in South Africa during this era of conflict, Gandhi had already begun his first actions of passive resistance against Apartheid by refusing to participate in military action, instead organizing a fleet of ambulances and directing a division of the Red Cross (Fischer 1953). In the 1960s the influence of James and Gandhi converged in social movements that gave rise to service-learning.

**Youth Service Corps (1930-1969)**

Between 1930 and the early 1960s youth service corps conceptually related to James’ idea of “civil service” sprang up in many parts of the world and constituted another important category of service-learning antecedents. With varying degrees of curricular integration as well as other recognized elements of service-learning, many of these programs resulted in service-learning projects and created a culture of volunteerism which paved the way for the service-learning movement.

Among the oldest of these groups are the Civilian Conservation Corps, established by Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933 (Eberly 1988; Titlebaum et al. 2004), and Voluntary Service Overseas, which was founded in 1958 by Maura and Alec Dickson in Great Britain (VSO 2007). VSO was created around the same time as its national counterpart, Community Service Volunteers, which was the predominant volunteer organization in Great Britain and one of the first to drive service-learning in that country (CSV 2007).

The Dicksons were also instrumental in advising the administration of President John F. Kennedy in the organization of youth volunteer programs in the United States (NYLC 2007). The Peace Corps was created in 1961, and Volunteers in Service to America followed in 1964. Both organizations involve university students and recent graduates in working voluntarily for one or two years in international and domestic social programs (Eberly 1988; Wofford 1992).
As the Peace Corps began to take hold in the United States, Fidel Castro established *Brigadas de Alfabetización* [Literacy Brigades] in Cuba in 1960, a program in which more than 100,000 high school and university students were enrolled to serve as *alfabetizadores* [literacy educators] in rural communities (Gómez García 2005). Other youth corps sprung up in the Caribbean as well, such as the National Youth Service Corps Programme that was established in Jamaica in 1973 (NYS 2007). Amongst other youth service programs, the Corps Programme involves approximately 2,000 young people each year in a seven-month training program that includes a curriculum of work and life skills, as well as service activities (McCabe and Addys 2007).

The Caribbean experiences have much in common with the national youth service movement in Africa that arose in the 1960s. The corps of young people operated as alternatives or complements to military service, incorporating a combination of military discipline and community service activities. These programs facilitated the attainment of knowledge and its application, though in some cases these “battalions” also utilized youths to attain political objectives (Obadare 2005).

One of the oldest of these African youth service corps is the National Youth Service of Kenya. Implemented in 1964, one year after Kenya gained national independence, the NYS still gathers close to 2,000 young people annually, most of whom have abandoned formal education. The program provides young people with vocational training in schools and centers that they later apply in projects related to the National Development Plan (ICP 2008). This intersection between service and learning is demonstrated in other African youth service corps as well, such as those established in Nigeria and Ghana for university students in the 1970s (Tapia 2000; IANYS 2002, 2003; Obadare 2005), and
While reflecting international currents of interest, the birth of service-learning in Latin America is richly informed and adaptive to its own particular contexts, leading to an abundant variety of practices. While reflecting international currents of interest, the birth of service-learning in Latin America is richly informed and adaptive to its own particular contexts, leading to an abundant variety of practices. This is suggested in the immense range of terminology that is used to describe similar experiences, such as those that developed at the university level: *servicio social* in Mexico, *trabajo comunal* in Costa Rica, *experiencia semestral de practicas sociales* in Colombia, and many others (CLAYSS, 2002). Nevertheless, the term “service-learning” has become increasingly more common among specialists of the region.

Within individual Latin American countries, service-learning generally originated in the educational institutions themselves. Pioneer programs arose in higher education (Mexico, Costa Rica, and Colombia); secondary schools (Argentina, Chile, and Bolivia); and also in primary schools (Uruguay). These initial programs spurred the implementation of wide-ranging strategies of service-learning promotion with varying degrees of success. With its achievements and setbacks, Latin America’s mandatory service-learning requirements, incentive-based recognition programs, and the work of nongovernmental organizations and networks provide noteworthy models of service-learning practice and promotion.

especially the Tirelo Setshaba (National Service) program that was established in Botswana from 1980 to 2000 for middle school students in their last year of study (Eberly 1992; IANYS 2000).

In 1969, on the centenary of Gandhi, India’s Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports created the National Service Scheme. This student social service program is considered to be among the oldest continuously running programs with the largest participation in the world (Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports 2007). Through this two-year program, university students volunteer 120 hours of service each year in their local communities. The NSS partially finances the related travel expenses of the students and supports 14 training centers in distinct regions of India. Initially in collaboration with 37 universities, NSS now works with more than 175 universities and 7500 colleges, and has expanded to middle schools as well (IANYS, 2002; Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports 2007). While the focus of the program is community service, many of the resulting experiences could be considered service-learning because of the high educational content of the trainings.

**The Birth of Service-Learning and Strategies for Service-Learning Promotion in Latin America (1967-1997)**

Some of the earliest uses of the term “service-learning” date back to 1967 when William Ramsay, Robert Sigmon, and Michael Hart employed the term to describe a local development project led by students and teachers of the Oak Ridge Associated Universities in Tennessee. The expression was solidified in 1969 in Atlanta, Georgia, when a combination of city, state, and federal organizations sponsored the first service-learning conference. At this conference, service-learning was defined as the integration of the accomplishment of the tasks that meet human needs with conscious educational growth (Eberly 1988; Titlebaum et al. 2004).

While reflecting international currents of interest, the birth of service-learning in Latin America is richly informed and adaptive to its own particular contexts, leading to an abundant variety of practices. This is suggested in the immense range of terminology that is used to describe similar experiences, such as those that developed at the university level: *servicio social* in Mexico, *trabajo comunal* in Costa Rica, *experiencia semestral de practicas sociales* in Colombia, and many others (CLAYSS, 2002). Nevertheless, the term “service-learning” has become increasingly more common among specialists of the region.
Mandatory Service-Learning Requirements

During the 1970s Latin America and other parts of the world experienced an enormous increase in the growth of student social service programs and spontaneous “solidarity initiatives” developed by schools and universities, many of which were compulsory. One such program was instituted at the University of Costa Rica by a policy that mandated students to complete 300 hours of *trabajo communal* [communal work] before graduating from high school, and an additional 150 hours in order to obtain a university diploma (Gonzalez 1998). The close curricular integration and efficient multidisciplinary framework of the Costa Rican *Trabajo Comunal Universitario* enabled it to be one of the first clear-cut models of service-learning in the region.

The process of formalizing obligatory practices of student service in Latin America and the Caribbean accelerated after the late 1980s. In 1988 the Dominican Republic launched an extensive national forestry campaign to combat deforestation, requiring middle school students to complete 60 hours of forest-related service in order to graduate. Eventually, this requirement was extended to other social causes at the discretion of the schools and students.

Similarly in Nicaragua, the 1996 *Ley General del Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales* [Environment and Natural Resources Act] required secondary school students to complete 60 hours of ecological service in order to graduate, contributing to the expansion of student ecological brigades (Nicaragua 1996). Recently, this service requirement was rearticulated and incorporated into the National Literacy Campaign (Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deportes 2006). Student social service also became established as a requirement for secondary school graduation in El Salvador (1990), Colombia (1994), Panama (1995), and Venezuela (1999).

In addition to secondary school requirements, Venezuela also approved a compulsory service-learning measure in higher education with the *Ley del Servicio Comunitario Estudiantil* [Student Community Service Act]. The policy required all students to complete 120 hours of service through service-learning projects approved by the university. Projects under this new legislation were implemented for the first time in the second academic semester of 2007.

The mandatory service-learning requirements established throughout the 1980s and 1990s have had a wide range of impacts on educational systems, communities, and students alike. In some countries these policies were accompanied by specific orientation and training programs that encouraged the successful diffusion of community service initiatives. Yet in other cases, the mandatory service requirement became little more than a formal or bureaucratic regulation, failing to achieve effective implementation. In general, it could be said that the current cultural context of Latin America tends to reject these types of mandatory service-learning requirements when imposed by military or authoritarian governments, or when perceived as a means of using student projects to achieve specific political goals.
The Role of Nongovernmental Organizations

Although nongovernmental organizations often act in conjunction with formal government-sponsored initiatives, it is important to recognize the crucial role that these organizations have served in the promotion of student service and service-learning in Latin American schools.

One such example is Faça Parte, which promotes educational volunteerism in alliance with the Ministry of Education and local educational authorities through the distribution of training materials that aid in the development of educational solidarity projects in Brazil. Service-learning was introduced in primary schools in Uruguay by an initiative of the Centro del Voluntariado del Uruguay [Uruguay Center for Volunteerism], an organization that also promotes service-learning in secondary schools and institutions of higher education. Likewise, the first experiences of service-learning in Bolivia were promoted by the Centro Boliviano de Filantropía [Bolivian Center for Philanthropy] in its capital city of Santa Cruz de la Sierra.

Between 2004 and 2006 a program financed by the Inter-American Development Bank allowed for the establishment of a group of service-learning training specialists in Argentina, Bolivia and the Dominican Republic who worked with schools, youth organizations, and other informal educational contexts. Service-learning in Peru and Ecuador also spread through nongovernmental organizations and governmental bodies, in both cases with the assistance of CLAYSS — the Latin American Center for Service-Learning.

Nongovernmental organizations in Latin America also play a significant role in the diffusion of service-learning in higher education. Together with Faça Parte, Brazilian organizations that stand out in the field of service-learning in higher education are Universidade Solidária and Aliança Brasil Universitário. In Colombia, the organization Opción Colombia promotes university students’ completion of a six-month professional internship that includes elements of service-learning. More than 20 public and private universities offer academic credit to participants in this program with upwards of 4,000 university students having passed through this semestre servicio, which is carried out in rural and marginal zones of Columbia (Corporación Opción Colombia 2008).

Today this model is being replicated in other parts of Latin America through Opción Latinoamérica and other national versions of the program, such as Opción Venezuela.

Incentive-Based Recognition Programs

Service-learning in some Latin American countries has been promoted by a variety of incentive-based educational policies that were designed for its adaptation to diverse contexts. Argentina provides a noteworthy example, having developed an explicit national policy in 1996 to promote service-learning in the educational system without establishing mandatory requirements. The Premio Presidencial Escuelas Solidarias [Presidential Award for Service-Learning Schools], initiated in 2000, and the Premio Presidencial de Prácticas Solidarias en la Educación Superior [Presidential Award for Service-Learning in Higher Education], which were awarded for the first time in 2004, established policies of recognition and evaluation for institutions that take the initiative in developing solidario projects. The awards function as a tool to increase the visibility of service-learning, spread best practices, and promote replication.
Beyond the Presidential Awards, Argentina’s Ministry of Education develops materials and teacher trainings that support service-learning through the Programa Nacional Educación Solidaridad [National Service-Learning Educational Program]. The Programa collaborates with CLAYSS and the Organization of Iberoamerican States to organize an annual International Seminar on Service-Learning in Buenos Aires, Argentina. This seminar has served as a principal source for service-learning information in Latin America.

In 2000 Chile also began to promote service-learning through a national educational policy, Liceo para todas [High School for All]. The program aims to prevent high school dropouts and improve the quality of education by focusing on 424 of the most vulnerable high schools as defined by student academic performance and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Similar to Argentina’s Presidential Awards, Chile launched the Premio Bicentenario Escuelas Solidarias [Bicentennial Award for Service-Learning Schools] in 2004, bringing together secondary schools from across the country, both public and private. This award, which is granted annually by the Bicentenary Commission and the Ministry of Education, has three categories: service-learning, community solidaridad, and school solidaridad. Many Argentinean authorities and schools have been invited to these ceremonies, as prize-winning Chilean schools in turn have participated in the award ceremonies at Argentina’s 10th International Service-Learning Seminar of 2007. The award continues to serve as a tool of recognition and diffusion of service-learning practices and student community service in the Chilean educational system.

Since 2003 Brazil has presented the Selo Escola Solidária [Solidarity School Label], a recognition and accreditation given to elementary schools that develop activities and projects of student volunteerism (Faça Parte 2007). This biennial certification was awarded for the third time in 2007. Between 2003 and 2005, more than 18,000 schools were certified, representing both public and private institutions from every Brazilian state and academic grade level. This recognition, which prioritizes educational volunteerism, is administered in collaboration with the Ministry of Education of the Brazilian States and the Instituto Faça Parte, a nongovernmental organization founded in 2001 to promote a culture of volunteerism and stimulate youth participation.

Awards function as a tool to increase the visibility of service-learning, spread best practices, and promote replication.
In 2006, on the International Day of Volunteerism, the president of the Dominican Republic, Dr. Leonel Fernández Reyna, officially announced the creation of the *Premio Presidencial al Servicio Voluntario Juvenil* [the Presidential Award of Youth Volunteer Service]. This initiative was driven by Sirve Quisqueya, an alliance of governmental, nongovernmental, and international organizations that promote youth empowerment and service-learning in the Dominican Republic. Some of these leaders have also participated in the aforementioned International Seminars developed in Argentina.

Most recently, Uruguay also launched their *Premio Nacional de Escuelas Solidarias* [National Solidarity Schools Award] in 2007 for elementary and middle schools, promoted by the joint action of the *Centro de Voluntariado del Uruguay* and the Ministry of Education. The CVU had been developing teacher training and technical assistance programs for Uruguayan schools since 2002, with the assistance of Argentinean specialists.

**Collaborative Service-Learning Networks**

The impulse for service-learning in Latin America and the Caribbean in the last decade has been generated by informal networks of officials, social leaders, and academics. The necessity of engaging in more formal dialogues and collaborations to strengthen national efforts and generate more effective partnerships led to the conception of the Ibero-American Network of Service-Learning, founded in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on October 29, 2005.

The Ibero-American Network is currently composed of 30 organizations, universities, and government bodies from more than 15 countries in Latin America, the United States, and Spain. This includes governmental bodies, such as the *Programa Nacional Educación Solidaria* of the Argentinean Ministry of Education and its Chilean counterpart; nongovernmental organizations, such as Faça Parte and Alianza ONG; universities from many countries in Latin America; and also two regional bodies that have contributed to the promotion of service-learning: the Organización Iberoamericana para la Educación, la Ciencia y la Cultura and the Inter-American Development Bank. CLAYSS and the National Youth Leadership Council were elected to lead the Network.

The Network aims to remain open, respecting the identities of each member organization while encouraging shared growth. Building from preexisting networks and practices, members strive to find links, generate synergy, and provide follow-up to established commitments. The Network is also a place of learning, dialogue, and action that creates opportunities to develop and support service-learning. Among its principal objectives is to offer real responses to the necessities of Ibero-American education and promote participation in the spheres of civil society.

Since 2005 the Network has convened four times, three of those occurring in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and the other organized by NYLC at the 2007 *National Service-Learning Conference* in Albuquerque, New Mexico. As a way of concentrating the efforts of various sectors, service-learning networks like the Ibero-American network can provide a framework for collaborative action in the promotion of service-learning.

In addition to the Ibero-American Network, other networks in Latin America work to promote service-learning in higher education, such as Chile’s *Universidad Construye País*, [University Builds Country]. Founded in 2001, this network is composed of 14 Chilean universities that work to strengthen
and promote responsabilidad social universitaria [university social responsibility] within institutions of higher education.

Conclusion

This article paints a picture of the rich and varied history of Latin American service-learning in the context of key developments in the service-learning movement throughout the world. Yet to use such broad strokes to portray many unique experiences and practices does not capture “aprendizaje-servicio” in all of its forms and expressions.

Nevertheless, the trends, policies, and practices of this region are instrumental in the development and diffusion of service-learning around the world. Latin America’s focus on solidaridad, its rich history of service programs and policies, the abounding number of collaborative organizations and networks, and legitimization of service-learning through its incorporation in preschool and university classrooms alike, hold a special place within the worldwide service-learning movement.

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Quality standards for service-learning practices lead to quality outcomes for young people and their communities. Equally essential to quality growth are federal, state, and local policies. Supportive policies bring media attention, carry appropriations, and mandate accountability which — in turn — aids researchers in understanding student and community outcomes. Thus research, policy-making, and effective practice are all intimately connected.

In this section, several authors comment on the advances that have encouraged service-learning at the state and federal levels, assess current policy needs, and offer insights for the future. Twenty-five years after the founding of the National Youth Leadership Council, Stina Kielsmeier reviews the history of the organization and its role in advocating for effective service-learning policies in Minnesota and nationally.

Jon Schroeder, a former advisor to U.S. Senator Dave Durenberger (R-MN), who was instrumental in the design of the National and Community Service Act of 1990, situates service-learning amidst current education policy issues. Now, in a political environment that focuses heavily on the teaching of “core” subjects and on measuring student performance through standardized tests, he offers his thoughts on the continued importance of policy to foster service-learning practice.

Peter Levine, the director of the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement, discusses the key relationship between meaningful research on service-learning and effective public policy. Connecting these often-disconnected arenas, Levine details how research can inform the development of policy.

Finally, Thomas Leeper, research assistant at NYLC, reviews the status of service-learning policy initiatives in a sampling of states and offers insights into how stakeholders can situate advocacy efforts in other education legislation.
The ground covered in 25 years is impressive. Service-learning has moved from a few isolated classrooms to a national education movement that engages millions of students annually. Today the United States has many national service and service-learning organizations, a domestic service corps program, and federal funds earmarked to support schools engaged in service-learning.

Looking back at the legislation that has made these changes possible, many policies reflect the involvement of the National Youth Leadership Council. Since 1983 NYLC has actively promoted a service policy agenda that has shaped the direction of service-learning. “[We saw] the field literally grow up before our eyes in large part due to this policy work and its subsequent impact on growth in the field,” says Mark Langseth, former NYLC operations director and currently assistant vice president for development at Portland State University.

Origins

In 1984 NYLC convened the first meetings and conferences on service and service-learning in Minnesota. Unlike service movements in other parts of the country, NYLC advocated for a state model that encompassed school, campus, community-based, and full-time service spheres. This comprehensive approach, known as the Minnesota Youth Service Model, was designed to bring “community service opportunities to every young person growing up in the state from kindergarten through college, or for non-college bound young adults in a full-time service corps.”
Governor Rudy Perpich also appointed a Task Force on Youth Service and Work in 1985, the first of its kind nationally. A report issued by the state-appointed commission on service became the basis for later legislation. The efforts of MYSA paid off when the Minnesota State Legislature passed the resulting Minnesota Youth Development Act in 1987. This bill gave school districts levying power to generate local funding for service programs that engaged young people, teachers, and community members. State levying power was bolstered again through state legislation in 1989 and 1993.

NYLC’s work in Minnesota was paralleled by efforts in other states, particularly Massachusetts, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Vermont, and Washington. These early leaders came together in the first National Service-Learning Conference hosted by NYLC in 1989, with funding from the Kellogg Foundation. Together, this coalition helped push a national agenda.

This holistic model brought together a diverse coalition of organizations who, in 1985, formed the Minnesota Youth Service Association, chaired by NYLC President Jim Kielsmeier. MYSA was dedicated to providing an ethos of service where giving of one’s time and talents to meet the needs of the community would be a commonplace experience, available at every level of school and through the community.

The coalition developed a state service bill and, in the words of former NYLC publications director Rich Cairn, “relentlessly pounded the halls of the Minnesota Capitol to make sure that Minnesota students, teachers, youth workers, and communities got the resources they needed to create service-learning programs.”

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None of the national work would have succeeded without solid policy grounding at the state level.

National and Community Service Act of 1990

Federal politicians, including Minnesota Senator Dave Durenberger, noticed the work at the state level. “As the first Republican co-sponsor to the national legislation, the Senator’s main condition was that Senator Edward Kennedy and the others listen to what Minnesota’s experience had to say,” says Cairn. “I credit Jim [Kielsmeier] with upholding an unbending vision of quality service-learning and faith in young people and their teachers throughout the many policy struggles; it was this vision that caught Senator Durenberger’s imagination.”

The senators paid attention to Minnesota’s experience when they created the National and Community Service Act of 1990, which provided the first federal dollars for service-learning programs and established the Commission on National and Community Service. The Commission adopted the Minnesota Youth Service Model’s comprehensive approach of supporting four streams of service: service-learning programs for K-12 youths, secondary education service programs, full-time service youth corps, and national service demonstration models.

In 1993, with strong support by incoming President Bill Clinton, the National and Community Service Trust Act was passed and signed into law, transforming the Commission into the Corporation for National and Community Service. Senators Durenberger and Paul Wellstone from Minnesota joined Kennedy to support the legislation that created AmeriCorps, Senior Corps, and the Learn and Serve America programs. “None of the national work would have succeeded without solid policy grounding at the state level,” said Langseth.

Supporting Policy through Infrastructure

Since 1993 NYLC has centered its policy work on building infrastructure to support the federal programs. In particular, growth of the National Service-Learning Conference — from just 200 people representing a dozen states to nearly 3,000 participants from all 50 states — has been central to the service-learning movement, providing a platform for politicians and educators to rally around key programs and push a common agenda.
In the 1997 Presidents’ Summit for America’s Future, NYLC advocated that service be among the primary promises now adopted by Colin Powell’s America’s Promise Alliance. As a result, service policy achieved another pillar of support.

In addition to this policy work, NYLC has added depth to the field by leading the development of professional standards for service-learning: first in 1997 with the Essential Elements and again in 2007 with Principles of Effective Practice for K-12 Service-Learning. These principles have been vetted over the past year by professional groups nationwide, refining and translating them into the new K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice released on pages 10-11 in this volume of Growing to Greatness 2008. These standards, along with G2G, provide the substance and rationale for greater professionalism supporting service-learning practice, as well as guidelines for future research and policy development.

**THE NEXT 25 YEARS**

NYLC is committed to helping lead federal and state policy efforts by developing sound models and clear evidence, documented through G2G, over the organization’s next 25 years. It is currently participating in a national service-learning coalition to “present policy options on service-learning for the next president,” says Kielsmeier.

In particular, NYLC plans to help advance the global appeal of service-learning by developing an international version of G2G. It will expand its work through relationships with policy leaders in international organizations including the World Bank, Youth Service America’s Global Youth Service Day, the International Association of National Youth Service, Ibero-American Service-Learning Alliance, and Innovations in Civic Participation.

Kielsmeier sees future work focusing on “backing up claims for service-learning with solid research and good examples,” critical factors in advancing policy; adding, “In part, this is why NYLC launched G2G.”
NYLC 25-Year Milestones

1983
NYLC incorporates as a nonprofit organization established at the University of Minnesota.
NYLC founds National Youth Leadership Training, an intensive summer experience in diversity training and service-learning for high school youths.

1984
NYLC leads effort to develop a comprehensive Minnesota youth service model.
National Youth Leadership Camp network, NYLC’s first offshoot, launches programs in four states.

1985
NYLC leads 1,300-mile Mississippi River canoe expedition celebrating United Nations International Youth Year.

1987
Minnesota Youth Development Act, spearheaded by NYLC, passes, allowing school districts to levy for funding to support youth service. This is the nation’s first state-funded youth service initiative.

1988
NYLC hosts first Governor’s Youth Service Recognition celebration, an event that has been held every year since.

1989
NYLC hosts first National Service-Learning Conference at the University of Minnesota.
NYLC holds first National Service-Learning Teacher Institute.

1990
NYLC publishes “Growing Hope,” the first service-learning guide including field-tested curricula.
NYLC launches the National Service-Learning Initiative to address the growing needs of the service-learning field.

1991
NYLC helps write service-learning provision for National Community Service Act.
NYLC advises Clinton transition team on creation of Learn and Serve America grant program.

NYLC launches the Generator School Project, a national service-learning and education reform demonstration project.

NYLC offers first service-learning immersion summer school program, WalkAbout, through Minneapolis Public Schools.

NYLC launches National Service-Learning Exchange, a network of peer advisors.

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NYLC offers first service-learning immersion summer school program, WalkAbout, through Minneapolis Public Schools.

NYLC named technical assistance provider for Corporation for National and Community Service and launches K-12 National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, based at the University of Minnesota.

NYLC implements National Youth Leadership Training model in Kenya.

NYLC partners with Saint Paul Public Schools to develop district-wide service-learning program.

NYLC launches National Service-Learning Exchange, a network of peer advisors.

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NYLC leads development of the “Essential Elements,” the first nationally accepted standards for service-learning.


NYLC kicks off Growing to Greatness (G2G): The State of Service-Learning Project, which develops and publishes annual research reports.

NYLC, in collaboration with the National Service-Learning Partnership, launches Service-Emerging Leaders Initiative.

NYLC works with Project Ignition, a youth-led national teen driver safety initiative.

NYLC hosts first National Urban Institute on Service-Learning.

NYLC Summer WalkAbout program initiated in five Gulf Coast sites following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

NYLC offers first annual World Forum on Service-Learning.

NYLC partners with State Farm® on first National Teen Driver Safety Summit in Washington, D.C.
Experienced service-learning advocates and practitioners know the conditions that help ensure a successful service-learning program: engaged and well-prepared teachers, empowered and motivated students, planning time and resources, strong community connections, and meaningful approaches to reflection. All these conditions are essential.

But, how do we ensure such an infrastructure is sustained over time? How do we ensure they are not overwhelmed by organizational resistance to change — or stifled by rising pressures to produce easily reported gains on traditional measures of school and student success?

One critical answer is sound public policy that establishes and protects the central role of empowered educators and students, strong links to the community, and the authority in each school and classroom to use a variety of strategies to improve student learning and enhance civic responsibility.

Current Policy Issues

Because of the central role that state governments play in K-12 education, sound state policies on service-learning are critical. On page 98 Thomas Leeper lists a number of public policies that directly impact the growth and success of service-learning in states and districts around the country at the time of this publication.

But there’s also the “bigger picture” debate now going on among policy leaders, educators, and the general public — in Washington, D.C., in state capitals, and in communities all across America: the debate around school governance, accountability, and the importance of high-quality teaching.
This is not an idle discussion among academics or authors of the next required text in civics and government. Resolved correctly, each of these issues could significantly influence the viability of service-learning as a mainstream tool for improving student learning. Done wrong, these issues could significantly stall service-learning and dilute the progress that has already been made.

These issues and related initiatives will determine nothing less than: school-level autonomy and scale; how we measure school and student success; and how we define the qualifications needed to ensure high-quality teaching.

**SCHOOL AUTONOMY AND SCALE**

For most of the last century, the scale and governance of American public education became larger and more centralized. In many ways this was necessary and good. Economies of scale were produced that created new professional opportunities for teachers and administrators and broadened learning opportunities for students. Federal and state policies also expanded access for students from lower income families and students with disabilities. And states increased their financing and reduced inequities between areas with lower and higher concentrations of wealth.

After World War II, huge additions were made to the physical capacity of a system that was forced to absorb millions of new students in rapidly growing urban and suburban America. All these changes were accompanied by larger schools and districts and more direction and decisions made centrally.

This dominance of bigger and more centralized schooling began to change in the mid-1980s when the focus of policy-makers began to shift beyond access and capacity to results. We were told we were “A Nation at Risk.” And education policy leaders and practitioners began to wonder whether different kinds of learning strategies might make a difference. These included strategies that would empower educators to create — and parents to choose — new and different kinds of schools that would be more autonomous and could better meet the varying needs of students. A quid-pro-quo of this autonomy would be increased accountability for improved student learning.

Two decades later thousands of new, more autonomous public schools have been created by districts directly and through chartering and contracting. Most of these new schools are much smaller than their traditional counterparts. Many have opted to use service-learning and a variety of other innovative teaching and learning methods involving projects, technology, community partnerships, and other means of engaging and empowering both students and their teachers.

Charter schools have been the largest and most contentious evidence of a change from the historic trend toward larger scale and centralized control. As of the 2007-2008 school year approximately 4,100 charter schools are serving 1.2 million students in 40 states and the District of Columbia.

Because of the central role that state governments play in K-12 education, sound state policies on service-learning are critical.
This dramatic change in the historic trend toward larger and more centralized schooling has not been without controversy. And a number of important public policy issues—around achieving autonomy, adequate support, and uniformly high quality—remain unresolved. At the same time, having a greater degree of school-level autonomy can be a critical factor in launching and sustaining a strong service-learning program. So broader public policies around both school size and autonomy cannot be ignored.

**MEASURING SCHOOL AND STUDENT SUCCESS**

Parallel to policy changes allowing smaller, more autonomous public schools has been a strong push from policy-makers—and the general public—for increased accountability for results. All public schools now devote significant time and resources to measuring and reporting how well they’re doing—particularly on the basic literacy and math skills of their students. It is hard to argue against a goal of having all students proficient in math and reading, basic skills needed to succeed in education, in the workplace, and in life.

But controversy has arisen around questions like: How much of the school day should be devoted to preparing students for increasingly high-stakes tests? To what extent should high-stakes tests that rely primarily on temporary retention of a universally-determined set of facts be used to define school and student success in secondary-level subject areas like math, science, and history? And, of particular relevance to service-learning advocates: Does high-stakes dependence on such testing discourage strategies that motivate students to learn subject matter content and other workplace and life skills in non-traditional ways?

The key issue in this policy debate is not whether students need to learn basic skills or achieve high standards in traditional content areas. The issue is to what extent the measures used to determine school and student success also determine—or limit—how those skills and standards are acquired and met.

Central to addressing this challenge is good research that documents service-learning strategies and practices that are successful at engaging, motivating, and achieving high academic standards—such as the work of Growing to Greatness. Without such research, it is too easy for less-informed policy-makers, reporters, and the public to assume all students will respond equally to increasingly challenging content acquired through traditionally taught courses. The research documented over the past six years through G2G and the release of the K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice in this volume are important milestones in the growth of service-learning’s research base. (See pages 10-11.)

Also critical is expanding our expectations, particularly for secondary students, to include the skills and experiences they’ll need in college, in the workplace, and as active, engaged citizens. One focus of current work on such expectations is the Partnership for 21st Century Skills, a coalition of business and education leaders and policy-makers.

The Partnership’s early work has included development of a “Framework for 21st Century Learning” that includes a combination of expectations in traditional subjects. But the Framework also includes broader categories of 21st Century Skills: learning and innovation skills (including creativity, innovation, critical thinking, problem-solving, communications, and collaboration); information media and technology skills; and life and career skills (including flexibility and adaptability, initiative and self-direction, social and cross-cultural skills, productivity and accountability, and leadership and responsibility)—all skills fostered by the *real world* nature of service-learning.

**ENSURING HIGH-QUALITY TEACHING**

The first step in addressing school and student success is identification and codification of related skills and competencies for
teachers. Policy and authority for most teacher licensure and certification exists at the state level. But the federal No Child Left Behind law also includes expectations that states, districts, and public schools will place a higher priority on ensuring highly qualified teaching. To satisfy NCLB, highly qualified means a demonstration of competencies in one core academic subject area at a time.

It is hard to argue that American history teachers shouldn’t be competent in their subject area. The same is true of biology, mathematics, or other traditional subject areas. But what about the competencies required for facilitating student learning across multiple subject areas at the same time through service-learning projects? What about competencies for helping students acquire “21st Century Skills” (Furco 2007)?

There has been an effort in Minnesota to create an interdisciplinary teaching license to identify, codify, and enforce a different set of competencies for teachers working in innovative schools and programs, including those using service-learning. This recognition may alleviate teacher concern that they’ll eventually be deemed not highly qualified, threatening their professional status and their innovative schools and programs. (The June 2007 bill is available at www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/bin/bldbill.php?bill=S1772.0.html&session=ls85.)

Several promising national initiatives are underway. The Certificate of Excellence Program, sponsored by NYLC and the University of Wisconsin at River Falls, provides certification for practitioners who have demonstrated excellence in implementing service-learning in K-12 environments through submissions of portfolios measuring competencies in the eight service-learning standards. Drs. James and Pamela Toole (Compass Institute and the University of Minnesota) are working collaboratively with Shelley Billig (RMC Research), Terry Pickeral (National Center for Learning and Citizenship), and the emerging Service-Learning Providers’ Network to develop “Guidelines for Quality Service-Learning Professional Development.” (More information available at slprovidersnetwork.org.) “The Box,” a comprehensive training tool designed to standardize the delivery of service-learning training, was produced by the Ionia County School District in Michigan. The training modules were based on the Principles of Effective Practice for K-12 Service-Learning, the forerunner of the K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice on pages 10-11. (More information available by contacting dawagner@ioniaisd.org.)

In short, service-learning advocates and practitioners have a big stake in making sure teacher licensure keeps up with innovative teaching learning methods. Public policy must play a constructive role in making this transition to a broader definition of highly qualified teaching.

Conclusion

Public policy is not something service-learning advocates and practitioners can take for granted. Bad public policy can stifle — even eliminate — the opportunity to apply service-learning. But supportive public policies can both enhance and expand this method for improving student learning and producing the next generation of civically engaged and contributing adults.

Creating sound public policy around service-learning is the obligation of all levels of government that touch K-12 education: federal, state, and local. It’s essential that those on the front lines — particularly educators and students — both voice their opinions to policy-makers and make sure they are heard. Service-learning must not be considered just an interesting idea or a tolerated sideshow in the larger theater of change and improvement now being demanded of American public education.

REFERENCE

I joined the conversation about service-learning late, around 2001. Since then, I have been privileged to meet and learn from many leaders — scholars, educators, organizers, and advocates — who have devoted years of work to the movement. Their main strategy has been to build service-learning from the ground up, improving both the quality and the quantity of teaching by recruiting new teachers and scholars, evaluating programs, sharing good practices, refining measures, and exchanging ideas.

It has been an impressive effort. Already in February 2004, over 10 percent of all K-12 public school students and 28 percent of all K-12 public institutions were involved in some type of service-learning, reaching approximately 4.7 million K-12 students in 23,000 public schools (Scales and Roehlkepartain 2004).

The movement has also sought to institutionalize service-learning in law and public policy. Examples include high school graduation requirements of 75 service-learning hours in Maryland and 40 hours in Chicago Public Schools. In October 2007, the Maine State Board of Education also began requiring service-learning in social studies curricula for grades K-12. In addition, the federal government funds and supports service-learning through the Learn and Serve America program. (See three-year evaluation on pages 36-45.)

I believe that institutionalization is crucial if service-learning is to be more than a passing professional movement, like so many educational ideas that have come and gone. I also believe that the effort to institutionalize service-learning — despite some victories like the recent decision in Maine to incorporate...
service-learning community successfully fights back, winning some appropriations in each Congress, but only through strenuous effort. Over time, funding for the program has decreased when adjusted for inflation. If Learn and Serve America were part of the Education Department’s budget, it would represent .04 percent of the total appropriation for Fiscal Year 2008.

Through the National Center for Education Research, the Department of Education currently funds scholarly studies of 18 “topics,” none of which explicitly mentions service-learning or other forms of civic education. The only way to seek federal funding for research on service-learning today would be to hypothesize that it enhances non-civic outcomes, such as reading or classroom discipline, and to demonstrate those effects with randomized field studies.

The 2008 presidential campaign provides an opportunity to reconsider education policy. But community service and service-learning have so far played very limited roles in the campaign. On December 5, 2007, Senator Barack Obama proposed what I thought was an ambitious, $3.5 billion per year service agenda, including programs for K-12 students. The speech generated virtually no national press coverage and no mention in the primary debates.

**THE CURRENT DEBATE**

If we take a broader view, we may notice lawmakers and candidates rarely propose to support any specific forms of education. They rarely promise to improve educational inputs by, for example, requiring, funding, or rewarding service, extracurricular participation, student voice, or the arts. Issues of content and pedagogy are conspicuously absent from debate. Instead, political leaders at all levels emphasize outcomes, such as higher scores on reading and math tests. This seems to be the essence of No Child Left Behind.

The underlying reason is policy-makers do not trust public schools. Conservatives see them as bureaucratic, monopolistic, and godless. But liberals see them as unfair, corrupt, and repressive institutions. In fact, some of the authors and strongest supporters of NCLB are liberals and leaders of national civil rights organizations. They argue if schools are simply given resources or told to provide specific services or opportunities, the results will be unsatisfactory. If, for instance, the federal government tells schools they must provide service-learning opportunities, some schools will offer very ineffective, hollow versions of these programs. They say we instead need to hold schools accountable for measurable outcomes and allow them to develop their own strategies for meeting those goals.

Our goal is to raise the next generation of Americans in and for a just and humane democracy.
Institutionalization is crucial if service-learning is to be more than a passing professional movement.

The main policy debates today are about tests, teacher qualifications and rewards, vouchers and charters, and school funding. These are all ways of changing the incentives for educators and students. Ideas run the gamut from left to right, but none has anything to say about what teachers and students should do in the classroom. The mainstream debate is not about pedagogy, but about money and accountability. On those rare occasions when candidates do propose specific educational opportunities — such as Senator Obama’s service plan — these ideas are so far removed from the mainstream debate that reporters and rival campaigns are not apt to pay attention.

MISSING FROM THE DEBATE

The current focus on outcomes and incentives instead of inputs and opportunities disturbs me for several reasons. First, NCLB — unavoidably — selects a small list of outcomes: ones that can readily be measured in high-stakes exams. Those of us who also care about civic knowledge and habits, artistic development, foreign languages, and moral learning are faced with a dilemma. Either we demand tests in our favored areas (some of which aren’t very testable), or we try to smuggle our subjects into schools without testing them. The latter course is difficult when schools are struggling to get their students through the required exams.

Any quantitative assessment can miss subtle but important changes in the lives of young people that don’t show up in questionnaires. Quantitative measures are usually generic; they would apply anywhere. For example, we test students on their understanding of the U.S. Constitution, or we ask them about their interest in voting. These are generic questions. But a good service-learning project might have idiosyncratic results appropriate only for the local community in which it occurs. For example, students who clean up Tampa Bay might learn about the Bay, not about the U.S. Constitution. To learn about their own place is an achievement, but not one that would show up on generic evaluations.

A focus on outcomes also encourages us to think of children and teenagers as people who are prone to fail. We work hard to identify those most “at risk” and to intervene so they avoid clear marks of failure (i.e., bad test scores). As a result, we may set our sights too low, forgetting that thriving people need more than adequate grades. As Karen Pittman notes, “Adolescents who are merely problem-free are not fully prepared for their future” (Pittman 1991).

Besides, not everything we do in school should be measured by its effects on individual students. Some school activities ought to be intrinsically satisfying or meaningful because they benefit others, not just because they enhance students’ individual skills. Whatever skills schools may provide, they are also places where students spend some 18,000 hours of their lives. A school is a community, and communities ought to have news sources, discussions of their own issues and problems, and opportunities to serve. I would support student newspapers and other media, students’ discussions of local issues, and service programs even if they had no demonstrable impact on students’ skills or knowledge.

These activities should be done well. There is a big difference between a fine scholastic newspaper and a poor one. But the difference is not measured by the impact on reading scores. It has to do with the seriousness, breadth, and fairness of the coverage and the impact on students’ knowledge of
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their own community. Likewise, the quality of service projects has much to do with whether the service actually addresses problems, quite apart from whether the participants gain quantifiably verifiable skills and knowledge. In fact, quantitative evaluation may make students accountable for achieving targets that seem external or artificial to them.

Finally, deep distrust for institutions like schools is fundamentally unhealthy. It leads to simplistic, top-down, punitive solutions that fail to capture the energy and enthusiasm of our teachers, administrators, parents, activists, and students. In any case, this distrust is unjustified; most of our schools actually do pretty well considering their limited resources, the onerous demands and mandates they face, and all the social problems that we expect them to solve on their own.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

But there is a case to be made for accountability. Some of our children cannot read or understand basic math. About one third of all our young people do not complete high school by age 19. They are at great risk of failure in life. It makes some sense to try to identify these students, help them, and create sanctions for any educators (from classroom teachers to superintendents) who “leave them behind.”

I am much influenced by my own experience as a parent in the Washington, D.C., public school system. The D.C. schools spend about $13,000 per child each year — an amount that has risen rapidly as enrollment has declined — but only $5,355 is spent on teachers, classroom equipment, and other forms of instruction. Test scores, graduation rates, and other measures of success are among the lowest in the nation, and highly unequal by race and class.

Anyone who knows the system from the inside knows it is dysfunctional. I, for one, do not believe if the system were given a substantial budget for service-learning, the results would be impressive. I understand why national policy-makers, when asked what they will do to educate our least advantaged students, do not answer: “Provide opportunities.”

Their emphasis on outcomes reflects idealistic motives and a certain amount of research and data. Because some of the motives behind NCLB are very idealistic, good arguments and evidence may change the opinions of important people, such as the congressional leadership. We may be able to persuade them to support service-learning. But the kind of evidence we provide will have to change somewhat.

BUILDING A PERSUASIVE CASE

We know a small service-learning class, organized by a charismatic and dedicated teacher and provided in a favorable setting, has positive effects. That is not the question policy-makers ask when they consider whether to set aside millions of dollars for service-learning or build service-learning into state standards. They want to know the impact of a particular policy — such as a requirement or a funding stream, and they want to know how that policy compares to others.

Thus we need research conducted in standard educational settings that are subject to public policy — especially public schools — with some kind of comparison. We must at least compare the same students to them—

Some school activities ought to be intrinsically satisfying or meaningful because they benefit others, not just because they enhance students’ individual skills.
By giving students opportunities to collaborate, discuss, serve, create cultural products, and address significant issues, we can help them to thrive.

service-learning and the national education debate

the staff did not directly address pregnancy or school-related problems. Instead, young people in the program were enrolled in service projects and asked to discuss their work in classroom settings. The cost per student was a reasonable $500-$700 for a whole academic year (summaries in Eccles and Gootman 2002).

Students who work in community organizations have been observed to develop longer time horizons, greater cognitive complexity, and more psychological investment in projects. They develop “initiative,” or self-motivated attention that is sustained over time. Neither popular leisure activities nor standard school assignments typically develop “initiative” (Larson 2000).

These studies show specific service-learning programs work. But a policy is different from a program.

Service-Learning and Positive Youth Development

First, we might hypothesize that service-learning is good for young people.

The prevailing view is adolescents are at risk for academic failure, drug-abuse, and other pathologies. They therefore require surveillance, assessment, prevention, and — when necessary — remediation and discipline. But adolescents also have assets they can contribute to their communities: energy, idealism, creativity, and knowledge. By giving students opportunities to collaborate, discuss, serve, create cultural products, and address significant issues, we can help them to thrive (Lerner 2004).

EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS

Considerable evidence supports the link between community service and extracurricular participation, on one hand, and healthy development, on the other. For example:

- Analysis of a national longitudinal survey found service projects and participation in student government substantially increased the odds that students graduated from high school and college. Service experiences — when required as part of high school courses — seem to raise the odds of graduation from college by 22 percentage points. Involvement in student government between 1990 and 1992 increased the odds of being a college graduate by 2000 by nearly 18 percentage points (Dávila and Mora 2007).

- According to several evaluations by J.P. Allen et al., the Teen Outreach Program significantly reduced teen pregnancy, school suspension, and school failure. TOP was successful despite focusing “very little attention on the three target problem behavior outcomes.” In other words, the staff did not directly address pregnancy or school-related problems. Instead, young people in the program were enrolled in service projects and asked to discuss their work in classroom settings. The cost per student was a reasonable $500-$700 for a whole academic year (summaries in Eccles and Gootman 2002).

The need for longitudinal research

What would happen if we implemented policies to increase the scale of service-learning work? Learn and Serve America represents one such policy: it provides limited streams of federal money for service-learning. In their 1999 evaluation of Learn and Serve America, Alan Melchior, Larry Bailis, and colleagues found that the funded
programs had positive effects on students’ civic attitudes, habits of volunteering, and success in school (Center for Human Resources 1999).

However, their study was limited to “fully implemented” service-learning projects: ones that involved “substantial hours” of high quality service, “face-to-face experience with service recipients,” and opportunities for reflection. Out of 210 programs funded by Learn and Serve America that the evaluators had randomly selected for their study, only 17 programs (8 percent) met the criteria for being fully implemented, even though the rest would certainly call themselves service-learning and had won grants in a competitive process. If all 210 programs had been included, it is not clear the average effects of service-learning would have been positive.

Melchior and Bailis collected their data almost a decade ago. The field has progressed since then. In a smaller study published in 2005, Shelley Billig and her colleagues found average service-learning classes had slightly better civic outcomes than average social studies classes (Billig et al. 2005). Students who had been exposed to service-learning gained more knowledge of civics and government and felt more confident about their own civic skills, compared to a matched group of students who had taken conventional social studies classes. However, service-learning did not raise students’ sense of their own community attachment or their own ability to make a difference. In any case, these average results concealed very large differences between higher and lower quality service-learning. Some classes in Billig’s small study claiming to use service-learning produced notably poor results.

If a school superintendent asked me what the research shows about service-learning, I would say it supports creating a small competitive grant program and providing voluntary opportunities for teachers, such as seminars on how to organize a community-service project. The research does not, at this time, support allocating a lot of district money for service-learning or setting a high target for the rate of student participation.

In this respect, service-learning is different from social studies teaching. Standard social studies classes are much more common than service-learning programs and are probably distributed in a normal curve, such that classes of average quality are most common. We can tell from surveys and exam results that the average-quality classes have positive effects (Niemi and Junn 1998; Gimpel, Lay, and Schuknecht 2003). Thus I would advise a superintendent or a state official to mandate social studies classes for all students (while also trying to support or weed out the worst teachers and reward the best ones). I would regard service-learning differently — as something to be cherished and admired when it is done well, but not to be rapidly expanded.

It is not especially good news if the existing research does not support the case for ambitious policies. But that’s partly because we don’t have much research that is rigorous enough to persuade skeptics. Maybe more studies would reveal some particular categories of service-learning are so good they should be massively expanded, generously funded, or even mandated by law.

Those who participate in politics or community affairs or leadership roles at age 15 or 22 are much more likely to be involved at age 30 or 50.
Service-learning is good for young people. Service-learning is good for democracy.

**Service-Learning for Democracy**

My first hypothesis was that service-learning is good for young people. The second hypothesis is that **service-learning is good for democracy**. In an excellent democracy, all citizens have political agency, every citizen’s voice counts, and diverse citizens deliberate together before they act politically. In an excellent democracy, we tap everyone’s energies, talents, and ideas to define and address social problems.

To be sure, many policy-makers do not care about “democracy” in an authentic and just sense. They benefit from a system with narrow public participation. Yet some political leaders do seek social justice, diversity, deliberation, and equality. That does not guarantee, however, that they favor service-learning. They have alternatives, such as voter mobilization, media campaigns, door-to-door canvassing, and even social studies classes.

**Youth Civic Engagement Builds Democratic Participation**

The evidence is strong that we need to focus on young people if we want to strengthen citizen participation in our democracy. Very few educational programs have been found to have lasting impact on adults, but specific interventions aimed at young people have been found to matter. James Youniss and Daniel Hart have summarized more than a dozen longitudinal studies that follow young people into adulthood and repeatedly ask questions about their civic engagement and values (Youniss and Hart 2002). The basic pattern is consistent: those who participate in politics or community affairs or leadership roles at age 15 or 22 are much more likely to be involved at age 30 or 50.

Probably the longest study is by Kent Jennings; it finds a relationship between participation in high school groups in 1965 and participation in community groups by the same people in the 1990s (Jennings and Stocker 2001).

In short, youth civic engagement builds democratic participation — but does **service-learning** in ordinary schools make a lasting difference in students’ civic knowledge, commitment, and skills?

**Quality Service-Learning and Democracy**

A recent study in the Chicago Public Schools found service-learning had substantial positive effects on students’ civic commitments. The authors, Joseph Kahne and Susan Sporte, ask us to consider a Chicago student who is average with respect to demographics and who receives curricular and extracurricular opportunities that are average for the Chicago Public Schools. “Imagine further that this student comes from a family where his/her parents rarely discuss politics or current events and from a neighborhood where there is little social capital — in fact assume that this student is only at the 16th percentile in both of these variables. If this student experienced opportunities to learn about civics and to participate in service-learning at the sample mean in this study, his or her commitment to civic participation would be at about the 40th percentile. If, however, the same student experienced opportunities to learn about civics and to participate in service-learning at the system average, then, despite the lack of focus on these issues in the students’ neighborhood and home, the student would be expected to develop civic commitments that would place him/her well above average — in fact at about the 70th percentile” (Kahne and Sporte, under review).
This is an important study and a model of the kind of research we need more of if we are to persuade decision-makers that service-learning really enhances youth civic and political participation. The method is longitudinal and comparative and the setting is a large public school system. We need more of that kind of research, and we need especially to ask:

- What kinds of political participation does service-learning encourage?
- How does it compare to other educational opportunities, such as social studies classes, student journalism, or political organizing by young people?
- How lasting are the effects?

In addressing these questions, proponents of service-learning have grounds for optimism. Service-learning may have lasting effects on adolescents’ political identities — their sense of their own efficacy and responsibility for public problems. Positive change seems most likely when young people have choices about issues and approaches, when they directly experience issues and situations in their communities, and when they have opportunities for serious reflection (Youniss and Yates, 1997).

**DIVERSE APPROACHES TO EDUCATING FOR DEMOCRACY**

Yet we should worry about potential drawbacks of service-learning versus other active approaches to teaching democracy. Nina Eliasoph has argued that when Americans of any age gather for voluntary service, they tend to suppress diagnoses of social problems that might be controversial or that might require political responses (Eliasoph 1998). Likewise, Diana Mutz finds voluntary groups often hang together by suppressing disagreements (Mutz 2006). In Eliasoph’s phrase, Americans who see themselves as volunteers often “avoid politics.” This problem may be worse in public school settings, where there is already a norm against explicit ideological and partisan discourse.

Direct and voluntary grassroots service is sometimes an appropriate response to a social problem — but it is not always the best response. Sometimes citizens are right to engage in partisan politics; to organize protests, boycotts, and civil disobedience; to employ sophisticated research to analyze an issue; or to promote controversial positions through the mass media. In principle, students involved in service-learning are able to choose any of these approaches. In practice, however, I suspect they are unlikely to engage with elections and campaigns, to organize protests, or to spend their time creating news and entertainment media. Other approaches to teaching democracy are more likely to encourage such responses. Thus, if we really want youth to address social issues in ways they freely and responsibly choose, we may need to offer a wider array of opportunities than service-learning alone.

Some of these opportunities — for example, partisan politics — do not fit comfortably in a public school setting. However, in a conventional social studies class, one can at least study the role of parties, interest groups, and ideological conflict. In a role-playing game modeled on a political campaign or a legislative session, one can think politically. And while covering local issues for a school newspaper or youth website, one can closely observe adults using a variety of strategies for social change. Thus I would advocate a broad and diverse approach to democratic education, not service-learning alone.

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1 Morgan and Streb (2001) find that the degree of youth voice in service-learning programs (as reported by youth in questionnaires) correlates with their attentiveness to politics and commitment to social change. This result suggests that voice is a key component of service-learning, although the direction of causality is not completely clear: perhaps politically active students demand more voice in service-learning.
Service-learning at its best crosses the lines between schools and communities and reflects a more inclusive definition of “education.”

The Purpose of Service-Learning

In arguing the need to develop evidence that will impress policy-makers, I have been talking as if our task is to accommodate ourselves to political reality. Indeed, we have a responsibility to engage with politics and policy-makers, but we need not surrender to their conventional thinking.

Service-learning, like all good civic education, provides opportunities to reform politics and public institutions. Teaching students to admire a flawed system is mere propaganda. If we try to enhance students’ interest in politics but leave our institutions unchanged, we are setting them up for disappointment and alienation. But we will fail in reforming the political system unless we have a new generation of citizens who are concerned, active, and informed. Civic education and political reform must go hand-in-hand. We must prepare students for citizenship but also improve democracy for citizens.

In the Progressive Era, great reformers like Jane Addams, John Dewey, and their followers invented many important opportunities for students to learn civic skills. This was the period when student newspapers, student governments, and service clubs were invented. But the same reformers who fought to give students opportunities to participate also tried to change big social institutions. Once the social reform movement ran out of steam, the Progressive educational methods became ways to accommodate young people to the existing political system.

Positive Youth Development

Service-learning, at its best, provides alternatives to politics as we know it. It exemplifies a kind of politics that is in desperately short supply today. In general, we treat young people as problems or potential problems. But service-learning embodies the alternative approach of positive youth development. In general, we see education as the job of teachers and principals in schools. It’s a specialized task to be measured by experts. Success then boils down to passing tests. But education should be a community-wide function, the process by which a whole community chooses and transmits to the next generation appropriate values, traditions, skills, practices, and cultural norms. Service-learning at its best crosses the lines between schools and communities and reflects a more inclusive definition of “education.”

Citizen-Centered Politics

In general, our politics is state-centered. Liberals want the government to accept new tasks, such as health insurance; whereas conservatives believe problems would be mitigated if the state were reduced. Governments are important, but they are not the only institutions that matter. Furthermore, a state-centered view of politics leaves citizens little to do but inform themselves and vote. Service-learning at its best epitomizes a “citizen-centered” politics in which people form relationships with peers, express their interests and listen to others, and then use a range of strategies, some having little to do with the state (Gibson 2007).

In general, our politics is manipulative. Experts — politicians, pundits, consultants, marketers, leaders of advocacy groups, and the like — study us, poll us, focus-group us, and assign us to gerrymandered electoral districts. They slice-and-dice us; then send us tailored messages designed to encourage us — or scare us — into acting just how they want. This is true of liberal politicians as well as conservative ones. It is true of public interest lobbies as well as business lobbies. It is true of big nonprofits as well as political parties. Americans know they are being
manipulated, and they resent it. They want to be able to decide for themselves what is important, what should be done, and then act in common to address their problems. They are interested in what other people think; they want to get out of what students call their “bubbles.” They want an open-ended, citizen-centered politics in which the outcomes are not predetermined by professionals (Kiesa et al. 2007).

Service-learning, at its best, is open-ended politics. We don’t try to manipulate our students or neighbors into adopting opinions or solutions we think are right — or at least, we shouldn’t. We give them opportunities to deliberate and reflect and then act in ways that seem best to them. In a time of increasingly sophisticated manipulative politics, these opportunities are precious.

I have argued that we are obligated to engage the national debate. Tougher measurement, evaluation, and research would make us more effective. But research is only a tool, not our goal. Service-learning is only a tool, not our goal. Our goal is to raise the next generation of Americans in and for a just and humane democracy.

REFERENCES


The passage of the National and Community Service Act in 1990, with bipartisan initiation and support, represents a definitive moment in service-learning history wherein the federal government expressed its support for a range of volunteer, service, and service-learning programs. This visionary legislation continues to be an anchor for service-learning practice nationwide.

The Corporation for National and Community Service defined service-learning as:

“a method under which students or participants learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that is conducted in and meets the needs of a community; is coordinated with an elementary school, secondary school, institution of higher education, or community service program, and with the community; and helps foster civic responsibility; and that is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students, or the educational components of the community service program in which the participants are enrolled; and provides structured time for the students or participants to reflect on the service experience” (42 U.S. Code 12511).

This definition reflects the work of stakeholders and continues to influence how projects measure up against a service-learning ideal. The K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice released in this volume reflect the adaptation of this definition as applied to effective practice.

The impact of CNCS is clear. Learn and Serve America — the K-12 grant-making arm of CNCS — annually invests approximately $40 million in service-learning. Each year between one and two million young people participate in service-learning programs.
Florida is a good example of how the SEA infrastructure can be used to move state policy. Florida Learn and Serve, without legislative initiation, has been able to develop 4 Practical Resources for Linking Service-Learning and the Florida Sunshine State Standards, a 250-page document on how service-learning can be meaningfully incorporated into the state’s academic content standards at all grade levels (Florida Learn and Serve 2006). Even though this document has not become state policy, it offers a future state legislature a prewritten policy that could be incorporated into current statute or regulatory code.

The most visible advancements of service-learning policy have come in the form of state- or district-level service mandates. Some states have taken an hours-based or project-based service requirement as the most direct way to universally engage young people in service-learning. Others offer high school credit for community service. Connecticut offers credit for 50+ hours of service if supervised by a teacher or school administrator and involving 10 hours of related classroom instruction (Conn. Gen. Stat. §10-221a).

Data collected for Education Week’s annual Quality Counts 2008 show academic content standards in general are an area of policy deficiency, particularly in social studies. Only 12 states have social studies assessments that are tied to content standards and only two states have clear, fully-developed standards in social studies for all grade levels (EdWeek 2008). One success story in 2007 is the state of Maine, which recently added service-learning as a means of satisfying content standards for application of preK-12 social studies learning.1

The most recent source of comprehensive state-by-state data is the 2001 “Institutionalized Service-Learning in the 50 States,” published by the Education Commission of the States. It states, “Twenty-three states had no mention of service-learning in any state policy,” but nearly all of these states did receive funding from CNCS and have thus been able to implement limited service-learning practice without state-level statutory support. Most other states mention service-learning in administrative codes or regulations and sometimes in legislated statutes (ECS 2001). Six states named service-learning in their state standards (ECS 2001).

Unfortunately, uneven policy initiatives across the country have made measuring, reporting on, and encouraging growth a significant challenge for both practitioners and stakeholders. No current research has assessed policy-making on service-learning in the states.

Still, the original decision by Congress to yield control over the allocation of funds to State Education Agencies has been critical to sustaining and expanding service-learning. SEAs can serve as catalysts, in partnership with other local stakeholders, to leverage local support for service-learning. Each state’s SEA can be a persistent and positive voice for service-learning and the central resource for expanding programs.

Maryland remains the only state to have mandated service. Since 1992 a 75-hour graduation requirement has been in place, but statutes allow for local decision-making to determine alternatives to the state requirement (Maryland 2003). Iowa, since 2003, has left the decision to require service-learning to the districts themselves.

At the local level, a number of districts in other states have adopted formal requirements. Chicago Public Schools piloted a program in 2002-2003 and now requires that all students complete 40 hours of service-learning to graduate and that sophomores complete 20 hours of service to move up to the next grade level (Chicago 2002). As of 2002 Philadelphia public schools added the completion of a multidisciplinary or service-learning project as a graduation requirement (Philadelphia 2005).

In 1999 the Los Angeles Unified School District began requiring high school students to complete a service-learning project in order to graduate with no hour requirement set; the district further encouraged service-learning at all other grade levels (Los Angeles 2003). The 2007 graduating class was the first to complete the district’s service-learning requirement. In preparation for meeting this requirement, the district’s American history and civics teachers were trained in service-learning by regional service-learning network leaders.

Continuing the Vision of Service
In an environment where graduation rates, test scores, and competency in academic standards are increasingly the only cited measures of student success, service-learning should be seen as an integral means of satisfying and accomplishing these objectives. But obligating students to do something can meet with resistance. Mandating districts to enforce a statewide requirement can be seen as a violation of local control, particularly when the responsibility of financing new programs falls to the district level.

However, it is important to recognize the distinction between two types of mandates: one that obligates individual students to complete service for graduation or credit and another that merely obligates schools to provide opportunities for service. Both policy models encourage service-learning, but the latter may find broader support. Maryland and the districts mentioned have chosen the former option. Other states, like New Mexico, have chosen the latter. The New Mexico plan requires districts to provide opportunities to perform service-learning and — as part of the comprehensive New Mexico Blueprint for Civic Engagement — offers incentives to young people who perform service (New Mexico 2006).

State policies, such as the bill signed by Massachusetts Governor Deval Patrick in November 2007 that created the Commonwealth Corps, lay the foundation for community-based serving. The mission of the corps is to engage residents of all ages and backgrounds in direct service to rebuild communities.

The common theme heard from State Educations Agencies in compiling the state profiles for Growing to Greatness 2008 was concern over lack of state funding to ensure the sustainability of programs funded by Learn and Serve America and of service-learning in general. In many states, no appropriations are available to monitor programs, coordinate and network activities statewide, or provide professional development and training to practitioners.

To help move state-level advocacy work forward, NYLC and the Education Commission of the States have prepared a checklist that can be used to assess how supportive a policy environment is for service-learning and to provide an outline of where there is room for growth. (See Figure 1.)
**FIGURE 1**

**State Service-Learning Policy Checklist**

The following list offers areas for potential support of service-learning at the state level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards and Accountability</th>
<th>State adopts and publicizes service-learning definitions and standards that are based in research and applied from kindergarten through high school graduation.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Service-learning practice is recognized as a component of school accountability and improvement processes that are measured and recorded annually.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>State education agency collects data that reports the scope, scale, and impact of student participation in service-learning and positive youth development.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Official transcripts reflect student participation in classroom-based and co-curricular service-learning and civic engagement.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Curriculum and Instruction**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>State supports service-learning as a teaching and learning method for student academic achievement, civic development, social-emotional learning, and career development that aligns with state standards.</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State supports capstone service-learning project requirements at key transition points — elementary, middle, and high school — that align with state standards.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>State creates a clearinghouse of service-learning curricula aligned with state standards.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>State maximizes federal service-learning funds by supporting quality programs that are standards-based, focused on student achievement, and monitored to improve practice.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>State encourages private funding sources to support service-learning programs through matching grant programs.</td>
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**Professional Development**

<table>
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<th>State supports quality practice by benchmarking and measuring service-learning knowledge and skills as elements of K-12 licensure.</th>
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<td></td>
<td>State supports teachers participating in professional learning communities on improving service-learning practice based in Standards for K-12 Service-Learning.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>State creates incentives for pre-service and in-service professional development programs for teachers and administrators through service-learning trainings and within content area-specific trainings.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>State higher education community supports Department of Education in providing continuing education credits in service-learning for teachers.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>State ensures that community partners and other stakeholders are included in professional development, to foster collaboration and ensure quality practice.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: The National Youth Leadership Council and the Education Commission of the States

**REFERENCES**


In this volume of *Growing to Greatness*, we profile service-learning in 23 states and the District of Columbia. The remaining states and territories will be profiled in subsequent years. We will present a profile of each state every three years as a systematic ongoing documentation of each state’s service-learning activities, tracking themes and trends as they emerge over time.

Each profile began by interviewing the state educational agency responsible for managing the state’s Learn and Serve America program, the federal program providing funding for service-learning. While most states coordinate these funds through their departments of education, others have delegated this responsibility to a state university or a governor’s Commission on National and Community Service.

This year’s collection of profiles presents a variety of approaches that states are taking to encourage, support, and sustain service-learning in their schools and communities. Our focus is at the state-level; we present how service-learning is becoming integrated into related state efforts, often as a key implementation strategy. In this way we hope to encourage alignment of the common interests shared by service-learning practitioners of service-learning and those in related areas including work readiness, character education, afterschool, and 21st Century Schools initiatives.

While there is currently no way to capture national and state level data on the extent of service-learning beyond that funded by Learn and Serve, it is increasingly apparent that this important federal program has done much to create the scaffold upon which additional programs have developed. For example, many state educational...
Growing to Greatness 2008

We hope to encourage alignment of the common interests shared by service-learning practitioners and practitioners in related areas.

agencies arrange for statewide conferences and trainings that include a wider group than simply those currently funded through Learn and Serve. Such state-level efforts to build communities of service-learning practitioners, policy-makers, and participants are presented in the profiles in sections titled “Convening and Celebrating,” and “Building Networks of Support.”

In this collection of profiles we found that several states have collected data about the prevalence and quality of service-learning through statewide surveys of school administrators. Massachusetts, Michigan, and Missouri are among the states deserving particular recognition for their efforts. These and similar efforts in other states are captured under the heading “Evaluating Progress.”

Another trend is toward including service-learning in state K-12 learning standards. Some states, including Arizona and Florida, have developed detailed guidelines showing educators how service-learning can be utilized to meet existing content standards. Maine, in contrast, has included service-learning experiences that meet specific criteria directly in their social studies content standards for each grade span. These and other state policies focused on service-learning are captured in the profiles under “Support Through Policy.”

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
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<tr>
<td>Alabama</td>
<td>Sherry Coleman</td>
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<td>Alaska</td>
<td>Margy Hughes</td>
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<td>Arizona</td>
<td>Stephanie Hahn</td>
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<td>Massachusetts</td>
<td>Kristen McKinnon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michigan</td>
<td>Angelia D. Salas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Minnesota</td>
<td>Michelle Kamenov</td>
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</tbody>
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Building Networks of Support

Service-learning in Alabama can be found in formal and informal education, and from pre-kindergarten through graduate school. Service-learning is a key implementation strategy for the state’s Environmental Education Association. Higher education institutions have implemented service-learning in many contexts, and held the first conference for service-learning in higher education in October 2007. The University of Alabama convened representatives from 22 campuses to share and learn about service-learning.

Various state-level entities — including 21st Century Schools, School Improvement, Community Education, Dependent Care Grants, Gifted and Talented, and the federally funded Title programs — are collaborating to include service-learning at statewide conferences and trainings. In September 2007 the first joint two-day training of 100 teachers and administrators was held as a collaboration of the State Offices of Learn and Serve America, Community Education, and 21st Century Schools. In March 2008 a larger conference with expected participation of 500 will convene for a four-day training.

A state-level Increasing the Graduation Rate Work Group gathered in December 2007 to present a series of informational meetings statewide to school administrators. The six meetings will present service-learning as an implementation strategy to address goals set forth in Title One and Title Two. These include provisions for professional development that address the achievement gap and further the objectives of Career and Technical Education.

Support Through Policy

The Alabama Board of Education includes service-learning as one of several strategies to implement the new Alabama Course of Study eighth-grade social studies standards. Locally, several Alabama school districts require a certain number of hours of volunteer service for graduation. Local programs also take responsibility for partnership development and recognition of outstanding contributions. Increasingly service-learning in Alabama is seen as a way to realize the goals of No Child Left Behind to improve the graduation rate and increase attendance.

Improving Sustainability

The Alabama Department of Education emphasizes that service-learning can become a sustainable and effective teaching method. The state Learn and Serve office provides training on grant writing for current Learn and Serve grantees, which has enabled four of the state’s sixteen current subgrantees to secure private funding. The Learn and Serve office helps subgrantees identify ways that service-learning can leverage federal funds for a range of programs. For example, 21st Century Community Learning Centers have provided funding for Learn and Serve grantees in order to help them sustain their programs.
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At the Academy for Academics and Arts, a fine arts magnet school in Huntsville, service-learning gives students a chance to share their talents and bring art to the community. With the arts at the heart of the curriculum, the K-8 school engages students in service opportunities that showcase performances, including choral, dance, and theater groups. Students have performed at a variety of venues, ranging from the inauguration of the mayor and the governor to appearing at other schools that are rewarding their classes for academic achievement.

“This is year 29 for me as a teacher, but I feel like it’s year one or two. Service-learning is just that energizing,” says service-learning coordinator Sheree Humphries. Recently the fifth-grade students hosted seniors at a luncheon, complete with a choral performance, craft activities, and snacks prepared by the students. To raise money for HIV/AIDS organizations, a school dance group hosted a “Dance for a Cause” event. The students were active in organizing the fundraiser: They prepared the meal with help from local restaurant staff, designed a presentation on the AIDS epidemic, and performed a dance for the audience.

The students also have been involved in other kinds of service-learning projects — starting a clothing shelf at the community center and creating a civil rights memorial garden on school property. Humphries remarked on how empowering service-learning has been for her students who are allowed to put their ideas into action. As she says, service-learning can be like “hanging on to the back bumper of a car with all your might once the kids get started.”

The school hosts eight projects annually and is funded through Learn and Serve. Humphries manages the school’s grant and provides resources and training to teachers interested in service-learning.

Subgrantees support training and long-term capacity building for service-learning in other ways. Each month Learn and Serve presents at least one school or school district service-learning workshop. Learn and Serve subgrantees play key roles in these presentations, including helping promote models of successful implementation.

Evaluating Progress

Through 2007 there has been no measure of how many young people in Alabama are engaged in service-learning. However, this may change as the state moves to include a question on service-learning in their required school survey. Because of the potential for variability in how service-learning is defined, follow-up to further understand the nature and quality level of service-learning is planned as a way to properly interpret the findings.

For more information contact the Alabama State Department of Education.

“This is year 29 for me as a teacher, but I feel like it’s year one or two. Service-learning is just that energizing.”
Grantees are required to account for their progress three times a year via budget and program reports. These reports discuss program activities, including any monitoring efforts. They also report training, technical assistance, or other capacity-building activities that have been implemented at the site. Finally, program reports include any lessons learned by subgrantees and a discussion of how challenges were addressed.

### Learn and Serve

Learn and Serve Alaska is situated in the Alaska State Community Service Commission within the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development, a community asset development agency. The ASCSC runs the AmeriCorps programs for the state and, through an agreement with the Department of Education, manages the Learn and Serve grant.

For the current grant cycle, Learn and Serve Alaska is emphasizing projects that increase civic knowledge and engagement. Four schools are currently supported and funds are matched by, and distributed through, the school district to which the applicant school belongs. Of these four Learn and Serve subgrantees, two require students to participate in service-learning as part of the requirements for graduation and two do not.

### Building Networks of Support

New leadership at the ASCSC has taken the Learn and Serve Alaska program to a new level. Individual program and group needs assessments are being used to improve subgrantees’ training. The use of site visits and teleconferences has opened communication and developed a peer network of subgrantees. Subgrantees have expressed a desire for additional professional development, technical support, and a more thorough training curriculum.

The use of site visits and teleconferences has opened communication and developed a peer network.
In response, the ASCSC has developed regional training summits. AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve sub-grantees attend these trainings along with other service organizations. While the summits will be open to the public, their primary focus will be on professional development and technical assistance for Learn and Serve grantees and AmeriCorps members. The summits will include a service-learning track focused on best practices.

**Convening and Celebrating**

In 2008, the Alaska State Community Service Commission is celebrating Learn and Serve students and other volunteers with state-level awards. These awards will be presented at the statewide Recognition of Volunteers ceremony.

*For more information, please contact the Alaska State Community Service Commission within the Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development.*

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**Rural villages are transformed** by high school students in Alaska’s Kuspuk School District, as they initiate service-learning projects that address community issues. Ninety percent of the district students are Yup’ik Eskimo and attend remote village schools that are only accessible by plane, some with populations as small as 50.

“Service-learning can have a real impact here because there are no other service organizations around,” said District Literacy Coordinator Emily Stribling.

In Upper and Lower Kalskag, population 500, students at George Morgan Senior High developed a service-learning project that addresses high rates of community alcohol abuse. A youth committee made a presentation to the City and Tribal Councils on the issue, proposing a teen center that would give young people alternatives to drugs and alcohol. The councils were supportive of the students and partnered with them to make the teen center happen.

“The kids felt important because the city council took them very seriously,” said Stribling. “They felt that they were making a difference. Most students will live in their home village after they graduate, so it’s important to instill a sense of civic responsibility. It’s also good for the village to see that kids are addressing problems in the community.”

This project is one of many in Kuspuk School District, where service-learning is incorporated in academic standards and required for graduation. In the fall semester, students learn about the principles of service-learning through video-conferencing technology and complete a needs-assessment for their village. Students then develop a project proposal with the input of a community partner — whose ownership is critical for making the project successful. The projects are implemented in the spring.

According to Stribling, young people involved in service-learning have become better students, are more engaged, and have better school attendance.
Learn and Serve

Arizona funds service opportunities for young people and for adults through its Learn and Serve America program. Learn and Serve Arizona’s youth programs are focused on engaging young people in meeting the needs of their local communities. Recent Learn and Serve-sponsored projects in the state have addressed literacy, environmental threats, poverty, and youth civic engagement. Three one-day trainings offered in November, February, and April convene educators for technical assistance and celebration. These trainings give educators the tools they need to help students uncover the needs of their own communities and respond with solutions. The trainings in November and April are open to young people, and the spring gathering draws 300 young people and adults for an annual celebration of service-learning in the state.

Each year, adult volunteers work in at least 35 school sites as academic tutors. The Department of Education reports that some schools that have hosted volunteers have experienced significant academic gains. As part of this program, schools are able to develop profiles of their specific volunteer needs through a website developed in partnership with the K-12 Adult Volunteer Initiative and the Volunteer Center of Southern Arizona.

Support Through Policy

Service-learning is not a graduation requirement in Arizona, but the Department of Education has clearly identified how service-learning can be utilized as a method for meeting the state’s academic content standards. State Senator Mark Anderson sponsored a resolution requiring the Arizona Board of Education to develop and promote guidelines for advancing academic achievement through service-learning. This led the Arizona Department of Education, along with Learn and Serve Arizona, to publish the *Arizona Service-Learning Curriculum Guidelines* in 2004. This document was endorsed by Tom Horne, Superintendent of Public Instruction.

The *Guidelines* include service-learning Competencies and Indicators for grades K-3, 4-8, and 9-12. Examples of competencies that students are expected to develop through service-learning include: identifying a community need, developing and implementing a plan, and evaluating project success. The *Guidelines* also clarify connections between academic content standards in language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies and the service-learning Competencies and Indicators for each grade span. This allows teachers to easily and authoritatively identify academic standards they can reach through service-learning at each level.
Promising Program:
Future Educators Association

One successful model for service-learning in Arizona grew out of the Future Educators Association program in Peoria, Arizona—a two year program for high school juniors and seniors aspiring to be educators. As the Future Educators Association sought to become a credit-granting class, they mobilized state support to include a strong service-learning component. State offices of career and technical education, service-learning, academic achievement, and special education joined forces to develop a rigorous academic framework for the program.

Forty-two high schools participated when the program was launched statewide in 2003-2004. Since then, the program has grown to 79 programs across the state. The curriculum is aligned with community college courses so that participants who successfully complete the program can receive college credit.

For more information, please contact the Arizona Department of Education.

Students enrolled in building technology courses tackle affordable housing issues by constructing a Habitat for Humanity house.

Students are combating poverty, one service-learning project at a time, at Howenstine High Magnet School in Tuscon, Arizona. From constructing affordable houses to addressing nutrition issues at food shelves, students are engaged in active learning related to the school-wide theme of “Ending Poverty.” Howenstine is a service-learning magnet school of 215 students operating with the help of a Learn and Serve grant and support from Habitat for Humanity.

Project proposals that integrate ending poverty into the curriculum must be first approved by a service-learning committee composed of teachers and students. According to service-learning coordinator Shelly Camp, they have been building this program for nine years.

In the biggest project on campus, students enrolled in building technology courses tackle affordable housing issues by constructing a Habitat for Humanity house. The project, in its seventh year, equips students with building skills and knowledge of how poverty can be linked to housing. A tutoring project incorporates state math and reading standards by matching up high school students with elementary students, helping demonstrate that education is key for ending poverty.

Language students practice speaking Spanish and learn about the root causes of homelessness and hunger while serving meals at a local soup kitchen. In health class, poverty-related nutrition issues are discussed as students organize a food-drive for the Community Food Bank. Math students collaborate with art design students to tend a school garden, whose produce is donated to the Food Bank.

Camp advises other schools to “start small and build up” their projects by beginning with “something that is a genuine need [and] that energy will help to spark a fire.”
Support Through Policy
Since 1996 Act 648 has given high school students in Arkansas the chance to earn one elective credit for 75 hours of documented community service. The service must involve preparation, action, and reflection components and be approved by the Arkansas Department of Education and the local school board. Every school is required to offer students the opportunity to receive service-learning credit; however, the elective credit is not incorporated under state academic standards. Educators who teach service-learning courses under Act 648 may only award one credit, preventing students from taking the class again for additional credit. There is no statewide data available on how many students have received credit under Act 648.

Learn and Serve
The Arkansas Department of Education awards Learn and Serve grants annually for school-based service-learning projects with preference for programs that focus on literacy and math improvement and that address risky youth behavior. According to ADE, risky behavior “is defined as a behavior that is a risk to a person, school or community… [such as] low school attendance, drug abuse, low community participation, … health issues that are a risk to the body, negative environment issues, etc” (2007). The grants are aimed to target grades 5-8, although the application is open to all K-12 public schools. Each year 16 grants are awarded, ranging from $5,000 to $19,000. Grantees must secure a 50 percent match, $1 raised for every $1 granted, through cash or in-kind donations.

Though the position of state coordinator of Learn and Serve was vacant during 2006, new employees are working to make up for lost ground. ADE provides assistance and support through workshops for new grantees and mid-year trainings, which have included national Learn and Serve experts. Special attention is focused on identifying areas in projects that need improvement. ADE also hosts a statewide conference for coordinators and new grantee coordinators. In addition, Learn and Serve grantees are included in cross-stream training with AmeriCorps and Vista programs, which gives grant coordinators exposure to what other service sectors are doing.

Building Networks of Support and Evaluating Progress
The University of Arkansas’ Clinton School of Public Service continues to be an important partner for ADE in several areas. The University acts as an outside evaluator of the Learn and Serve program and has provided speakers for ADE workshops and trainings. The evaluations by the Clinton School are not made public but are used by the state Learn and Serve staff to improve the Arkansas program. According to Dr. Reginald Wilson, the ADE coordinator for Learn and Serve, recent evaluations have shown that the program needs to work on publicizing the available grants so that more schools can utilize the funding.
AmeriCorps is an important partner that works closely with Arkansas Learn and Serve. On January 30, 2007, ADE and AmeriCorps teamed up to host a legislative breakfast where issues related to service were discussed with local politicians. In particular, the link between the Learn and Serve program and participation in AmeriCorps was highlighted. Also, on October 22, 2007, Learn and Serve grantees were honored at the opening statewide ceremony for AmeriCorps.

For more information, please contact the Arkansas Department of Education.

References

“The absolute best thing you can do for kids.” When Fayetteville High School teacher Connie Crisp says this about service-learning, you know she means it. Her contagious passion for service-learning has inspired students enrolled in her service-learning course to take the class again and again, even though they can’t receive credit for more than one semester.

The projects undertaken by the service-learning class focus on mentoring and tutoring. Students are trained by University of Arkansas Literacy Corps members and use their skills once a week at an elementary school to tutor younger kids. Crisp said the most rewarding aspect of this project is seeing “how excited [the high school students] are to see that little person and how excited that little person is to see them.”

The class also spends one day a week serving at assisted living facilities, early childhood programs, and homeless shelters. The recycling program at Lafayette High School is run by the service-learning class who work alongside a special education classroom to collect, sort, and transport bottles and paper products. Other service projects have been spearheaded by the students who are in charge of conducting needs assessments, contacting community partners, and soliciting funding. Notably, the Veterans of History project, in its tenth year, has students conduct oral histories with World War II veterans and submit their transcripts to the Library of Congress.

Crisp has seen how service-learning has made a difference in her students’ lives, equipping them with “better problem-solving skills, an ability to connect to other people of different ages, being less self-absorbed and more giving.”
Support Through Policy
A statewide focus on standards has placed additional emphasis on the learning in service-learning, increasingly seen as a way to improve cross-curricular integration. Jack O’Connell, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction notes, “Successful schools all over our state are combining academic standards with service-learning in projects that teach the value of giving back and importance of engaging in the broader community.”

The updated California School Boards Association service-learning policy urges implementation of service-learning as an instructional method at the district level and includes optional language for school boards choosing to require community service as a condition of graduation. This boiler-plate policy language coincides with the California Department of Education’s vision that 50 percent of all districts involve students in a service-learning experience at least once in elementary, middle, and high school. (California School Boards Association 2007 March).

Page 100 of this volume describes the Los Angeles Unified School District’s experience with their requirement that students complete a core curriculum course that includes a district-approved service-learning component.

Learn and Serve
Through funding provided by Learn and Serve America, the California Department of Education’s CalServe Initiative supports school and community service-learning programs involving over 200,000 students each year. A statewide study of CalServe programs reported 83 percent of students met or exceeded academic content standards delivered through service-learning activities (California Department of Education 2007).

Building Supportive Networks
CalServe partnered with the nonprofit Youth Service California to support California’s Regional Service-Learning Network Program. Twelve Regional Service-Learning Networks were established to build statewide capacity for service-learning. Each region hosts trainings and facilitates collaboration among the region’s key stakeholders.

In September 2007 the California Department of Education launched the California Service-Learning Leaders Schools Award Program, recognizing schools for service-learning excellence and program sustainability. The awards will be presented at the annual California Service-Learning Leadership Institute hosted by YSCal and the CalServe Initiative. Service-learning leaders and practitioners from throughout the state will focus on how to develop policy, deepen practice, and implement strategies increasing their organizations capacity to support and sustain service-learning.

Afterschool
The California Afterschool Service-Learning program was launched in 2003 to strengthen out-of-school time programs. It focuses on seven communities with high concentrations of low-socioeconomic status populations.
Young people who participated in the program scored above California norms on measures of external and internal assets as measured by the California Healthy Kids Survey (McCarthy 2007).

In 2006 YSCal published Service-Learning in Afterschool Programs: Resources for Afterschool Educators and expanded their afterschool programming work through the management of the State Commission’s Cesar Chavez After School Program. During the past year, seventy-five Cesar Chavez afterschool clubs have been opened across the state.

**Empowering Youth**

Project CATALYST — California Taking Action for Learning through Youth Service Teams — is a statewide network of 28 service-learning youth ambassadors supported by YSCal. Operating through the state’s regional infrastructure, Youth Ambassadors promote service-learning to their peers, communities, and the media.

*For more information, please contact the California Department of Education’s CalServe Initiative.*

**REFERENCES**


**Cosumnes River Preserve** is a 46,000-acre haven for environmental education and service-learning for students in Galt Elementary and High School Districts. With broad support from community partners including the Bureau of Land Management, the Department of Fish and Game, and The Nature Conservancy, Cosumnes hosts multiple service-learning opportunities in partnership with the school districts. Teachers are invited to workshops at the preserve about integrating environmental projects with academic standards in math, language arts, science, social studies, and fine arts.

In the Oak Riparian Forest Restoration Project, 1,000 students annually are bringing back the native forests. Young people make several trips to the preserve throughout elementary and middle school, each time to tackle a different stage of the restoration process. Grades 2-3 collect acorns, grades 7-8 sort the acorns and prepare them for cold storage, while grades 4-8 plant the trees. High school students will soon be involved in a monitoring project. In recent years, the students have planted 20 acres of valley oaks in an area known as the Children’s Forest.

“When students see the trees they’ve planted, they know they are making a difference in their community. Students are inspired to seek additional service opportunities,” said Service-Learning Coordinator John Durand.

An additional 3,000 students are involved in other projects on site throughout the school year, including a duck egg rescue, wetlands restoration, and a kindergarten butterfly count. According to Durand, the service-learning projects have increased community engagement at the preserve and many students return with their parents on the weekends.

“They gain a sense of environmental stewardship, they learn that this is their preserve and that they play an important role in protecting it,” he said.
Building Networks of Support

Colorado’s Department of Education continues to respond to the 2003 The Civic Mission of Schools report encouraging civics educators to engage students in service-learning experiences (http://www.civicmissionofschools.org/site/campaign/cms_report.html). With assistance from the Civic Canopy—a partnership including Project Citizen, Facing History Civics and Ourselves, the Close-Up Foundation, the Center for Law and Democracy, and the Education Commission of the States—CDE hosted a 2003 Civics and Service-Learning Academy. Fifty educators developed action plans for integrating service-learning into their curricula.

Evaluating Progress

Learn and Serve funding in Colorado focuses on students from disadvantaged circumstances through grants to districts, with a district-wide program director and a youth council (generally 6-10 youths). The North-east Colorado Youth Council travels the state offering trainings for other youth councils. RMC Research Corporation conducted a 2004-2006 evaluation of the effectiveness of service-learning experiences offered by Learn and Serve Colorado grantees, showing that students who reported participation in higher quality service-learning experiences were more likely to report that they valued school, were academically and civically engaged, felt civically efficacious, had positive civic dispositions, and possessed civic skills (www.cde.state.co.us/servicelearning/downloads/CO2006ResearchBrief.pdf).

In 2006 Learn and Serve Colorado contracted annual evaluations with the Evaluation Center, located in the School of Education and Human Development at the University of Colorado. The 2006-2007 evaluation presented a rubric of high quality-service learning, based on a survey of educators at 23 Learn and Serve schools.

Active Community Organizations

For 10 years FrontRange Earth Force, known nationally for their innovative Community Action Problem-Solving curriculum, has offered professional development and ongoing support for engaging service-learning experiences to teachers in Denver area schools. An annual culminating city-wide presentation and celebration at the Denver Zoo draws approximately 1,000 students.

In 2006 ten Nobel Peace Laureates, the largest gathering of peace laureates outside Oslo, joined 1,000 young people at the University of Denver to celebrate the 10th anniversary of PeaceJam Foundation, a service-learning-based K-12 program headquartered in Denver. The program helps students across the nation.
cultivate habits of peace-making within themselves, their families, and their communities. Students, teachers, and college mentors convene annually for a weekend of skills-building workshops. They develop and launch a peace-oriented service-learning project to address a local need based on one of the 10 “Global Calls to Action” developed by the Nobelists, whom they meet at an annual spring workshop weekend presenting the outcomes of their project.

Support Through Policy
On May 25, 2006 Governor Bill Owens signed legislation stating, “Service-learning is an effective teaching method that gives students the opportunity to apply curricular knowledge and skills while serving the community, thereby reinforcing the content standards applicable to many subjects.” The act recommends local adoption of policies promoting youth service and service-learning, and recognition on diplomas and transcripts of students meeting service-learning goals.

Convening and Celebrating
Since 1992 Colorado has also involved over 150 youths and adults annually in its state service-learning conference. Half of those who attend each year are young people. In 2001 Colorado hosted over 3,200 participants at the 12th Annual National Service-Learning Conference.

For more information, please contact the Colorado Department of Education.

Revitalizing a public park improved the community’s view of young people and made a splash in the local papers in the town of Haxtun, population 900. After students and teachers noticed the need for repairs, they became engaged in service-learning projects to address the problem.

With help from a Colorado Learn and Serve grant, students in Alan Nall’s science class worked on installing a water feature in the park, researching the appropriate plants and rocks to purchase. They studied plumbing, created a budget for the project, presented the plan to the town board for approval, and came back in summer to help set up the water feature. Stan Kennedy’s class of students utilized their math skills to design a walking path in the park. Gazebos in the park were reconstructed by youths in the agricultural courses taught by Jeff Plumb. Currently, social studies students are researching Haxtun’s past and plan to install a special plaque in the park that displays town history.

Nall said service-learning in Haxtun has been a great way “to connect students to our community, giving them a learning experience that is not in a box.” With service-learning, many students “come back years later still remembering what they have learned.”

To help facilitate these projects, Haxtun High School has a service-learning club with student members trained in best practices. Every teacher has one student advisor from the club to help implement service-learning in their classroom. With all the publicity from the park project, more teachers and students are interested in doing service-learning.

“The communication between the school and community has been revitalized [through service-learning],” said Nall. “It makes the school looks good and makes it easier for students to interact with adult community members.”
Connecticut

Learn and Serve

Strong state, regional, and local leaders carried Connecticut Learn and Serve forward after a staff reduction in 2000. The Connecticut Learn and Serve coordinator, a state-level staff development specialist, brings service-learning into other state initiatives and links programs through her membership on the Connecticut Commission on National and Community Service.

Connecticut’s five Learn and Serve grantees range from small towns to the EASTCONN Regional Educational Service Center, which serves 36 towns in the northeast quarter of the state. Each grant program, uniquely designed to address the needs of its students and community, participates in a day of staff development four times a year. The program evaluator conducts yearly site visits and is available to help assess progress and develop strategies for improvement.

Building Networks of Support

Learn and Serve collaborates with Character Education and Safe and Drug-Free Schools programs to offer a statewide conference including presentations on service-learning by youths as well as adults. Extra points are granted to 21st Century Community Schools applicants incorporating service-learning into their plans. At least one-third feature service-learning in one or more of the enrichment or recreation programs required, in addition to the academic components of the 21st Century Schools after-school programs. Staff development for all grantees includes service-learning fundamentals.

Several EASTCONN staff participated in professional development that infuses service-learning across a wide range of education initiatives. The Joy of Reading program engages students in boosting literacy; Creating Community Builders develops student awareness about their watershed to share with the community; and students learn about making good decisions and taking a stand against bullying in the Character of the Characters project. Teachers from across the state present at the annual state conference and attend regional workshops.

EASTCONN surveys students to determine their growth in civic and character skills. Questions to students include: What have I done well? What is my responsibility? What could others have done? What could I have done to help them do better?

Improving Sustainability

In 2004 one of the five Learn and Serve Grantees, the School for Ethical Education, led by director Davin Wangaard, began Student Activists for Service-Learning, a youth philanthropy board in the New Haven County schools. The board provides training and experience for high school students, distributing service-learning mini-grants to middle and high schools. By 2007 this program evolved to include 225 participants completing over 3,300 hours of...
service-learning and providing service to over 1,000 people.

For nine years, Donna Drasch, staff development specialist of EASTCONN Regional Educational Service Center, has helped teachers build strong service-learning programs integrated into the curriculum. Drasch links teachers to experts in their field from the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension Service, American Red Cross, Special Olympics, Connecticut Audubon, soup kitchens, churches, and other business and community organizations. She also helps students explore historical, environmental, and social experiences through experiential learning activities, classroom lessons, and field experiences. Using picture books and other quality literature, students delve deeper into issues of respect, responsibility, cooperation, conflict, and social justice to discover their own voices based on beliefs, opinions, perceptions, and background knowledge while appreciating the voices of their peers. Wikis and blogs were added to a number of projects, connecting students’ use of technology to communicate, collaborate, and gain a more global perspective about issues.

For more information, contact the Connecticut State Department of Education or EASTCONN.

Environmental and character education through service-learning is a strong focus at Chaplin Elementary Schools. Lacking money for programs that do not address standards or curricular needs or impact student achievement, students in grades 4-6 in this small rural school participate in service-learning projects driven by the science, language arts, social studies, and math standards.

The sixth grade is studying the water quality of the Natchaug River as part of an EASTCONN grant. Students collect water quality data, which will be sent to the statewide database. With the help of local experts, they are learning about the complexities of pollution through a wetlands simulation and individual research projects. They share their learning online in a wiki site.

The fifth grade is participating in The Character of the Characters, another EASTCONN program. Students from Norwich and Windham are involved in this study of Nutmeg Book Award nominees. Deep discussions, literary responses, and writing have emerged, some of which are posted on a wiki site. Students write and record songs about friendship and believing in themselves for a school-wide songwriting project, which was instigated by the school social worker, Neil O’Keefe.

The fourth grade is studying native plants versus invasive species, in order to propagate native plants for a garden at the Chaplin Public Library. The students visited the local gardens and collected seeds to become stewards of the gardens. They inventoried native and invasive plants in their schoolyard and are currently writing a children’s book about seed dispersal.

The students’ opinions, research, literary responses, poetry, songs, plants, gardens, and compost all make contributions to the community. The most important outcome is that students learn that they matter and that they can make a difference.
Support Through Policy
Delaware has institutionalized youth service in a very real way by providing high school juniors and seniors with the opportunity to earn academic credit for the completion of at least 90 hours of community service. Since its inception in 2000, 670 students have received this credit, called the Delaware Volunteer Credit. Many students participating in service do not apply for the credit. The Department of Education is currently making an effort to boost the visibility of the Volunteer Credit program.

In the fall of 2007 the Department of Education began implementing Student Success Plans for every 8th and 9th grade student in the state. Student Success Plans are individualized online plans that help students make choices in high school, explore college and career options, and make the curriculum choices that help them to reach their goals. The Success Plans will include information on the Volunteer Credit and may boost its statewide visibility.

Learn and Serve supports 12 service-learning sites in the current grant cycle. Delaware’s Learn and Serve Coordinator also directs Department of Education initiatives relating to dropout prevention, school-to-work, and character education. The position is designed to help schools and districts focus on the needs of the whole child. Service-learning is presented as an effective pedagogical approach for achieving this goal. The Department of Education has also started the Connections to Learning program to help districts and schools consider carefully how student well-being influences academic outcomes. Connections to Learning highlights service-learning.

Building Networks of Support
The Delaware Department of Education no longer hosts an annual service-learning conference in the state. Instead, service-learning trainings are integrated with in-service trainings held at all schools in Delaware each fall. Trainings are offered by Department of Education staff as well as by teachers from the Leader School in each county. Leader Schools also serve as mentors for schools starting service-learning programs. Despite a recent request by an additional school to become a leader school, limited funding has kept the number to one per county.

Improving Sustainability
Over the course of the last few years, funding for service-learning has declined in Delaware, and educators have had to find more creative means for funding their service-learning programs. As of the 2003-2004 school year, schools receiving federal Safe and Drug-free Schools funds in Delaware were required to include service-learning in their programming, but that funding is no longer available. In addition, MBNA Banking Corporation, which had provided matching funds for local service-learning programs, merged with another company and no longer offers...
Growing to Greatness 2008

Plagued by failed referendums, the McIlvaine Early Childhood Center in Magnolia, Delaware was in desperate need of improvements. “We wanted to make it appear as beautiful on the outside as what was happening in the classrooms inside,” said Sheryl Ford, Caesar Rodney High School family and consumer science teacher. She and her grade 9-12 early childhood education curriculum design students teamed with the high school’s agriculture students and their teacher, Catherine DiBenedetto, to contribute each program’s talents to the run-down façade.

Horticulture and floriculture students removed 30-year-old landscaping and recreated the garden spaces to reflect modern design. Meanwhile, curriculum design students developed science lessons for the kindergarten students. They taught about plants and flowers. They engaged kindergarten kids by working with them to create more than 100 stepping stones for the new garden space. “No matter how hard we pushed on their little feet, we learned kindergarteners aren’t heavy enough to make footprints in concrete!” said Ford. Instead, the high school students used the kindergarteners’ hands to include their names on each stepping stone.

“Every time we had a need, someone was there,” Ford commented. Donations of talent, supplies, water, and even food for the students came from local businesses, city departments, and professionals. “We couldn’t get enough of people helping, sharing, and wanting to be a part of it. We were never wanting.”

Each year Ford engages her students in service-learning and often brings along another program and teacher. Believing in the power of service-learning, she told DiBenedetto, “This is something you need to do.” The partnership between the two programs has blossomed and created beautiful results. “I had people all summer long telling me how it brightened up both the outside and the inside of the school.”

Convening and Celebrating

The Governor recognizes young people who serve their communities at an annual Governor’s Youth Volunteer Awards. Awards are given for group and individual service projects, and youths make presentations sharing their projects with those in attendance.

For more information, please contact the Delaware Department of Education.

Funding. The Department of Education continues to offer training and technical support to schools that received Learn and Serve funding in the past. These efforts have helped previous grantees sustain their service-learning efforts.

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For more information, please contact the Delaware Department of Education.
Learn and Serve

The District of Columbia’s Learn and Serve America program is administered by Serve DC, the DC Commission on National and Community Service, and is dedicated to promoting and expanding service-learning during in-school and out-of-school time programming. The organization administers three Learn and Serve America grants: Community-Based, Homeland Security School-Based, and School-Based Formula — currently distributed to 15 sub-grantees. Serve DC supports school-based service-learning programming in partnership with the DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education.

Serve DC sub-grantee examples include:

- **Kid Power DC**, a community youth organization serving nearly 150 public school students at six schools in the District of Columbia, promoting the importance of neighborhood history and fostering youth leadership through programs connecting literacy and art with civic action.

- **Youth Service Opportunities Project**, a community-based organization with students attending Cardoza Senior High School, implementing in-school and out-of-school time service-learning focused on hunger, homelessness, and poverty. Students engage in pre-service orientation, meaningful service, and reflection.

- **Elementary students from Ferebee-Hope Community School Complex**, in collaboration with Communities in Schools of the Nation’s Capital and Discovery Creek Children’s Museum, engaging in science and service-learning activities pertaining to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

Building Networks of Support

The 2007-2009 District of Columbia State Service Plan calls for greater collaboration among national service partners in civic engagement, emergency preparedness, and inclusion of young people with disabilities. To achieve service-learning goals, Serve DC will increase cross-collaboration among AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve programs; foster a service-learning network to include teachers and youth practitioners; increase the number of Learn and Serve sub-grantees; and promote participation in service-learning professional development opportunities.

Education priorities of the Executive Office of the Mayor, the DC Office of the State Superintendent of Education, and the District of Columbia Public Schools will be supported through Serve DC’s new initiative Volunteers In Public Schools. It will connect volunteers and community-based organizations with DC public schools, supporting community-school partnerships and establishing a means of clear communication between agencies.
Growing to Greatness 2008

Convening and Celebrating
Serve DC hosts several annual service-learning professional development opportunities that convene members of the District’s youth development, service-learning, and national service communities. The DC Conference on Service and Leadership provides professional development for participants from all streams of national service. Two larger service-learning training institutes each year are open to practitioners throughout the District.

In addition, Serve DC promotes service-learning through the District’s program volunteer, a portfolio of national and global service opportunities for people to serve in their communities. As part of this program Serve DC organizes local activities for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service, Global Youth Service Day, and Patriot’s Day, as well as assisting partner organizations with planning and implementing days of service such as Make a Difference Day and DC Public Schools Beautification Day.

Support Through Policy
In 1996 the District of Columbia began requiring students to complete 100 hours of community service or service-learning prior to graduation — including charter school students. Service hours may be completed independently or integrated into the curriculum. Serve DC’s national and local service efforts provide opportunities for students to meet this requirement.

For more information, please contact Serve DC in the Executive Office of the Mayor.

At 6:30 a.m. Collegiate Academy, a college preparatory Friendship Public Charter School in Washington D.C., buzzes with its students’ deep sense of pride and responsibility. While most students are still asleep, these Leadership and Criminal Justice program students have already started their day.

Under the direction of 21-year military veteran and retired state trooper Kem Cooper, grade 9-12 students are gaining exposure to law and public safety professions while preparing to be leaders through service-learning.

Called to action by the tragedies of September 11, 2001 and flooding in New Orleans, high school students have been educating elementary students and their families for nearly four years. “Our goals are for families to have a plan when a disaster happens, to be ready and not to panic,” said Fri-Mai-kah Fon, a high school senior and the program’s captain. The high school students visit elementary classrooms to instill leadership traits and provide instruction in disaster preparedness. According to Cooper, “You have to have responsibility, pride, and honor to discuss disaster preparedness.”

Earning leadership credit is one reward for this early morning commitment, but the most powerful motivator seems to be results. “We get letters from parents about the impact we’ve had on their family and from teachers telling us how their students’ behavior has changed,” said Fon. Their own lives are impacted as well through this rigorous, highly motivating program. Honored by awards and media attention, Cooper believes that there is “No other program with higher GPAs or more hours of community service.”

While the class may meet in the early morning hours, the program instills in its students that being a leader is a commitment that spans 24 hours a day, seven days a week — a commitment that more than 200 students are excited and willing to make.
Florida

Learn and Serve
Florida State University coordinates the state’s Learn and Serve program, with a staff of five full-time employees, two full-time VISTA volunteers, and a full-time assistant. Through the Florida Alliance for Student Service and strategic partnerships with other education initiatives, more than 50 people across the state work in support of K-12 and higher education service-learning. Twenty-five VISTA volunteers provide support to service-learning programs. In 2007-2008 nearly $1.5 million was awarded to almost 100 large-scale projects, with 200 mini-grants issued by students.

Improving Sustainability
Florida Learn and Serve focuses on building service-learning infrastructure at the district level. Ten districts (out of 67) have six-year awards. Subgrantees must form a service-learning advisory group and establish community partnerships. Multi-year awards require subgrantees to have plans for building infrastructure through dedicated staff and funding, links with educational policy, long-term partnerships, program development, and evaluation and assessment plans.

In addition, a 2006 Learn and Serve school-based competitive grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service was awarded for expanding, replicating, disseminating, and sustaining efforts at eight service-learning sites.

Building Networks of Support
Since 2005 Florida Learn and Serve has partnered with State Farm® to sponsor service-learning programs focused on disaster (mostly hurricane-related) preparedness and response, with support to 48 K-12 and higher education projects and ManaTEENS, the nation’s largest local youth service organization.

Through the Common Cents Penny Harvest program, 18 schools in four districts are collecting pennies to fund youth service-learning projects addressing local needs.

Florida State University and Florida Learn and Serve are forming a partnership with PeaceJam Foundation to bring Nobel Peace Prize Laureates to Florida. PeaceJam curriculum will be used to learn about global and local issues and conduct service-learning projects culminating in meetings with Peace Prize Laureates.

Evaluating Progress
Dr. Thomas Marcinkowski, at the Florida Institute of Technology in Melbourne, has been contracted to evaluate service-learning programs and measure their impact on participants, including measures of civic engagement, academic achievement, attendance, and student conduct. Survey instruments will be administered in winter 2008, with data available later in the year.

Convening and Celebrating
The annual Florida Service-Learning Institute includes trainings, workshops, and recognition for approximately 350 partici-
Art can revitalize neighborhoods and transform people’s perceptions. This is what young men in Miami who have been expelled from traditional schools are discovering. Teachers at the Young Men’s Academy for Academic and Civic Development at MacArthur South have used art-based service-learning to engage students since 2002, finding that those involved have better grades and less behavioral problems. The program has been so successful it recently expanded to include three other low-performing schools in the area.

In the program, students receive weekly art classes from the residential artists at ArtSouth, an organization based in the distressed farming town of Homestead, which was devastated by Hurricane Andrew in 1992. Using their art skills, the young people beautify the city through public art projects that benefit the entire community. Students also serve through teaching art classes to seniors and youngsters with developmental disabilities. MacArthur is lucky to share a campus with an assisted living facility, school for physically and mentally disabled kids, day-care for developmentally delayed toddlers, and adult day care center. Service-Learning Coordinator and Art Teacher Janis Klein-Young notes the transformation in the students who teach physically and mentally disabled kids, remarking that “you can see the tenderness in youngsters who were formerly bitter and violent.” Students teach art classes at each site, fostering positive relationships with other community members.

According to Klein-Young, the most rewarding part of the project is the “warm relationships that have developed between youngsters who were once considered to be social outcasts and the vulnerable community who they now serve.”
Building Networks of Support

Service-learning falls into the “learning support” category within the Georgia Department of Education. Georgia’s State Service-Learning Advisory Committee meets quarterly, and is comprised of teachers, representatives from the 16 Regional Education Service Agencies, the League of Professional Schools, higher education, two nonprofits, current grantees, and a representative from each of the Georgia Department of Education’s major offices. It promotes sustainability by providing support for school administrators new to service-learning and advising the Department of Education on how best to organize and implement service-learning across the state.

Learn and Serve

The ten Advisory Committee teachers also serve as Service-Learning Ambassadors, functioning as peer mentors for teachers at schools receiving three-year Learn and Serve grants. One Ambassador, a school administrator, shadows principals for several days at grantee sites to offer ideas and support.

Support Through Policy

Service-learning is becoming more integrated into the curriculum in Georgia. Several local school systems require service-learning and receive regular training from the Department of Education. Georgia Learn and Serve partnered with leaders in alternative education to focus on reducing the state’s dropout rate. This is an overarching goal of the Department of Education, which is developing longitudinal data to see the relationship between participation in Learn and Serve service-learning programs and students’ decisions to complete high school.

Georgia Learn and Serve offers two types of funding to 32 subgrantees working with over 23,000 young people. Funds are intended for school-wide programs, rather than individual classrooms. Three-year grants focus on secondary schools having difficulty making Adequate Yearly Progress as determined by NCLB. One year of startup funding is granted to schools with previous service-learning experience.

All grantees must have two co-directors in their building, ensuring ability to manage the funding paperwork. The co-directors share programming, funding, and evaluation responsibility with an advisory committee including administrators, teachers, students, at least one nonprofit organization and one business partner, and parents.
Building Capacity and Sustainability

Subgrantees develop program goals at a weeklong summer training institute, giving the more than 100 teachers and administrators an opportunity to develop deeper understandings of quality service-learning and how it fits within their curricula. Participants must arrive with their school’s annual Adequate Yearly Progress data and School Improvement Plans. Institute staff facilitates data analysis and helps participants leave with plans for service-learning experiences for the upcoming school year that meet each school’s needs. Department of Education scholarships fund this experience for more than half of the participants.

Site co-directors and administrators consult, check progress, and receive additional training at Leadership Institute meetings five times each school year. Site co-directors meet once a month via teleconference.

Evaluating Progress

In 2006 the team from Georgia State University, which conducts annual Learn and Serve programming across the state, identified the five strongest programs. Their report, “Georgia Academic Learn and Serve Evaluation Highlights Five Outstanding Programs,” explains how teachers and administrators implemented programs to foster improved academic outcomes for their students. Evaluators marked the dramatic improvements that these five sites made in terms of Adequate Yearly Progress, reading and math test scores, and reduced absenteeism.

For more information, please contact Georgia Department of Education.

Crossroads Second Chance North

Alternative School transforms kids who were unsuccessful in traditional high schools into motivated and engaged students. Up to 200 students attend Crossroads each semester and must complete 20 hours of service-learning that incorporates Georgia Performance Standards. When they successfully complete one semester, students may return to their old school, but — according to teacher Erin Geller — some don’t want to leave because they enjoy the emphasis on service-learning.

Students can be involved in three service project areas including literacy, horticulture, and philanthropy. Students create and share bilingual children’s books with elementary-age kids and are building a greenhouse on campus to grow vegetables as part of a community garden project. Young people support philanthropic causes through fundraising and charity walks and also utilize their technology skills by building websites for local organizations. School Principal, Dr. Alicia Borishade, is extremely pleased with the connection students have made through their service experience. Borishade states that giving children a sense of efficacy is critical to their becoming successful students and productive members of society.

The projects are funded through a Georgia Learn and Serve grant awarded to the school in 2006, which requires the award be matched with in-kind dollars and services from the local community. The initiative has inspired a similar program in an alternative school in Atlanta. The Crossroads Team has presented at several conferences across the nation and will present their program in an upcoming conference dealing with at-risk youths, stressing how service-learning can benefit students outside of traditional classrooms.

Active learning has motivated students and direct service has changed the community’s perception of kids in alternative schools. Geller said the most rewarding aspect of service-learning is the “increase in student engagement because students are enthusiastic about what they are doing in school.”
Support Through Policy

One of Hawaii’s General Learner Outcomes is that each student will be an effective “community contributor.” Indicators of achieving this outcome include students showing “responsible and ethical behavior in decision making,” and implementing solutions in a responsible way. Service-learning has been recognized as an important strategy for teaching students to be community contributors because it provides them with opportunities to address community needs (Hawaii State Department of Education 2005).

The state superintendent has made the development of civic responsibility one of her three central goals for students in the state. This focus has led to a statewide emphasis on involving students in service. Each month, schools must submit a trend report to the superintendent’s office indicating the school’s current service activities.

Improving Sustainability

Due to insufficient Learn and Serve funding and staffing, many educators in the state continue to confuse service-learning with volunteerism or community service. Building on information from the monthly trend reports to the superintendent, the Department of Education is currently working with teachers to help them connect service activities more closely with curricular goals.

In March 2007 the Department of Education surveyed 25 teachers who had participated in Learn and Serve-funded service-learning programs. They found that 20 of the 25 continued to use service-learning in their classrooms — the other five are now school administrators. The Department of Education plans to continue collecting data on whether subgrantees engage their students in service-learning beyond the life of their Learn and Serve funding. So far, the results look positive.

Building Networks of Support

The Department has partnered with Shelley Billig of RMC Research to offer trainings and build a team of master service-learning practitioners. The trainings started in 2007 and will take place over a three year period. The focus in year one is on differentiating high quality service-learning from other service experiences. Educators who have attended the first of these trainings found that what they thought was service-learning was actually volunteerism and community service.

In the second year of the process, educators will deepen their understanding of service-learning and improve their own practices. In the third year, teachers participating in the program will be trained to facilitate service-learning trainings throughout the state.
Vermicomposting is a highly efficient process by which worms break down waste into high-quality compost. Inspired by just one student, both fourth-grade classrooms at Hukulani Elementary School in Honolulu, Hawaii are now learning its finer points. The need was close and apparent to these young students — they saw the amount of waste generated in their lunchroom and decided to look for a solution. With experience in vermicomposting at home, one student proposed the concept and the others were quickly engaged.

"Fourth-graders realizing the need and creating their own idea is really unique," said teacher Laurie Yoshinaga. Students presented their solution and quickly won the approval of the School Community Council, a group comprised of teachers, administrators, parents, and community members. At two bake sales, students raised enough money to bring “The Worm Lady” to their classroom. She taught the class about the benefits of vermicomposting, the necessary supplies, and the required worm-to-food ratio. Teachers integrated the project into most curricular areas including science, math, social studies, reading, writing, and oral communications.

The students’ goal is to eventually use vermicomposting to remove all of the school’s lunch waste. Through the reproduction of the initial worms, this may very well be possible. They also hope to engage other grade levels in the process and either sell or give away the compost as fertilizer. Ultimately, they also hope to inspire more families to use vermicomposting at home.

In conjunction with these professional development opportunities and their focus on meeting Annual Yearly Progress as set down by No Child Left Behind, the Department of Education is also engaged in aligning service-learning outcomes with state academic content standards and benchmarks.

Youth Service Hawaii

Beyond the activities of the Department of Education, Youth Service Hawaii offers service opportunities for youths and supports service-learning practitioners in the state. Over the course of 2007 Youth Service Hawaii has offered several trainings focused on literacy and civic engagement. Youth Service Hawaii also convenes the Statewide Service-Learning Conference which brings together practitioners and students from across the state to explore service and learning.

For more information, please contact the Hawaii State Department of Education.

REFERENCES

Empowering Youth: Learn and Serve Youth Leadership Teams

Learn and Serve subgrantees in Idaho form Youth Leadership Teams that offer young people opportunities to share their perspectives on service-learning projects taking place in their schools. In 2007 one Youth Leadership Team composed the Learn and Serve grant proposal for their school. Learn and Serve Idaho offers Youth Leadership Workshops that are designed to prepare members of these teams for their leadership roles. At the workshops, students learn about innovative service ideas, examine the needs of their communities, and begin to work with other young people to generate solutions. Workshops in 2007-2008 will feature presentations by Leaders Today, a youth leadership training organization from Toronto.

Evaluating Progress

The Idaho Department of Education directs Learn and Serve funding primarily toward programs that focus on civic engagement. This focus is driven by the fact that school administrators across Idaho must provide the Department of Education with an annual assessment of their building’s participation in activities that focus on developing civic learning and engagement. This assessment, the Civics Report Card, is a component of each school's accreditation report to the state. The report card asks for a building-level assessment of student civic engagement and the linking of civic education knowledge and skills to service-learning or community service in grades 5, 6-8, and 12.

The Civics Report Card specifies three levels of proficiency. The presence of quality service-learning experiences qualifies schools to move from the “basic” to the “proficient” or “advanced proficient” levels. These assessments provide an incentive for schools to provide students with opportunities to serve their communities.
Convening and Celebrating

The Governor’s Commission on Service and Volunteerism, Serve Idaho, hosts an annual conference for national service participants, including service-learning programs funded by Learn and Serve. Each year more than 50 teachers, students and administrators attend the Learn and Serve strand of the conference. In addition to the state conference, representatives of each Learn and Serve Idaho program attend the National Service-Learning Conference each year.

Biking and walking along the Portnuef River has become more enjoyable for the residents of Pocatello, Idaho thanks in part to students at New Horizon High School. Young people at the alternative school have adopted the Kraft Hill trailhead, a section along the Portnuef Greenway, and created a dirt path that is accessible to the local community. With help from the Greenway Foundation, they installed the trail, cleared it of brush and litter, and installed signs that explain the geology of the area.

The students involved are members of Alameda Bicycle Club, an elective course in its first year that engages young people in bike-related service-learning projects. The bicycle club has also partnered with the Greater Pocatello Information and Visitor Center to provide several free bikes for use along the Portnuef Greenway that the students fixed up during class. In collaboration with Pocatello Free Bikes, used bicycles are often given to the club and donated back to the community once restored.

According to teacher Brent Patch, service-learning has given the community a better perspective of kids who may otherwise be considered unsuccessful. He said, “When the community sees our students improving our city, they see the potential of youth.”

Patch says the most rewarding aspect of the project is to “see the kids understand the benefits of giving back to the community.” New Horizon hosts about a dozen service-learning projects annually and has had great success. Service-learning is supported through a Learn and Serve grant and through community partners like the City of Pocatello. A student leadership team at the high school brainstorm ideas for projects and the teachers collaborate, tying them into academic curriculum.

For more information, please contact the Idaho State Department of Education.
Support Through Policy
In December 2004 the Illinois Board of Education approved statewide Social and Emotional Learning Standards that support service-learning efforts. These standards focus on helping students “develop awareness and management of their emotions, set and achieve important personal and academic goals, use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships, and demonstrate decision making and responsible behaviors to achieve school and life success” (Illinois State Board of Education 2004a). There are three larger goals along with standards for meeting each goal. One goal is that students will “[d]emonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts” (Illinois State Board of Education 2004b). High quality service-learning, which includes youth voice in a process that meets authentic community needs, is a powerful method for meeting this goal.

Building Networks of Support
A Service-Learning Advisory Council provides guidance on best practices to the Lieutenant Governor and Board of Education as they shape policy. The council has been instrumental in promoting service-learning as a strategy for civic engagement.

Convening and Celebrating
The Illinois Resource Center organizes the annual Illinois Statewide K-16 Service-Learning Conference in conjunction with the Office of the Lieutenant Governor, the Illinois State Board of Education, and Illinois Campus Compact. The event draws 250 participants — including young people — each year.

Learn and Serve
In 2006, through an intergovernmental agreement with the Illinois State Board of Education, management of Learn and Serve Illinois was transferred to Illinois Lieutenant Governor Pat Quinn’s office. The program currently supports service-learning activities for over 46,000 students in 44 districts. The Illinois Resource Center provides training and technical assistance to grantees across the state, with four basic modules of training focused on service-learning and student leadership. Learn and Serve staff also conduct site analyses to help schools determine how best to improve their service-learning programs.
Taking driver safety seriously is the focus of a service-learning program titled: “In a Blink of an Eye — Think Before You Drive.” Recognizing car accidents as the number one cause of death among teenagers in the United States today, students at Jacobs High School in Algonquin, Illinois selected this program. It encompasses 30 different projects, including sponsorship of speakers, a wrecked car display, videos on driving distractions, and an Operation Prom campaign.

“We empower them to do good, to do what is right for the community. They take that upon themselves to do the work, they become leaders.”

In 2003 the incoming Governor Rod Blagojevich proposed legislation mandating a state service-learning graduation requirement intended to take effect for students entering high school in 2006. The measure did not pass. In 2006 the state legislature passed and the governor signed the Community Education Act, intending to provide incentives for schools to involve students in service to their communities. The Act establishes the Community Service Education Program, administered by the state Board of Education, through which districts can receive grants for their community service programs. This act has not yet been funded.

**Service-Learning Leader: Chicago**

Starting with the class of 2001, all graduates of Chicago Public School are required to complete 40 hours of community service. In 2004, the Chicago Public schools required completion of half of these hours in 9th and 10th grade, with no more than 20 hours served at the school site. In addition, the Chief Education Officer of the Chicago Public schools directed educators to focus service done at the school site on curricular goals. Each school has at least one trained service-learning coach responsible for developing project opportunities. The service-learning initiative in the Office of High School Programs keeps a database of over 200 possible community partners, and provides guidance, staff development, and other resources.

*For more information, please contact the office of the Illinois Lieutenant Governor.*

**REFERENCES**

Learn and Serve

Learn and Serve Indiana is focused on helping subgrantees connect service-learning more closely to curricular goals. As part of this effort, the Department of Education has provided curriculum frameworks designed to help teachers incorporate service-learning into courses. The curriculum alignment frameworks have garnered interest from school corporations — equivalent to districts — that are new to service-learning. Administrators are beginning to see that service-learning helps students solidly meet state standards.

Indiana’s Learn and Serve program offers grants on the school corporation level. Unlike funding individual classrooms, funding corporations promotes sharing of funds, which helps build sustainability. The Department of Education requires corporations receiving funds to provide two trainings each year for teachers who are less familiar with service-learning. In addition, superintendents and administrators in corporations that receive Learn and Serve funding must participate in trainings on quality service-learning and how to integrate it into the curriculum.

Building Networks of Support

Learn and Serve subgrantees in Indiana are limited to six years of funding. In order to help them maintain their programs when federal funds are no longer available, the Department of Education requires each subgrantee to form a Service-Learning Advisory Board. Administrators, teachers, community partners, parents, and students serve on these boards, and provide support for service-learning programs in their corporation. In addition, Service-Learning Advisory Board members from across the state attend an annual Summer Service-Learning Institute, hosted by the Department of Education. Recent institutes have focused on curriculum alignment and youth development.

A key partner of Learn and Serve Indiana is the Youth Philanthropy Initiative of Indiana. Their mission is to promote youth philanthropy through partnerships and collaboration; to support giving and serving among young people through training, education, and resources; and to sustain youth philanthropic efforts in ways that meet local community needs.

Empowering Youth

Several subgrantees have Youth Advisory Boards. For example, Spencer-Owen Community Schools’ YAB handles all mini-grants in their corporation. They make decisions and forward them to the Service-Learning Advisory Board for final approval.
Monarch butterflies were in trouble because of human development, learned Kristen Gryskevich’s third-grade class at White Lick Elementary School. They decided to take action. The third-grade students told fifth-grade students in Lori Tietz’s class about the problem, and soon the students were collaborating on a project to restore the local milkweed plants that monarchs feed upon.

Seeing their enthusiasm, Gryskevich and Tietz helped the students write a Learn and Serve grant proposal to create a butterfly garden with milkweed plants in the local park. The students elected project leaders and studied the essential components of service-learning, designing the “Monarch Mission Program” to fit the criteria. As the project progressed, students had more ideas and decided that the park should have a pathway that was handicap-accessible.

“It was so student-led that it went in the directions they wanted it to go,” said Tietz. “It took a ton of time for us, but I don’t think we would have changed it because it was a great experience for us and for the kids. We just had to be flexible, and remember that what we were teaching them was covering standards.”

The project took the whole academic year to complete, involving students in planting milkweed, constructing fences, and designing the park. According to their teachers, the students didn’t consider it learning, but a fun and exciting project. Student leaders presented their project to Governor’s Conference on Service and Volunteerism where they received the Service-Learning Star award. Now, the park is open to the community and the monarchs have a feeding station on their migration.

Convening and Celebrating

Indiana Campus Compact and the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives hosts an annual conference that brings together all streams of service — Learn and Serve, AmeriCorps, VISTA, and Senior Corps, as well as volunteer centers, community-based programs, and faith-based programs. In 2007 this event brought together 750 participants. More than 200 were Learn and Serve participants or practitioners. The event included student service-learning presentations, faculty and staff professional development programming, and an award luncheon.

For more information, please contact the Indiana Department of Education.
Support Through Policy

In 2003 legislation was passed encouraging the integration of service-learning into curricula and the use of service-learning as a valid form of assessment. In the 2005 Model Core Curriculum, developed by the Department of Education, was adopted by the legislature. In 2006 the AEA service-learning network, the Iowa Coalition for the Integration of Service-Learning, and model core curriculum specialists convened to write service-learning examples satisfying the core model requirements in reading, math, civic literacy, and social studies. The legislature is developing standards in other core curriculum areas, and the Department of Education will continue to provide examples of how service-learning meets the new standards.

Learn and Serve

Learn and Serve Iowa grant funds are distributed to 12 Area Education Agencies, each working with a number of districts, as well as directly to schools. Grantees must tie service experiences to curriculum standards and school improvement plans (reviewed by the Department of Education every five years) and involve as many teachers and students as possible. Many plans focus on civic engagement. Grantees must attend the state’s annual service-learning conference, work with the AEA to produce service-learning presentations, and are encouraged to attend a national conference.

In 2007 Learn and Serve Iowa leaders developed a more complete and comprehensive K-20 vision that connects across all educational levels. The group considered how Iowa pre-service and in-service teachers can be better prepared to use service-learning as a teaching method.

Building Networks of Support

Iowa’s 12 state-supported, regional Area Education Agencies created a service-learning network in 1999 to promote service-learning as an effective instructional methodology for K-12 students and other learners.

The Iowa Collaborative for Youth Development, a non-statutory network of 11 state agencies — whose goal is to improve results by adopting and applying positive youth development principles and practices at the state and local levels — now lists service-learning as a particularly successful youth development strategy.
Students at Merrill Middle School took their civic duty seriously by helping senior citizens learn about the caucus process in Des Moines.

Although too young to vote in the presidential elections, students at Merrill Middle School took their civic duty seriously by helping senior citizens learn about the caucus process in Des Moines. Eighth-grade students planned and hosted the “Caucus Countdown” with the help of their teachers, Dave O’Connor and Georgia Tucker, and funding from Learn and Serve. The November 27th event was attended by 75 seniors and is the first in a series of intergenerational service-learning projects to be held during the school year, aimed at connecting young people with the elderly in the local community.

The students took complete ownership of the project, making a budget, creating brochures, choosing the venue, and inviting seniors and representatives from the presidential campaigns to attend. According to O’Connor and Tucker, the students were sometimes not taken seriously because of their age.

“Students were disappointed by the reception by some of the campaigns,” said Tucker. “They would call and get reactions like, ‘Oh, you’re a kid,’ and not be taken seriously. I think it can be a barrier, especially for middle school kids — establishing their legitimacy can be difficult.”

The students overcame those initial challenges by learning how to act professionally when making contacts with campaigns and senior facilities. O’Connor and Tucker also recommend sending students out with support materials like a letter of recommendation or brochure to gain credibility with adults.

Though the students will have to wait until 2012 to vote for president, their engagement in politics today has helped community members understand the caucus process and learn about the candidates. O’Connor and Tucker believe this experience will encourage them to be active voters in the future.

“The kids were amazed by what they have done,” said O’Connor. “There is a sense of accomplishment.”

Fifty-five percent of the 285 respondents in a civic literacy poll, administered to young people and adults at the 2007 Iowa State Fair, answered yes to “Have you been involved in service-learning?” Additional adult polling will take place at the state Social Studies conference and at the State School Boards Association meeting. Survey results will be shared with the judicial and legislative branches of government, university centers for law and civic education, social studies teachers, service-learning practitioners, and community education leaders.

The governor is interested in proposing $1 million for promoting an Iowa Summer of Service and his own summit on civic literacy. The integration of service-learning into other streams of national service will provide summer enrichment for less privileged young people.

Convening and Celebrating

Between 150 and 375 volunteer specialists, national service participants, educators, and members of nonprofits and the private sector attend the annual Iowa Conference on Volunteerism.

In conjunction with the Iowa Education Association, Learn and Serve Iowa has produced a 28-minute documentary, “Creating Hearts of Service: Service-Learning in Iowa.” The video, which has become a statewide training tool, highlights nine successful service-learning programs in Iowa schools. Learn and Serve Iowa also created a service-learning multimedia resource, “The Presenters’ Tool Box,” which includes a two-disk CD set with “Creating Hearts of Service,” a 250-slide set for presentations about service-learning, and templates for creating unique PowerPoint presentations.

For more information, please contact the Iowa Department of Education.
Building Networks of Support
The strength of the Learn and Serve Kansas program stems from its efforts to bring subgrantees together with other local service and volunteer programs that share a common interest in meeting authentic community needs. All Learn and Serve subgrantees are required to establish Local Partnership Councils including students, teachers, parents, community business leaders, and other community stakeholders. Through these partnerships, program allies help initiate collaborative events with local businesses, organizations, government officials, and faith communities around the shared goals and needs of the community.

Improving Sustainability
Increased community involvement in Learn and Serve Kansas programs has helped establish programs and has made strides toward increased program sustainability. In small communities, school districts and community education programs often share office space, equipment, and staff, enabling sharing the expenses of operating and growing all programs.

Local programs used modest funds from Learn and Serve America as a catalyst to generate further funding and more extensive partnership arrangements with agencies that share similar goals. These agencies have been instrumental in providing low-cost professional development and support to service-learning staff and have helped them identify additional funding sources and grants. The added value and leverage of funds allows programs to expand on-going projects and introduce new projects with new learning opportunities.

Empowering Youth
Each Learn and Serve funded program is supported by a Youth Advisory Board. A board in Ottawa, Kansas led efforts to design and build a skate park in their community. The Kansas Volunteer Commission is currently seeking alternative funding to support Youth Advisory Boards, formerly funded by Learn and Serve community-based grants.

In 2005 the Kansas Volunteer Commission, which houses the state’s Learn and Serve program, partnered with Kids Voting Kansas and Kansas Campus Compact to sponsor the Kansas Youth in Government program. This program helps young people become active and informed citizens by (1) educating them about state government and the legislative process; (2) providing them with simulated experiences working in state government; (3) providing opportunities for them to think critically and independently about state policy; (4) providing an understanding of the Kansas electoral process; and (5) enhancing the leadership skills of participants. The program, first used by civics teachers across the state, has expanded beyond the classroom. Many teachers and leaders now require their students to participate in their local city councils. Local districts are funding the program while
seeking alternative funding, after the loss of Learn and Serve community-based funds that the state no longer receives.

**Support Through Policy**

In 2003 the state required that the Department of Education provide guidelines for the implementation of community service opportunities in every high school. The purpose of the guidelines is to assist high school principals and advisors of student organizations in providing students with service opportunities. The guidelines detail specific ways schools can use service to help students connect to their communities, explore possible careers, and further develop academic, problem-solving, civic, leadership, and social skills.

**Convening and Celebrating**

Learn and Serve grantees and alumni participate in an annual conference including other programs of the Corporation for National and Community Service. The event draws approximately 250 participants each year including young people who are currently participating in Learn and Serve funded programs.

*For more information, please contact the Kansas Volunteer Commission.*

**Addressing needs** in their local community since 1997 has transformed the way students at Spring Hill High School see the world. Teachers Lynda Jochims and Kerri Rodden help students enrolled in a semester-long volunteer class design, coordinate, and implement service-projects that are performed by the volunteer club.

According to Jochims, students who create and implement service projects “get a different view of the world … (and) get to experience diversity where they otherwise wouldn’t.” Projects range from visiting adopted grandparents at assisted living facilities, to taking care of children in a low-income daycare. Along with managing all the project logistics, students hone their composition skills by writing newspaper articles and brochures to publicize the event. Instead of a final exam or paper, students present to the school board and develop a website after the project is completed.

Despite all the hard work involved, young people are eager to be involved in the volunteer club and class at Spring Hill. Jochims finds it amazing how “affected kids are in high school (by the issues) and how they keep participating even after they leave.”

To be admitted in the selective volunteer class, open only to high school juniors, students must attend three service projects per semester with the volunteer club during their freshmen and sophomore years. Jochims and Rodden, who instituted an application process for the class because space is limited, reported 30 percent of freshmen were involved in volunteer club projects last year.
Learn and Serve
Kentucky continues to utilize its network of county community education directors as point people for the state’s Learn and Serve funding as well as for service-learning technical support and trainings across the state. In 2007 the Kentucky Department of Education and Learn and Serve distributed grants equally among 56 community education directors (out of a total of 102 community education directors).

Empowering Youth
The grant application process in Kentucky is non-competitive, but grantees must meet three criteria. First, grantees are required to have advisory boards that include at least 10 percent youths, an effort that has resulted in 97 young people serving on community education advisory boards across the state. Second, teachers and practitioners who receive Learn and Serve funds must be trained in the preparation, action, reflection, and celebration model of service-learning. Finally, grantees must provide at least one service-learning program in their county directed toward helping students make the transition from middle school to high school.

Beyond community education, service-learning has been integrated into federally-funded 21st Century Community Learning Centers as well as state-funded Family Resource Youth Services Centers.

Support Through Policy
In the fall of 2006, as part of a document meant to help state auditors assess school performance, the Board of Education introduced the following definition of service-learning: “A teaching methodology that allows students to learn and apply academic, social and personal skills to improve the community, continue individual growth, and become better citizens” (Kentucky Department of Education 103). This document also includes a rubric that provides a rating of “exemplary” to schools at which “[s]ervice-learning opportunities are fully integrated in the education program of all students” (42).

Building Networks of Support
Teachers and administrators in Kentucky must connect with community education directors to receive service-learning funding. This requirement creates unique opportunities for those working in community education to partner with those working in more traditional educational settings. Joan Howard, the program consultant with the Kentucky Department of Education who oversees the state’s Learn and Serve funding, finds that the connections that develop between teachers, administrators, and community educators lead to a fuller and more integrated education for students.
Growing to Greatness 2008

Young Women Exploring Solutions (Y.E.S.), a culminating senior project, is the challenge for young women at Mercy Academy, a Catholic high school in Louisville, Kentucky. They must develop an action plan that addresses a social justice issue at the local, state/national, and global levels. Equipped with three years of service-learning experience, students have eight months to plan and implement their senior projects on topics of their choice ranging from domestic violence to poverty and war.

Each plan includes direct action, community education, and advocacy. “It needs to be more than direct service,” explained Rick Blackwell, Mercy Academy Service-Learning Coordinator. “The special part is that we have 130 kids thinking in terms of systemic change. That advocacy piece might be the most important because if they don’t get that [experience] here, I don’t know where they will.”

One recent senior project focused on refugee issues. In partnership with Catholic Charities, a small group of students aided a family of six coming to the United States from Iraq. The students held fundraisers to furnish the family’s apartment, met them at the airport, and welcomed them to the country. They initiated petitions for fair immigration laws and educated the local community with a website. According to Blackwell, the family would not have been able to come to this country had the students not adopted them.

Y.E.S. is integrated into the students’ social justice and English courses. The plans go through an approval and refinement process and must include goals, budget, reflection, a celebration directly linked to the service, and a formal presentation.

“The students are overwhelmed with the fact that they really can make a difference,” said Blackwell. The senior project is one final way students fulfill the Mercy Academy theme: “Where girls with dreams become women of vision.”

For more information, please contact the Kentucky Department of Education.

REFERENCES


The Department of Education is phasing in a new statewide student database over the course of the next several years which will include information on students’ participation in school-based service-learning.

Convening and Celebrating

Each year students who participate in Learn and Serve-funded programs attend regional workshops where they present their service-learning projects to peers and educators. These workshops are sponsored by the Department of Education and organized by local districts.

For more information, please contact the Kentucky Department of Education.

REFERENCES


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Convening and Celebrating

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Louisiana

Learn and Serve

In 1993 service-learning found a permanent home in the Louisiana Serve Commission. Through the commission Learn and Serve awards subgrants on the school level, most often directly to teachers. Currently 42 grantees serve more than 3,000 youth. The number of Learn and Serve applications declined following the hurricanes, but have almost returned to pre-hurricane levels. To receive funding, grant applicants must connect projects to the academic needs of students, meet state standards, and fulfill community needs. Proposals must include careful evaluation methodology and relevant program partners and must engage young people in at least 40 hours of service-learning.

Every year service-learning coordinators from each site come together for a training focusing on the stages of service-learning: preparation, action, reflection, demonstration, and celebration. Experienced service-learning coordinators offer guidance and ideas to new coordinators.

Evaluating Progress

Grantees must detail their service-learning programs in an annual portfolio for LSC. Each portfolio includes a description of the project, a needs assessment, an evaluation of outcomes, quotes from participants, photos of activities, and documentation of local, state, or national presentations.

Building Networks of Support

Programs that have participated in Learn and Serve for several years serve as models for newer programs. Those in the fourth to sixth year of funding must demonstrate sustainable community partnerships, sources of matching support, and describe the achievements of former students. Programs that have received funding for more than six years must demonstrate that they reached expected outcomes and show excellence in design, evaluation, and partnership development.

The hurricanes caused Louisiana to lose many partners who had previously offered matching support. To fill this gap, The Joe W. and Dorothy Dorsett Brown Foundation offered to partner with the Learn and Serve program on its Special Initiative Grants and provide a 50 percent cash match. In addition, the Corporation for National and Community Service allowed Louisiana to utilize remaining 2005-2006 Learn and Serve monies to award grants to programs in hurricane-affected areas.

In 2007 the Learn and Serve program partnered with Louisiana Campus Compact for a K-20 service-learning symposium. Teacher candidates from the colleges and universities and K-12 service-learning program coordinators were invited to hear presentations regarding service-learning and disaster preparedness by the Institute for Global Education and Service-Learning. Experienced K-12 service-learning coordinators presented information on how they used service-learning in their curricula to meet the state’s standards, benchmarks, and grade level expectations.
Empowering Youth
Governor Kathleen Blanco signed the Legislative Youth Advisory Council initiative under the administration of the State Commission on Civic Education. Its purpose is to facilitate communication between young people and the legislature on issues of importance to youth.

Service-Learning Leader: WalkAbout
In 2006 the National Youth Leadership Council, in partnership with State Farm Companies Foundation and the LSC, began its Gulf Coast WalkAbout program. During the summer, students at Sophie B. Wright School and Pierre Capdau Charter School in New Orleans documented their Hurricane Katrina stories through oral history projects, planted a flower garden at a local park, and coordinated other beautification projects within the community.

WalkAbout continues through the partnership of LSC, Learn and Serve, and NYLC. A Learn and Serve grant was awarded to Sophie B. Wright to fund programming when school is in session through May 2009. NYLC will provide funding for summer service-learning programming through 2009.

For more information, please contact the Louisiana Serve Commission.

The GATES School in Vernon Parish School System gives 16- to 22-year-olds who were not progressing in traditional schools an opportunity to change their outlook on life. GATES’ student body, 80 percent of whom receive special services, are engaged in service-learning that prepares them for jobs after high school. The students work on projects that meet community needs, combining vocational training and academics. According to GATES teacher Lori Partridge, the students also “begin to believe in themselves, which is tremendous.”

With support from a Learn and Serve grant, GATES students complete several service-learning projects during the school year. In one project, students build handicap-accessible ramps at local organizations. According to Partridge, this is one of the most popular services the students provide since the surrounding community is very rural and lacks resources. The students are in charge of researching how much the new ramp or sidewalk would be used and choose the most appropriate sites. Louisiana Technical College-Lamar Salter Campus has provided support to the students, training them to lay concrete and install the ramps.

In other projects, students built raised garden beds that are wheelchair-accessible for an assisted living facility. They created blankets that are wheelchair-specific and delivered them to seniors in the area. They have also been involved in conservation efforts, building bluebird and bat houses that are used around the state.

The training that students receive can give them a head start in the job market; employers in the community will often call GATES to look for employees. Partridge said, “When you see how much your students and community respond to [service-learning], it’s addictive.”
Building Networks of Support
As in many states, service-learning has been an integral teaching method in Maine for some years, fostered by the nonprofit KIDS Consortium, which has been honored nationwide for its innovative approaches to service-learning and civic engagement. Increasingly, Maine students have taken service-learning projects to scale — expanding projects on gun safety, working against alcohol advertising at family-friendly events, and teaching about shaken baby syndrome.

Learn and Serve
Learn and Serve funding, which in the past had been concentrated in southern Maine, has spread throughout the state, with a focus on high-poverty areas. This is largely due to a change in the way in which grants are administered. In the past, grants had been offered on the district level, but now they are being offered directly to schools. Charlie Hartman, the Department of Education’s Director of School-Based Service-Learning, thinks this allows more schools to hear about and apply for the grants because all schools in the state are directly contacted about available funding. These efforts have led to increased funding for service-learning in alternative schools.

Support Through Policy
In a unanimous decision on October 10, 2007, the Maine State Board of Education voted to adopt revised content standards mandating the inclusion of service-learning in social studies curricula. The new social studies standards require that all students be able to apply “social studies processes, knowledge, and skills” in “authentic contexts.” As part of meeting this standard, students in each grade span must complete a service-learning project or civic action.

The Maine standards also require educators to increase both the reach and the complexity of service-learning experiences as students move toward graduation. Elementary school students focus on addressing a classroom or school need, while high school students focus on community, school, state, national, or international needs. In terms of service-learning complexity, elementary students must “select, plan, and participate in a civic action or service-learning project” and “reflect on the project’s civic contribution.” In contrast, high school students are asked to “select, plan, and implement a civic action or service-learning project... and evaluate the project’s effectiveness and civic contribution” (Maine Department of Education 2007).
As the Portland Museum of Art began preparations for its first exhibit of a deaf artist’s work, it recognized the fact that the deaf community has a distinct culture. Through the exhibit, the museum sought to engage that culture and educate the general public. It asked for help from some of the local deaf community’s youngest citizens — the grade K-8 students at the Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing/Governor Baxter School for the Deaf in nearby Falmouth, Maine.

The museum staff introduced the exhibit, A Deaf Artist in Early America: The Worlds of John Brewster, Jr., to all 15 students. After researching the itinerant painter and his portraits, students compared deaf culture in the 19th century with that of today and brainstormed ways to incorporate current deaf culture into the exhibit. Teacher Julie Clark made easy but profound curricular connections to the students’ history and art lessons.

“I wasn’t sure how interested the students would be in the primitive portraits, but the more we learned the more interested we became,” said Clark. Each student chose one Brewster painting and was challenged to replicate it. They did this by dressing the part, painting the backdrop, then posing to create interactive elements for the exhibit: a photograph of the student signing the word for an object of significance in the painting, and/or a video of the student signing their own interpretation of the painting. The photographs were professionally printed on cards and given to exhibit visitors with an assignment to find the object in the actual painting. The videos played continuously in the exhibit space.

The students were the first to view the exhibit and were honored at the opening night. “The project really evolved into more than I thought,” said Clark.

Convening and Celebrating

Each year students from across the state who have participated in service-learning projects gather at the state capitol building to share their projects with members of the state legislature. The strongest projects are officially recognized by the governor.

For more information, please contact the Maine Department of Education.

REFERENCES

Support Through Policy

In 1992 the State Board of Education adopted a graduation rule requiring students to complete 75 hours of service including preparation, action, and reflection components — or to complete a locally designed program approved by the state superintendent of schools. Since Maryland’s class of 1997 first met the requirement, approximately 55,000 students have participated each year, contributing nearly four million hours of service annually to their communities.

Promoting Quality

From the beginning, education and volunteer leaders recognized that if the graduation requirement were to succeed, schools must provide students with quality service-learning experiences. Toward that end, the Maryland State Department of Education focused resources on providing support for professional development.

Beginning in 1993, the Maryland Student Service Alliance, now merged with the Maryland State Department of Education, began training up to 15 Service-Learning Teacher Fellows annually. Currently, 193 Fellows share their service-learning expertise with colleagues throughout the state.

One project of the Maryland Service-Learning Fellows has been the revision of Spinning Interdisciplinary Service-Learning Webs, a handbook first published in 1995 to help teachers connect service with their specific curricular areas. The revised edition, released by the Maryland State Department of Education in 2007, includes curricular webs focused on aging; the environment; hunger, homelessness, and poverty; literacy; pregnant and parenting teens; prejudice; public safety; and substance abuse.

As part of their continuing efforts to improve service-learning quality, the Maryland State Department of Education also published the Maryland Student Service-Learning Guidelines in 2005. This document insists all service-learning experiences should meet “Maryland’s Seven Best Practices of Service-Learning” which include: (1) meeting a recognized need in the community, (2) achieving curricular objectives through service-learning, (3) reflection throughout the service-learning experience, (4) developing student responsibility, (5) establishing community partnerships, (6) planning ahead for service-learning, and (7) equipping students with knowledge and skills needed for service.

Accountability

Each local school system in Maryland must have an approved and up-to-date service-learning plan on file at the Maryland State Department of Education, which is assessed on the local and state levels. In the first year of the review cycle, the plan must be reviewed by a statewide panel of stakeholders consisting of parents, teachers, students, administrators, and community-based leaders.
Preserving Revolutionary War history is at the heart of a service-learning project for students at Colonel Richardson High School in Caroline County. They were accustomed to hearing about history — after all, their school was named for a Revolutionary War hero. Now they learn about history in class, and work to preserve it at the nearby Linchester Mill, which was once the oldest working business in the country, even selling grain to Washington’s army. Various groups have been working to preserve the mill, which fell into disrepair in the 1970s. Micheal McCray, President of Friends of the Linchester Mill, collaborated with teachers at the school to start a service-learning project pairing history and English class with local action.

The project involved 130 freshmen students who worked over two days to improve the mill’s condition. The students balanced work activities to clean up the site, with tours to learn about the history of the mill from McCray. Students discovered buttons made out of shells at the site, learning that the mill had been used to make them hundreds of years ago. A writing assignment in English class, gave them opportunity to reflect. The Historical Society thanked the students by donating a framed print to the school with a plaque commemorating their work.

Brad Plutschak, history teacher and Service-Learning Coordinator at the school, said that projects like the mill restoration help shift perceptions of service-learning as a significant part of education instead of an add-on. He encourages other educators to get involved in service-learning, stating that “it's really not as daunting as it might seem... [once you start] the kids' energy just takes over.” He also recommends starting a direct project that is local, noting that “kids want to do stuff like this; they just need to be pointed in the right direction.”
Building Networks of Support

For the 2006-2009 Learn and Serve grant cycle, the Massachusetts Department of Education, the Massachusetts Service Alliance, Brandeis University, and Massachusetts Campus Compact have partnered together and received a competitive, school-based grant. This grant, totaling $449,999, is intended for districts working to establish a new community partnership or those planning to deepen existing partnerships.

The four partners are interested in fostering school-community partnerships that involve community partners in all aspects of the service-learning program. The goal is to push schools to engage with community partners as more than sites where students can perform service. These grants will go to at least 16 districts in Massachusetts. The Department of Education and the Massachusetts Service Alliance will provide grantees with at least six trainings focused on building stronger partnerships, high-quality service-learning, youth leadership development, and resource development. These trainings will be open to service-learning leaders throughout the state.

Empowering Youth

The Massachusetts Service Alliance, with funding from Learn and Serve America, has supported over 50 Youth Councils throughout the state since 2000. In addition, the implementation plan for the competitive school-based grant focuses on youth development, engaging at-risk youths, and ensuring that young people have opportunities for leadership through their service-learning projects and elsewhere in their communities.

The Department of Education and the Massachusetts Service Alliance offered a youth-adult partnership training in spring 2007 to help school and community partners enter into a dialogue about strategies for empowering youth.

Evaluating Progress

In 2000 the Massachusetts Board of Education formed the Community Service-Learning Advisory Council to provide guidance to the Board and the Department of Education on how to best employ service-learning as a strategy for improving student academic performance, personal development, and civic engagement. In 2001 the Advisory Board began surveying superintendents to uncover the prevalence of service-learning in Massachusetts. The resulting report, *Fulfilling Our Civic Mission: Service-Learning in Massachusetts*, was published in March 2006.

The Advisory Council found that more than a third of all districts in the state reported the use of service-learning in their classrooms, and that service-learning is most often utilized as a strategy for fostering students’ sense of civic responsibility and connection to the community. The Advisory Council also identified several factors that check the rapid expansion of service-learning practice in Massachusetts.
Massachusetts: lack of funding, teacher overload, and limited professional development. The report recommends increased policy support and advocacy for service-learning, increased resources to support service-learning, increased professional support for service-learning, and a statewide system for collecting service-learning data. The Advisory Council plans to replicate their survey of superintendents every five years.

Convening and Celebrating
The Massachusetts Department of Education brings together at least 250 students, teachers, administrators, community partners, and representatives of higher education for an annual state service-learning conference. Current Learn and Serve grantees are invited to present their programs. Several sessions each year focus on how to sustain service-learning programs. The 2007 conference featured a round table with superintendents about how district leaders can better support service-learning.

References

For more information, please contact the Massachusetts Department of Education.

“Am I doing enough?” is a question many young teachers ask themselves — but few answer like Zach Snow, a biology teacher at Newton North High School, just outside Boston, Massachusetts. Inspired four years earlier by his summer reading of Eco-Economy by Lester R. Brown, Snow reflected on his personal impact. “I have a responsibility to create students who will move our country toward environmental sustainability,” he said.

Snow was satisfied with the way he covered the environment unit; however, he felt he should “do something bigger.” He decided to require year-long environmental service-learning projects of his advanced placement biology students. The process was designed not only to enhance his environment unit, but also to foster a passion for biology — the course’s primary objective. The projects begin in the fall with individual students or small groups choosing local environment-related issues. The students conduct needs analyses and submit detailed proposals. During the second term they partner with community organizations, research their chosen issues and submit in-depth research papers. In the third term, students organize and implement their service-learning projects. They finish and formally present in the fourth term.

One recent exemplary project involved two juniors working on the issues of renewable energy and reducing the carbon footprint. They partnered with a local agency, Green Decade Coalition, to raise funds for solar panels to be installed on Newton Public Schools. They organized a benefit concert called “EnviroJam,” which featured student and faculty musical acts. As event emcees, the students educated the sold-out crowd and ultimately raised $3,000 for the local initiative.

“The most exceptional part is the pride that the students have when they take a project on that they completely own,” said Snow. “Connecting their feeling of accomplishment with a sense of advocacy is my greatest goal.”
Increasing Sustainability

The Michigan Community Service Commission continues to spearhead efforts to promote service-learning. In 2002 the Commission engaged Public Sector Consultants to survey school administrators and found that while youth service was widespread, more work was needed to ensure program sustainability.

These findings led to the focus from funding individual projects toward institutionalizing a process that will sustain programs long-term. MCSC worked with a committee of educators to design a sustainability rubric to plan for and evaluate service-learning programs according to a wide array of indicators.

Learn and Serve

The rubric influenced MCSC’s administration of the 32 Learn and Serve America school-based grants awarded in 2006-2007. Grantees are required to formulate a six-year program plan showing how they will develop sustainability. In the first year, Learn and Serve grantees focus on planning and setting up a professional development plan. Years two through four make up the implementation phase, during which grantees focus on growing the program in light of the Rubric for Sustainability. MCSC conducts site visits to help grantees and give them feedback during this phase. In the final phase, grantees are asked to reach out to other schools and share their service-learning expertise.

Evaluating Progress

In 2005 MCSC contracted with Public Sector Consultants to conduct a follow-up to their 2002 survey of school administrators. They found 4 percent of schools have a service-learning graduation requirement, 10 percent require community service, and 3 percent require both. More teachers use service-learning — from 24 percent to 28 percent. Service-learning continues to be driven by individual teachers rather than wider initiatives — 62 percent of schools reported individual teachers provide their students with service-learning experiences.

As a part of MCSC’s ongoing efforts to improve service-learning quality, RMC Research Corporation conducts an annual evaluation of Michigan’s Learn and Serve subgrantees. In their 2006 evaluation, RMC found statistically significant increases in how grade 3-5 students rated themselves on their ability to make a difference.

Convening and Celebrating

MCSC hosts two annual gatherings for service-learning leaders in Michigan. The Symposium on Sustainability, held for Learn and Serve grantees and former grantees, includes teacher-led workshops, keynotes from national service-learning leaders, and planning sessions. The second event, the Michigan Institute on Service-Learning, co-sponsored by Michigan Campus Com-
serving our community Kid style is an annual service-learning program for all 600 students. SOCKS began three years ago when a parent and a teacher approached Chris Turner, the principal of Independence Elementary School in Clarkston, Michigan, with the idea of a school-wide community service day. What began as simply that, “evolved into a service-learning tradition,” according to Corena Bell, project coordinator and first-grade teacher. Four classrooms of each grade-level focus on a unique project, the components of which are fully integrated into all curricular areas. Kindergartners make and decorate toiletry bags for Haven, a local shelter for abused women and children. First-grade students make dog toys for the local humane society and collect aluminum cans for PAWS with a Cause. The second grade writes letters and makes care packages for service people in Iraq. Third-graders assemble muffin packages, make refrigerator magnets, and write letters for delivery with Meals on Wheels. The fourth grade makes blankets for the local hospital. Fifth-grade students perform a music program for senior citizens, whom they then interview and share a meal with. The seniors are now coming to the school to share their talents with the elementary students.

“we are planting seeds and it grows at each grade level. With that history we are going to see adults who are responsible, caring citizens,” commented Bell. Not only are seeds being planted with the students, but teachers have been inspired by the success of this program as well. Bell added, “the units are getting better and better, and eight of our staff members have decided to do service-learning on their own.”

Empowering Young People
Young people also participate in statewide service-learning efforts through MCSC’s Service-Learning Youth Council, young people in grades 7-12 who promote service-learning and offer trainings throughout Michigan. In 2006 Youth Council members initiated 17 local projects and delivered more than 30 presentations on the service-learning best practice and impact.

For more information, please contact the Michigan Community Service Commission.
Learn and Serve

In past years, Minnesota had received three types of grants from Learn and Serve America to support local service-learning efforts: school-based formula grants, community-based competitive grants, and school-based competitive grants. The state currently receives only school-based formula grants. In addition, the size of Minnesota’s school-based grants declined from $308,526 in 2000 to $238,038 in 2004. Despite reductions in federal funding, Learn and Serve funding supported 13,703 young people as they participated in service-learning programs at 40 schools throughout the state in 2006-2007.

Support Through Policy

Prior to 2003 the Minnesota Department of Education presented service-learning as a teaching and learning strategy particularly suited to Minnesota’s Profile of Learning — a set of state educational standards and frameworks geared toward project-based learning. The Profile of Learning was set aside and replaced with the Minnesota Academic Standards in 2003. At present, officials from the Minnesota Department of Education do not mandate the use of any particular teaching strategy — including service-learning — and there is no current state initiative to include a service-learning requirement or service-learning language in the Minnesota Academic Standards.

In 2005 the Minnesota Department of Education adopted the following definition of service-learning: “Service-learning is a form of experiential learning whereby students apply content knowledge, critical thinking and good judgment to address genuine community needs.” Beyond defining the activity, Minnesota has seen few changes in policy regarding service-learning over the last few years.

The Minnesota Legislature continues to allow school districts to levy $1 per capita for community-education-based youth development programs — including service-learning. This levy is in addition to a general community education levy. The state does not currently assign a position to monitor how these youth development funds are being spent.

Minnesota statute 124D.50, entitled “Service-Learning and Work-Based Learning Curriculum and Programs,” directs the Governor’s Workforce Development Council and the Commissioner of Education to develop a curriculum combining service-learning and work-based learning. The statute also requires schools to provide individuals who are 10th grade and older with opportunities to apply for and participate in service activities. Service-learning is promoted as an effective strategy within career and technical education programs.
In the spring of 2005 what was once a single teacher’s dream became a community’s reality — the windmill began generating usable energy.

“I’ve always dreamt of a windmill;” said Duluth physics teacher Kevin Michalicek after attending a service-learning workshop. Ideas flew at an initial meeting among Michalicek, Kathy Bartsias, the Duluth Public Schools district service-learning specialist, and Andy Remus, a Minnesota Power electrical engineer. A partnership was formed, but they knew the most important link was missing — the students.

Perched on a hill overlooking Lake Superior, Central High School is a perfect windy spot for generating energy. Remus began spending time with Michalicek’s 12th-grade honors physics class, educating his students about alternative energy sources. The students soon became the project’s catalysts, using new knowledge to design logistics and engage others to answer critical questions: What will be done with the energy that the windmill generates? What are the district’s safety concerns and how can they be addressed? Are there zoning limitations that need to be considered? According to Remus, “This was much better than reading [about physics] in a textbook.”

“Everything fell into place. It really was remarkable,” commented Bartsias. Minnesota Power donated the construction of the windmill, including the long connection between it and the once-dark welcome sign it would ultimately light. The Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers and the Duluth Rotary Club also provided funding. “This is an excellent example of cooperation between community agencies and our school system,” said Michalicek.

In the spring of 2005 what was once a single teacher’s dream became a community’s reality — the windmill began generating usable energy. Ever since, the windmill has been used as a teaching tool in a variety of ways, and plans are now underway for windmills at other district schools.

Convening and Celebrating

The Service-Learning Specialist at the Department of Education organizes a state service-learning conference that brings together more than 200 educators and practitioners every three years. The Department of Education also offers service-learning trainings teachers can use as training hours toward renewing licensure. Recent trainings related to service-learning have focused on literacy, at-risk youth, and a fishing curriculum created by Minnesota’s Department of Natural Resources. In addition, the National Service-Learning Conference, hosted by NYLC, returns to Minnesota every five years and brings together nearly 3,000 service-learning leaders — including young people — from across the country.

For more information, please contact the Minnesota Department of Education.

REFERENCES

# Learn and Serve Funding

## K-12 Competitive Grants

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### Note

All states are eligible for K-12 Learn and Serve formula funding. The formula is based on the proportion of school-age youths (ages 5-17) in each state to the total number of school-age youths in all states. For the 2006-2007 year, formula amounts ranged from $33,489 (Wyoming) to $2,266,227 (California). Competitive grants were also available. The information on this page shows competitive Learn and Serve awards in the states profiled in *Growing to Greatness 2008*. 
The following terms are commonly associated with service-learning; the definitions pertain to their application to service-learning.

**Accountability**: Measurable proof — often shown in student achievement data — that teachers, schools, districts, states, organizations, and agencies are efficiently and effectively accomplishing their goals.

**Authentic assessment**: A form of assessment that measures students’ knowledge and skills as demonstrated through real-world products or achievements. Service-learning demonstrates learning through a service project that results in such a product or achievement.

**Civic and Citizenship Education**: Teaching the knowledge and skills necessary for effective civic participation, and connecting education to concepts such as democracy, liberty, responsibility, and freedom.

**Community Service**: Community service is often a form of volunteerism done within a defined community, which could be a classroom, school, town, or city. Typically, it does not have an intentional tie to learning; the emphasis is strictly on service. In the context of the judicial system, “community service” can have a punitive connotation.

**Experiential Education**: Emotionally engaged learning in which the learner experiences a visceral connection to the subject matter. Good experiential learning combines direct experience that is meaningful to the student with guided reflection and analysis. It is a challenging, active, student-centered process that impels students toward opportunities for taking initiative, responsibility, and decision-making.

**High Quality Service-Learning**: Service-learning that meets the K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice.

**Indicator**: A quantitative measure used to predict an outcome.

**K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice**: A set of standards and associated indicators determining the nature and extent to which service-learning practice can be considered as high quality.

**Learning Assessment**: Documentation and evaluation of how well students have met curricular goals and learning objectives. Because of the nature of service-learning, assessment activities such as portfolios, rubrics, and anecdotal records are appropriate in addition to standard approaches such as test and papers.

**National Service**: Service programs organized by national governments to promote the welfare of their citizens. Participants are often young people in emerging adulthood.

**Positive Youth Development**: A body of theory that identifies factors that support the development of young people into caring, capable, and civically engaged adults.

**Project Evaluation**: The process of evaluating how well a service-learning project achieved its goals, and what impact the project had on participants and the community. Project evaluation is separate from student assessment.

**Reflection**: A critical component distinguishing service-learning from community service. Reflection is the conscious review and critical analysis of the service performed, giving meaning to the service and enhancing the understanding of classroom concepts.

**Service-Learning**: A philosophy, pedagogy, and model for community development that is used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or content standards.

**Social Capital**: The features of social organization, such as networks, norms, and trust, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit.

**Youth Service**: An umbrella term identifying program models, titles, and organizations whose youth provide service to their school and/or communities. The term should not be confused with “youth services,” which typically refer to programs that serve youth.

**Youth Voice**: Young people have ownership of and an active say in the selection, design, implementation, and evaluation of a service-learning project.
More about Growing to Greatness

The desire to serve, to do meaningful work that is of value to other people, is universal. Growing to Greatness provides community leaders, educators, and policy-makers with critical information and resources to mobilize local people, including neighborhood youth[s], to solve local problems. It is an important overview of the service-learning field’s progress to date in creating not only active citizens, but also future leaders eager to be the agents of change.

Dorothy Stoneman
President and Founder, YouthBuild USA

Growing to Greatness 2006 brought renewed power and insight to our shared commitment to service-learning and its impact and potential on “both sides of the hyphen.” Together, NYLC and State Farm are playing an important leadership role for the field—by making the case, pointing to what works, and reminding us yet again that we will only achieve the full promise of this great country when young people are viewed as important resources and partners in the work to be done.

Marguerite Kondracke
Executive Director, America’s Promise – The Alliance for Youth

NYLC and State Farm are giving a great boost to the service-learning field with each annual publication of Growing to Greatness. The information is not only useful for those of us “in the business,” but it provides a compelling argument for young people, educators, elected officials, parents, corporate leaders, and anybody who cares about student achievement and the health of American democracy.

Steven A. Culbertson
President and CEO, Youth Service America

Growing to Greatness continues to offer some of the most valuable reading in the service-learning field. Whether you are a researcher, administrator, or practitioner, you will find timely, lively, well-documented information that will assist you in your quest to improve both schooling and community life.

Drs. James and Pamela Toole
Compass Institute and the University of Minnesota

Growing to Greatness is a wonderful resource on service-learning that fits well with strategies for school reform outlined in NASSP’s Breaking Ranks II and Breaking Ranks in the Middle.

Gerald N. Tirozzi, Ph.D.
Executive Director,
National Association of Secondary School Principals

Growing to Greatness is a must-read resource for policy-makers, practitioners, and any member of the public interested in service-learning. It’s practical, highly readable, and full of rich detail about this important and ever-changing field.

Shirley Sagawa
Author; Consultant; Former Executive Vice President,
The Corporation for National Service

Growing to Greatness recognizes and celebrates the work done daily by dedicated young people, educators, and civic leaders to promote and expand service-learning in schools and communities across the country. The examples, profiles, and articles of this report are incredible resources for those of us committed to nurturing generations of engaged learners and active citizens ready to participate in our global community.

Nelda Brown
Executive Director, National Service-Learning Partnership

Growing to Greatness is an exceptional source of information and ideas about the status of service-learning. It provides perspectives on service-learning as a field of practice and subject of study; reports empirical evidence from survey research; presents profiles of practice in particular places; and features highly intelligent thinking about this work in the years ahead.

Barry Checkoway, Ph.D.
University of Michigan School of Social Work

Across this country our youngest citizens are stepping forward to shoulder the responsibilities of active citizenship through service-learning in ever-expanding number. Thanks to State Farm and NYLC, this pioneering movement comes to life through the pages of Growing to Greatness.

Harris Wofford
Former U.S. Senator, Pennsylvania; Former CEO,
Corporation for National Service
State Farm and NYLC are to be congratulated for providing this important resource and for contributing to a deeper understanding of the service-learning movement. Growing to Greatness clearly documents the contributions service-learning is making to the intellectual, personal, civic, and moral development of students.

Ira Harkavy
Associate Vice President and Director, Center for Community Partnerships, University of Pennsylvania

Growing to Greatness documents how youth[s], families, and communities are working toward educational and social change, and is essential reading for anyone interested in youth development. Growing to Greatness provides fresh perspectives and intellectually stimulating arguments on the merits of service-learning.

Chris Kwak
Program Director, W.K. Kellogg Foundation

An excellent resource that answers questions many policymakers, education leaders and other education stakeholders ask: What is the current status of service-learning across the country? What does quality service-learning look like? What are examples of policies for states and districts?

Terry Pickeral
Executive Director, National Center for Learning and Citizenship

Growing to Greatness demonstrates the importance of providing meaningful opportunities for youth[s]. It’s an especially important resource for schools that have not invested in service-learning because it will convince them to get involved.

Patti Smith Ed.D.
Associate Director, Secondary School Redesign
The Education Alliance, Brown University

Growing to Greatness is the best available resource on the state of K-12 community service and service-learning in this country. The evidence presented overwhelmingly supports the reach of this work, and includes research findings, policy information, and state and program profiles in clear, easily digestible summaries.

Jeffrey Howard, Ph.D.
Associate Director for Service-Learning at the University of Michigan’s Edward Ginsberg Center for Community Service and Learning

Growing to Greatness offers readers essential information to understand and advance service-learning. Long-time practitioners will feel a sense of pride at the state of service-learning. For people new to the field, G2G captures the meaning and value of service-learning for young people and teachers, provides encouraging research results, gives you lessons on ways to implement service-learning, as well as helpful resources.

Carol Kinsley, Ed.D.
Corporation for National and Community Service, Board of Directors, National Service-Learning Partnership, Chair, Board of Directors

We know that young people’s hope, passion, and energy can provide vital fuel to community efforts to improve. Growing to Greatness not only offers a comprehensive scan of the “how, what, where, and when” this exciting work is taking place, it also paves the way for the movement’s continued growth by organizing information for policy-makers, practitioners, researchers, and anyone who cares about youth[s] and change into a true one-stop shop.

Karen Pittman
Executive Director, The Forum for Youth Investment

Engaging youths in the advancement of civil society is a fundamental component of the promotion of positive youth development. This landmark report documents the important contributions being made by community-based, service-learning organizations in enhancing the lives of our nation’s youths.

Richard Lerner, Ph.D.
Director, Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development, Tufts University

Growing to Greatness documents the power of learning that engages young people as active citizens in their communities. An excellent resource for educators, policy-makers, and community activists.

Rachel B. Tompkins, Ed.D.
President, Rural School and Community Trust

Growing to Greatness is an excellent resource for learning about the state of service-learning in the U.S.A. and for getting a bird’s-eye view of the research that is needed for its progress.

Don Eberly
President, International Association for National Youth Service
About Growing to Greatness

Growing to Greatness makes clear the case for service-learning by demonstrating how quality service-learning experiences can broaden and deepen schooling’s impact. It does so by synthesizing research and by providing descriptions of initiatives that work. This volume will be valuable to service-learning educators. And perhaps it is even more important to get this into the hands of those who focus on educational policy and reform. Growing to Greatness highlights important and often under-valued gaps in many schools’ priorities and practices and shows how service-learning can help educators respond.

Joseph Kahne
Abbie Valley Professor of Education
Dean, School of Education, Mills College

Growing to Greatness 2008 is a unique resource about the state of service-learning in the U.S. — there is nothing comparable. The series of these annual reports has provided a very useful documentary on the service-learning landscape as it has evolved by citing research, discussing topics of interest to practitioners, and raising important policy questions. NYLC has provided a service to the service-learning community of practice by compiling information and resources that support our work to create high quality programs and facilitative policy. And in the end, we need this kind of information to support the role we believe young people should have in transforming their communities and their education.

Susan E. Stroud
Executive Director, Innovations in Civic Participation

Over the past five years, the Growing to Greatness annual reports have become essential desk (and backpack!) companions for those writing about, organizing, and participating in service-learning programs throughout the world. Each report provides snapshots of the current state of research alongside concrete examples of service-learning programs in action. This interplay in bridging the research and practice makes G2G’s publications enormously useful.

Joel Westheimer
University Research Chair in Democracy and Education
University of Ottawa (Ontario)

Service-learning through volunteering is one of the most effective ways to enrich young people’s lives by enhancing personal and social growth. Through civic engagement, young people can develop leadership skills, explore career opportunities and appreciate how individual contributions can make our community a better place to live.

Congresswoman Betty McCollum, MN-04

Those of us in higher education need to pay attention to what is happening in K-12 service-learning. High school students are coming to expect service-learning experiences as part of their college education, and we need to be ready for them. Growing to Greatness helps the higher-ed community understand the trends and outcomes for younger students in civic engagement.

Gail Robinson
Manager of Service-Learning
American Association of Community Colleges

Once again NYLC has created a useful and thought-provoking annual report on the state of service learning. The Growing to Greatness series has become a reliable source of reflections by leading figures on both where the field is and where it needs to be headed. By tapping a broad range of authors who provide both new insights and challenges, this essential publication helps build a stronger, intellectually grounded field — one that can help shape the future. It combines the best of lessons from research and practical examples that inspire. Congratulations on another successful year!

Dale A. Blyth, Ph.D.
Associate Dean for Youth Development, University of Minnesota

For 25 years NYLC has been a clear, constructive, compassionate voice for some of the most effective methods to improve not only schooling, but also learning. Many of the schools in the U.S. with the highest test scores are also strong believers in service-learning. The more we listen to NYLC, the better our youngsters will do.

Joe Nathan
Senior Fellow, Director of the Center for School Change
University of Minnesota