



San Diego Unified School District

Fact Sheet

LEARN AND SERVE San Diego

LEARN & SERVE San Diego, the district's service learning program, is a partnership between San Diego Unified School District and Volunteer San Diego, with support from the University of San Diego Office of Community Service Learning. Entering its fourteenth year, the program promotes student volunteerism in the community and integrates that experience into the classroom curriculum (i.e. language arts students acting as cross-age tutors, technology students developing websites for non-profit agencies, U.S. History students serving as poll workers during elections, etc.).

What is service learning?

Service learning is a teaching strategy that integrates community service with classroom curriculum, helping students see communities as places of learning. Reflection is a **required** component of the service experience. Students learn "beyond the classroom" and grow through active participation in organized activities and experiences that:

- meet real community needs, including the needs of the school;
- develop academic, leadership and employment skills;
- are integrated/infused into the total curriculum;
- are not isolated service activities; but rather, provide structured time for a person to reflect upon the actual service activity;
- foster the development of lifelong commitment to community service and the ability to work effectively as a team member; and
- are based on the PARC (Preparation, Action, Reflection, Celebration) model.

Research shows that infusion of these integrated teaching strategies improves critical thinking, communication and planning skills, while enhancing the targeted curricular framework.

How does service learning differ from community service?

Traditional community service does not integrate service within the classroom curriculum; activities are usually one-time, isolated experiences. Service learning activities are generally ongoing projects whereby students identify a community need and are empowered to take a leadership role in all phases of the project. These activities are integrated within the classroom curriculum. Student reflections are encouraged throughout the entire service project through essays, class discussions, art projects, plays, videotaping, etc. Students who participate in service learning projects/activities are also eligible to receive service learning recognition on their report cards.

What resources are available for teachers and students wishing to implement service learning?

The Community Relations Department and Volunteer San Diego provide assistance to administrators, teachers, parents, students and local agencies in project development. Classroom presentations and staff workshops are available upon request. The Community Relations Department provides service learning manuals for administrators, teachers, students and agency personnel, as well as a required *Authorization for Student Participation in Service Learning* form. Volunteer San Diego provides volunteer opportunities for students through the *Guide to Youth Volunteer Opportunities*, a compilation of more than 300 local non-profit agencies wanting to work with youth.

SUMMARY

During 2006-07 school year:

- ❖ 16,057 students participated in service activities.
- ❖ More than 90,230 volunteer hours were logged by these students.
- ❖ More than \$66,215 was raised by students for various school, local and national causes through their participation in service projects.
- ❖ Value of volunteer hours was approximately \$1.7 million (based on an hourly rate of \$18.77 as established by the Independent Sector).
- ❖ The Board of Education unanimously approved a district service learning policy in May 1998.

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http://www.sandi.net/depts/comm_relations/service_learning.html

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