



DISTRICT LESSONS

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The Philadelphia Story: A Guide to Service-Learning System Building

By Kenny Holdsman and David Tuchmann

Introduction to the Guide

In June 1998, the Board of Education of the School District of Philadelphia passed a resolution mandating that all students demonstrate citizenship competencies by completing a service-learning project for promotion to grades 5 and 9 and for high school graduation. This resolution, part of *Children Achieving*—Philadelphia’s education reform plan—launched an initiative supporting service-learning practice on an unprecedented scale for one school district.

Four years later, the District had formed partnerships with over 250 community agencies, trained 2,400 teachers in the philosophy and methodology of service-learning, and leveraged approximately \$20 million per year in financial and in-kind resources to support this initiative.

Since then, the District has received countless requests for information about this initiative. These inquiries include such questions as “What specific policies support this effort?” “What types of funding were used?” and “What key staff functions are required to manage such a large initiative?” This guide provides answers to these questions and many others.

Guide’s purpose

The purpose of this guide is to tell the story of the Philadelphia service-learning initiative from the perspective of two people deeply involved with its formation and implementation—Kenny Holdsman and David Tuchmann. Kenny served as the Philadelphia School District’s director of service-learning from 1998, when the Board of Education passed the citizenship competencies mandate, until 2002. David served as assistant director of service learning during the initiative’s strategic planning process in 1998 and coordinated the District’s Freedom Schools high school leadership program in 1999, its first year.

Information about service-learning implementation at the district level is rare. We have crafted this guide for those eager to extend the benefits of service-learning to an entire district of students. In this guide, we describe all aspects of the Philadelphia service-learning initiative and lessons learned through it. We provide “how to” advice for constructing the key components of a support system for service-learning. And we offer our opinions regarding the efficacy or shortcomings of the Philadelphia model.

We hope this information will support district-led adoption and expansion of service-learning practice as well as increase dialogue about the best ways to do this.

Guide’s intended users

We believe that this guide to district-wide, service-learning system-building will be most relevant to superintendents, school board members, senior-level administrators, service-learning coordinators, and district-focused activists. In addition, we think that service-learning advocates—including teachers, students, principals, community staff, and parents—will find this guide helpful for promoting service-

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learning with key district decision-makers. We are confident that this guide will be useful to readers in small urban districts, suburban and rural districts, or individual public and private schools, as well as to readers from districts as large as Philadelphia.

Guide's organization

This guide is divided into the sections and corresponding subsections in the table of contents below. We present the guide in this order because it roughly matches the conceptual order of planning for system-wide service-learning use. Consequently, the order of topics within each section does not necessarily follow the chronological order of implementing a whole district initiative. In addition, we have organized this guide so that readers may skip to topics they find most relevant. The table of contents includes hyperlinks for “one-click access” to each topic.

Table of Contents

Introduction to the Guide.....	1
Guide's purpose.....	1
Guide's intended users.....	1
Guide's organization.....	2
Guide's authors.....	4
Acknowledgements	4
Rationale for Requiring Service-Learning	5
Education for citizenship and democracy as the rationale for service-learning	5
What are citizenship competencies?.....	5
Service-learning as a catalyst for better education	6
The Philadelphia Initiative.....	8
Philadelphia's requirement	8
Why is a requirement necessary?	8
Who should create and issue the policy?.....	9
Flexibility within schools to meet the requirement	9
The advantages of project-based as opposed to hourly-based requirements	10
How are service-learning projects organized?.....	11
Which project topics are “out of bounds?”.....	12
Individual students' service-learning projects	12
Infrastructure.....	14
Strategic positioning of the service-learning staff	14
Central office staff roles	14
Maximizing central office staff time	15
Regional and school staffing	16

Appropriate roles for AmeriCorps members and parents 17

Young people in governance and leadership roles 17

Improving youth voice..... 18

Funding 19

 Leveraging internal operating funds 19

 Securing external public and private funding 19

 Final funding advice 21

Professional Development 22

 Goals and training profiles 22

 Using outside consultants 22

 Including community partners in training 23

 Results and challenges..... 23

School-Community Partnerships 25

 Categories and roles of main partners 25

 Forming partnerships 26

Political Support..... 27

 Superintendent leadership..... 27

 Teacher and administrator support 27

 Community leaders’ influence..... 28

 A service-learning advisory committee 28

Roadblocks and Solutions 30

 Existing policies 30

 The importance of mini-grants 30

 Scheduling and report-card grading..... 30

 Consistent and clear answers to common questions 31

Concluding Comments 32

 Current use of service-learning in Philadelphia..... 32

 Feedback and closing words 32

Appendix A: Citizenship Cross-Cutting Competency 33

Appendix B: Essential Elements of Small Learning Communities in the School District of Philadelphia 39

Appendix C: Service Learning Work Plan Goals & Strategies through June, 2002- excerpt 40

Guide's authors

The views and opinions expressed in this guide are those of authors, Kenny Holdsman and David Tuchmann. All statements expressing advice, recommendations, or beliefs are exclusively our own. Even when we use the pronoun “we” to encompass the District leaders and teachers involved in the service-learning initiative, we are still presenting the Philadelphia story as we see it.

Kenny Holdsman is the managing director of the National Service-Learning Partnership. Sponsored by the Academy for Educational Development in New York City, the Partnership provides strategic leadership to advance service-learning as a common experience for all students in the United States. Kenny directs the W. K. Kellogg Youth Innovation Fund, which promotes innovations in youth-directed civic action using a service-learning framework. The Fund integrates several “action pathways” for youth engagement, including service-learning, youth philanthropy, youth in governance, youth organizing, youth social entrepreneurship, and youth-generated media. In addition to his work with the Partnership, Kenny also co-directs the newly launched Campaign for the Civic Missions of Schools, which is funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.

Prior to this work, Kenny served as the director of service-learning for the School District of Philadelphia for five years, as a member of the W. K. Kellogg Learning In Deed Steering Committee, and as the first board chair of the National Service-Learning Partnership. Additionally, he is an adjunct faculty member of the Temple University College of Education. Kenny was an attorney at the Philadelphia law firm of Ballard Spahr Andrews & Ingersoll and the legislative director to Congressman Robert E. Andrews (D-NJ). He has been a member of the board of the Philadelphia Student Union for eight years. Kenny can be reached at kholdsma@aed.org.

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Acknowledgements

Without David Hornbeck's bold and brave leadership of the Philadelphia school system, we would not have a story to tell. We are honored to have served in his administration. We hope this guide will help spread his message: American schools have a critical role to play in preparing young people for informed and active participation in the democracy, and service-learning is the pedagogy-of-choice for supporting students' development of citizenship competencies.

We want this guide to honor the work of the many teachers, administrators, students, and community partners who played such a significant role in making service-learning part of the educational experience of thousands of Philadelphia students.

For contributing to this guide, we thank David Hornbeck, Betsey McGee, Terry Pickeral, Shelley Billig, Kate McPherson, Jim Toole, Kathy Havens Payne, Theo Luebke, Danielle Jacobs, Carolyn Garber, Elayne Archer, Aaron Hawn, and Kelly Nuxoll.

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Rationale for Requiring Service-Learning

Education for citizenship and democracy as the rationale for service-learning

An emerging body of research is beginning to demonstrate service-learning’s positive effects on students’ learning and development. These positive impacts include academic achievement, workforce competency, civic preparedness, personal, social, and emotional development, and decreased at-risk behaviors. District leaders should be able to describe these effects in order to persuade key stakeholders to support a district-wide service-learning initiative. However, in Philadelphia, we did not promote service-learning as an all-purpose “Swiss Army Knife” that would benefit students along many dimensions of learning. Instead, service-learning was selected as the primary way to meet the District’s formal educational objectives for student citizenship preparation. Such preparation was deemed essential to Philadelphia schools’ fulfilling their civic mission.¹

We began with the premise that preparing students to be informed and active citizens of a democratic society is one of the central purposes of public education, along with preparing them for academic achievement and workforce participation. Early leaders of the United States valued school as a critical means to establishing an intelligent and engaged citizenry and as the only social institution with the capacity to reach each generation. School offers students opportunities to engage in learning activities that address real-world challenges, while at the same time deepening their understanding of how individuals and groups relate to their large communities.

In Philadelphia, District leaders decided that developing students’ civic beliefs, knowledge, and skills was a core educational principle. Based on its power as a teaching methodology, service-learning was selected as the central vehicle by which the District would support students’ achieving citizenship outcomes. Linking citizenship preparation and service-learning was critical to broadening the use of service-learning.²

What are citizenship competencies?

In Philadelphia, citizenship competency was not framed as a subject or content area. Citizenship preparation was defined as a “cross-cutting competency” that should be addressed across the curriculum.³ Citizenship preparation is more than acquiring knowledge of our country’s framing documents and principles in a history lesson. Such preparation must also involve mastering civic knowledge, participating in local problem-solving, and contributing to democratic government. The District’s curriculum frameworks defined a good citizen’s core beliefs, knowledge, and skills, as follows.

Beliefs—a responsible, active citizen:

- has a personal vision of how he or she fits into a community and knows that individual actions affect the whole community.
- understands that fellow citizens have equal rights and that differences in backgrounds and beliefs should be respected.
- is willing to take risks to challenge the injustice or indifference of the status quo.
- has a sense of duty to serve others as a condition for participating in a democratic society.

¹ The Carnegie Corporation of New York and The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning & Engagement (CIRCLE). *The Civic Mission of Schools*. 2003.

² Shelley H. Billig. “The Impacts of Service-Learning on Youth, Schools, and Communities: Research on K–12 School-Based Service-Learning: 1990–1999.” <http://www.learningindeed.org/research/slresearch/slrsrchsy.html>.

³ See Appendix A for the Philadelphia School District’s “Citizenship Cross-Cutting-Competency” description.

Knowledge—a responsible citizen knows/understands:

- the laws and rules of the U.S. and the rights and responsibilities of individuals.
- U.S. history and its significance, the country’s primary democratic institutions, the core stakeholders and institutions that make up a community, the levers of power, and how power structures can be accessed.
- alternative government systems under which freedoms may not be guaranteed.

Skills—an effective citizen can:

- evaluate and advocate for or against an issue of public importance.
- recognize different viewpoints and the motivations behind them and think constructively to formulate alternative policies or solutions for social challenges.
- assess the strengths, weaknesses, and needs of a community.
- work as a member of a team and recognize the unique strengths that individual members possess.
- engage in effective civil discourse and peacefully resolve conflicts with others.

Service-learning as a catalyst for better education

In this guide, we emphasize the importance of promoting students’ active citizenship as a central obligation of a school district. We believe that service-learning is a critical teaching method for fulfilling this obligation, as well as for supporting positive academic and youth development outcomes. As important, service-learning can make education a truly collaborative community effort. Schools cannot thrive in a vacuum. Administrators who partner with local public and private institutions help provide their districts with essential resources, additional expertise, and an enriched perspective. Investing in partnerships for service-learning projects often yields long-term opportunities for joint ventures in other areas of school and community life.

For example, several public high schools and elementary schools in West Philadelphia paired up with the University of Pennsylvania Center for Community Partnerships to launch the Urban Nutrition Initiative. In this initiative, students of all ages cultivated urban community gardens and sold affordable fruit and vegetables in their neighborhoods as well as herbs to local restaurants. Also, students disseminated health and nutrition information. With plans for a full-service farmers market underway, including paid employment for students on the weekends, this initiative is promoting local economic development, and the business community is supporting the District in a systematic way. Additionally, students have spent time on the university campus, and the seeds for long-term partnerships with the university have literally been sown.

Students’ service-learning projects can also help a school district pursue its overall goals in a more effective way. For instance, if a district identifies increased school safety as its goal, students can design service-learning projects that contribute to meeting this aim. Projects centered on safe corridors and conflict resolution have improved school climate. Another example: if a district wants to strengthen its contributions to “environmental sustainability,” students can be encouraged to undertake projects focused on recycling, technology refurbishment, and resource conservation. Early in the initiative, we found that describing school safety and environmental sustainability as potential benefits to using service-learning as a teaching method helped increase school administrators’ and teachers’ support for service-learning.

Philadelphia's Rationale for Requiring Service-Learning: Four Key Points

1. Making citizenship preparation the primary reason for requiring service-learning is critical to the success of a district-wide service-learning initiative.
2. Service-learning is a powerful teaching methodology for supporting students' acquisition of the skills, knowledge, and beliefs of democratic citizenship.
3. Service-learning projects contribute to school district priorities and strengthen local community-building efforts.
4. Teachers and administrators are receptive to instructional strategies that benefit students, schools, and communities, making service-learning a desirable teaching method.

The Philadelphia Initiative

Philadelphia's requirement

For promotion to grades 5 or 9 and to graduate from high school, Philadelphia students had to complete a citizenship project using service-learning. These projects were not completed during one particular year or subject (grade 8 English class, for example). Students could complete the project at any time before promotion or graduation (for example, a student could complete a project during grade 2, which would qualify later for promotion to grade 5). According to Philadelphia's citizenship competency promotion and graduation requirement, each service-learning project had to:

- involve writing, research, and a connection to two curricular areas.
- meet a genuine and authentic need, issue, or problem through service or advocacy.
- include reflection and self-assessment.
- include teacher involvement and assessment, using a formal rubric during the design and reflection stages of the project.
- include the presence of an adult, expert community partner outside the classroom, in addition to the teacher.

Why is a requirement necessary?

When a school district acknowledges its civic purposes alongside its academic and vocational purposes, it must provide opportunities for all students to develop citizenship competencies. Given the political realities of standards and high-stakes testing, citizenship education can easily get “crowded out” if it is not part of a district's priorities and required curriculum.

What our society values most from public education, it chooses to require. We value science, English, and math as essential curricular areas. Therefore, we require students to take certain courses and demonstrate a level of proficiency in these areas. Given that time and money are the two scarcest resources in public education, it follows that we support the education we require with financial, human, and technical resources. Topics viewed as optional, extracurricular, or merely for enrichment purposes are often the first on the chopping block when funding is cut.

Consequently, if a district wants to engage all students in citizenship education and take service-learning to scale, the district must create a policy requirement that encompasses citizenship and service-learning. In the current educational climate in which standards, testing, and accountability dominate the “incentive structure” for districts, a policy embracing citizenship education and service-learning practice is essential.

There are several other reasons for requiring service-learning that the Philadelphia initiative illustrates and that our colleagues who have attempted to scale service-learning without a requirement have confirmed:

- While some teachers and principals will immediately embrace service-learning as “good teaching,” a critical number of school personnel will need additional reasons or motivations for employing a new instructional methodology. The reality that their students will not be promoted without completing a citizenship competencies project compels some teachers and administrators to give service-learning a chance.
- A mandate encourages administrators in key district offices, such as assessment and accountability, grants, curriculum support, professional development, and communications, to devote time and energy to supporting service-learning. For example, from a strictly financial perspective, the office or internal district committee that decides which departments will be

authorized to pursue public and private funding must value service-learning as a high priority. A mandate encourages this result.

- A district-wide requirement offers legitimacy and weight to the goal of promoting citizenship education through service-learning. School and district leaders must allocate staff time and other resources to enable students to comply with the mandate. In this environment, teachers stand a better chance of getting the kinds of support they need to teach service-learning well.

Who should create and issue the policy?

The formal power structure of a district (in most cases the board of education) must codify a mandate as part of the district's promotion and graduation policies in order to require all students to participate in service-learning. When David Hornbeck became superintendent in Philadelphia, he already had plans to craft such a mandate. He therefore was the central catalyst for taking service-learning to scale. However, in other school districts, the majority of school board members could craft the policy, or a group of parent, student, and teacher advocates could lobby the superintendent or board to pass such a policy.

David Hornbeck felt that citing citizenship and service-learning in the District's mission or vision statements would not on its own bring about system-wide implementation. Our conversations with colleagues in other districts have confirmed that, without the force of District policy, a mission statement often remains a lofty aspiration because it is not supported by a corresponding infrastructure and resource allocation. A formal policy that is part of the District's accountability system gives a citizenship education and service-learning initiative the support required.

Along with adopting a formal policy requirement, key administrative offices should be responsible for ensuring that a strategic work plan is developed to build the necessary infrastructure (see [Infrastructure](#) section) and to flesh out the details of implementing the requirement. In Philadelphia, for example, staff members from the assessment, curriculum, and service-learning offices designed assessment rubrics so that teachers and students could evaluate service-learning projects, in terms of both the process and the outcomes. This collaborative process ensures that senior administrators in district offices concerned with curriculum and instruction help develop the formal criteria for judging whether a citizenship/service-learning project is satisfactory.

Flexibility within schools to meet the requirement

In Philadelphia, the board resolution, the service-learning project required elements, and the assessment rubrics were non-negotiable, but each school had the autonomy to decide in what ways its students would meet the requirement. In 1998, when we were contemplating how to structure the requirement, some administrators wanted to "nest" the service-learning projects in the English or social studies curriculum. However, we ultimately decided that restricting projects to one subject area, and therefore to one set of teachers, would be detrimental to the healthy expansion of the initiative.

We recognized that some teachers, often those who used lecture-oriented instruction, would not adapt to service-learning as naturally as others. Forcing this group of teachers to help construct rigorous and engaging projects with their students did not seem to be wise. Instead, we preferred to allow teachers to self-select their involvement in the initiative, knowing, of course, that principals would "lean on" teachers to become involved should too few teachers within a school choose to use service-learning.

We also encouraged theme-based small learning communities (SLCs, sometimes called "schools within schools") to develop interdisciplinary projects that aligned with their missions. SLCs focusing on law, health, technology, or environment, for example, created ambitious and innovative projects. Further, teachers within the same SLC began sharing content expertise across subject matters to enhance the

quality of service-learning projects. Placing the requirement in a particular grade or subject area would have stifled this sort of creativity and collaboration.⁴

Finally, while a district-wide service-learning and citizenship requirement is admittedly a very top-down way to promote change, flexibility in how schools implement the requirement allows administrators, teachers, and students to shape the content and direction of their service-learning projects. In retrospect, school-level flexibility was crucial in encouraging innovative educators of all grade levels and subjects to engage their students in service-learning.

The advantages of project-based as opposed to hourly-based service-learning requirements

For students to learn effective citizenship skills, they require more than episodic public or community service experiences. Project-based service-learning helps students analyze a community problem, explore its root causes, and identify and pursue potential solutions. Because service-learning is inquiry-, knowledge-, and problem-based, it is an ideal way for students to develop citizenship beliefs, knowledge, and skills. Furthermore, because citizenship education is grounded in the school curriculum, it enhances students' intellectual engagement.

From our experiences, observations, and conversations with other district leaders, we have found that policies requiring students to create a curriculum-connected service-learning project are more effective than policies requiring students to complete a minimum number of hours performing community service. Hourly service requirements lack intentional learning and do not demand that students inquire into and analyze the underlying causes or contexts of a community issue. From the perspective of students, teachers, administrators, and community agencies, hourly requirements are not nearly as beneficial as project-based service-learning for fostering students' civic knowledge and skills.

The Philadelphia policy required students to complete an academically rigorous, project-based service-learning experience, involving a teacher and adult community partner and addressing an authentic community need, issue, or problem. (See [Philadelphia's requirement](#) for a description of the required elements of a service-learning project.) Working in concert with expert community members, students take on leadership roles in designing, creating, and implementing a project. This approach promotes citizenship skills, empowers teachers and students, and fosters positive community changes. To achieve these outcomes, a school district clearly must commit additional resources, but we believe the benefits of project-based service-learning are worth the investment.

Unlike many districts where only high school students must meet community service or service-learning requirements, Philadelphia's policy was premised on the belief that students' acquisition of citizenship competencies must begin early and extend throughout their education. Young people are ready at all grade levels to explore issues of community, self, and civic engagement. Because service-learning involves support from both teachers and adult community partners, any age student can participate in a high-quality service-learning experience.

When adults tell students they must spend a requisite number of hours serving their communities, many young people view the mandate as punitive. Students interpret hourly minimums as "clocking hours." Even if students are given a list of groups needing volunteers, it is the student's responsibility to schedule the hours and produce a signed paper as proof of completion.⁵ In this model, students will likely believe that adults do not value these activities. They may think to themselves, "If school leaders think service is

⁴ Please see Appendix B for Philadelphia's description of the "Essential Elements of Small Learning Communities."

⁵ See "Maryland Service Learning: Classroom Link Weak?" by Michelle Galley from *Education Week*, v. 23 no. 7, p. 6, October 15, 2003, for a discussion of Maryland students seeking to meet hourly service requirements. In Maryland, the only state with a service-learning requirement, students must complete 75 hours of service-learning to graduate from high school.

so important, why don't they devote instructional resources to it, as they do with math, writing, and physical education?" By requiring students to pursue public service alone, hourly requirements unintentionally downgrade citizenship training to a lower priority.

In comparison, a project-based requirement supports use of service-learning as a powerful instructional strategy in which educators and students collectively explore community issues. This teacher-facilitator role contrasts sharply to the potentially limiting role of an hourly record keeper, in which service is decoupled from academic instruction and teachers check off service participation as they would account for signed field trip permission slips. When service-learning is recognized as good pedagogy, teachers cannot help but view it as essential to their instruction.

Additionally, time-driven community service creates no expectation for teachers to guide and contextualize students' experience, helping them explore underlying social and policy dilemmas. Teachers are the critical link to student learning: without them, the agencies at which students serve become the sole facilitators of their learning experiences. While some community personnel can ensure students' rigorous learning and reflection, most agency staff members are more effective collaborating with trained educators.

At their worst, hourly "placements" often include mundane and poorly contextualized tasks. For example, filing, faxing, answering phones, and stuffing envelopes may represent crucial volunteer needs for community agencies but these experiences are unlikely to engage students in meaningful learning and civic participation. Additionally, when students are deployed in the day-to-day operation of a community agency, they may not understand that civic improvements and social change happen through coalitions and groups. Effective service-learning and civic action necessitate students working collaboratively.

How are service-learning projects organized?

Students, teachers, parents, and administrators commonly ask how and by whom project topics are selected in Philadelphia. In the classic methodology of service-learning, students, teachers, and community partners undertake a process beginning with a community exploration, mapping exercise, or "town meeting" discussion to identify a public issue or problem of mutual concern. Through these techniques, students reach consensus on the community problems they will address through service-learning. Often, students divide into different groups to examine subtopics of one theme. Also, the class may divide the responsibilities of one project by phases such as research, community outreach, and documentation.

Using this methodology, teachers allow "youth voice" and the youth-led aspects of service-learning to flourish. Students acquire and apply knowledge, with the teacher serving as facilitator and coach. However, this approach to instruction is more challenging for educators to practice. During the past several years, approximately 10% of teachers in Philadelphia who were involved in service-learning used these youth-led methodological approaches to begin a service-learning project. For the teacher, this classic methodology is more labor-intensive, less predictable, more challenging with younger students, and requires a high level of experience as a facilitator of student-centered, experiential learning. Therefore, this method may not represent a "comfortable point of entry" into service-learning for the majority of teachers.

To allow for multiple entry points for teachers, our community partners, in collaboration with teachers and central office staff, often developed service-learning projects in which several classrooms of students could engage. We also generated district-wide projects where the topics, curricular connections, and community partners had already been selected.

Teachers also chose the topics for many service-learning projects in Philadelphia. A faculty member may be an environmental advocate or a technology expert or have relationships or affiliations with community partners or faculty at local colleges and universities. Teachers can teach more comfortably and expertly

focusing on issues and partnerships they already know. While these projects are not initiated by students, they often are extremely complex and enriching, as teachers can begin planning months in advance.

Our overall advice on this issue is that there is no “one size fits all” methodology for designing and executing a service-learning project. Some teachers will use the classic methodology, others will tap into pre-existing projects, and still others will design their own projects. It is crucial for the healthy expansion of a district-wide service-learning system to promote all these options. Yet, we do regret that more projects did not involve youth voice in the design phase. In retrospect, spending additional time encouraging and training teachers to see community problems through the eyes of young people might have increased the number of teachers willing to allow students a larger role in developing and delivering service-learning projects. This in turn would have strengthened students’ experiences.

Which project topics are “out of bounds?”

Inevitably, some project topics raise eyebrows. They are regarded by schools, districts, or community members as contentious, controversial, or maybe just a little too close to home. For instance, in Philadelphia, students initiated projects about safe sex and condom distribution. In another project, high school students advocated to overhaul what they felt was an unsatisfactory multicultural curriculum. Similarly, middle school students asked the Philadelphia City Council to put more pressure on the District to remove high levels of lead from their drinking water. In a final example, high school students, in partnership with outside advocacy organizations, researched state education funding discrepancies before educating legislators about the need for a more equitable funding system. Students argued that such a policy change was needed to enable urban and poor rural school districts to gain parity with wealthier suburban districts.

In these cases, we did not seek to determine whether the politics of the projects were philosophically acceptable by any predetermined standard or to any administrative body, even when the defined target of a project’s advocacy efforts was a school or the District itself. We instead relied on the District’s service-learning project “elements” as the sole criteria for approval. In nearly every instance, controversial projects included writing and research connected to two curricular areas, addressed a genuine problem or issue, involved a teacher and an adult community partner, and fostered reflection. Projects meeting the requisite elements were approved, regardless of their philosophical orientation.

If the students who disseminated information about safe sex had posted materials about abstinence or “protecting the life of the unborn,” the project still could have met the required elements. The components of good service-learning pedagogy, not the merits of a particular ideology, should determine whether a project is in bounds. To do otherwise is to squelch the very freedom of expression and advocacy that citizenship education promotes. However, each district has its own view of citizenship engagement. Local advocates for service-learning must carefully navigate these political waters to balance supporting students’ active citizenship with keeping influential district leaders on board the service-learning ship.

Individual students’ service-learning projects

Service-learning practice is ideally organized among a classroom of students working collaboratively with one or more teachers and community partners. In this way, service-learning becomes an academically integrated teaching and learning strategy. However, classroom-based or group-based projects were not the only ways for Philadelphia students to meet the service-learning requirement.

Some students developed “independent track” service-learning projects. These projects do not emanate from the classroom but originate from a student’s individual connection to an issue or community group. The student often works independently with a community agency. In these situations, a student finds or is assigned a teacher adviser to help in designing and assessing the project, which must still meet all the District’s service-learning elements.

On average, an independent track service-learning project is more susceptible than a classroom-based project to becoming a community service internship, with a less formal connection to instruction and the academic curriculum. However, some high schools in Philadelphia opted to align the service-learning project requirement with a senior internship or exit project requirement rather than integrating service-learning projects into the curriculum. In the spirit of flexibility previously described, we believe that independent track projects should be supported in order to secure widespread backing for a district-wide requirement. We recommend, therefore, that any district implementing a system-wide requirement allow and prepare for the inclusion of independent track projects.

The Philadelphia Initiative: Seven Key Points

1. A district that wants to engage all students in citizenship education and take service-learning to scale must create a policy requirement and an assessment strategy.
2. Key administrative offices must support the formal policy requirement and ensure that a strategic work plan is developed to build the necessary infrastructure.
3. The formal power structure of a school district, in most cases the board of education, must codify the mandate in the district's promotion and graduation policies in order to officially require all students to participate in service-learning.
4. Flexibility at the school level is crucial to encouraging innovative educators of all grade levels and subjects to engage their students in service-learning.
5. Project-based service-learning, more than an hourly service requirement, helps students effectively analyze a community-based problem, explore its root causes, and look for potential solutions.
6. There is no "one size fits all" methodology for designing and executing a service-learning project. Some teachers will use the classic methodology, others will tap into pre-existing projects, and still others will design their own projects. It is crucial for the healthy expansion of a district-wide service-learning system to promote all of these options.
7. The components of good service-learning pedagogy, not the merits of a particular ideology, should determine whether a project is in bounds.

Infrastructure

Strategic positioning of the service-learning staff

In Philadelphia, the service-learning staff was initially situated in the Office of Education for Employment whose primary charge was to administer vocational and school-to-career education. To a certain degree, service-learning and school-to-career share common pedagogical roots as real-world contextual learning strategies. Additionally, while service-learning was more heavily focused on citizenship preparation, and school-to-career or workforce preparation, they often complemented one another.

Although service-learning is the quintessential “inside-outside” practice, with work focused both in schools and in communities, we believe that service-learning infrastructure and capacity should be more heavily weighted toward the school or academic side. Emphasizing the school’s role addresses the most challenging parts of service-learning system-building—providing teachers with appropriate professional development, enhancing projects’ academic rigor, and supporting schools embracing service-learning philosophically and organizationally.

Accordingly, a district’s office of service-learning should be situated within the academic branch of the administrative structure. Placing the service-learning office in a social service or community outreach department will weaken staff’s ability to promote service-learning as a rigorous academic pedagogy. Coming from an academic department, service-learning staff will have better access to leaders who oversee professional development, principal leadership, and curriculum development. In Philadelphia, residing in the Office of Education for Employment, a department with combined academic and community outreach goals, enhanced the ability of service-learning staff members to advance an ambitious initiative.

In addition to the particular department in which the service-learning office is situated, the level of authority or power also has practical and symbolic importance. In Philadelphia, Kenny Holdsman reported to a cabinet-level administrator, who in turn reported to the superintendent. We think the director of service-learning should be no more than two direct reports away from the superintendent or chief academic or executive officer. Otherwise, those responsible for leading the service-learning initiative lack the necessary leverage to implement system-wide changes. For example, we have observed that in other large school districts, directors of service-learning who are not positioned at a senior level frequently get saddled with time-intensive responsibilities unrelated to service-learning. Additionally, these leaders are often frustrated when it comes to influencing major policy or funding appropriation, decisions that can be pivotal to the success of an initiative.

Central office staff roles

To implement an ambitious service-learning mandate, a district must make a strong staff commitment. In the following sections, we describe core staff members and their functions and examine the optimal use of internal district or central office staff members (within the reality of budget constraints).

In Philadelphia, we were fortunate to have staff members in all these positions:

A director who ideally should:

- be experienced in and oriented toward system-building, as well as understand the complexities of school and community institutions.
- be a skilled manager of projects, people, and strategic long-term planning.
- be able to articulate the district’s vision for service-learning, explain service-learning to many different audiences, and describe its roots, philosophy, and rationale.

- be effective in promoting the initiative publicly with funders, members of the media, and district leaders, as well as adept at “making a pitch” in front of small and large groups.
- be conversant with concepts of school and instructional change, even if he or she lacks teaching credentials.

A service-learning expert who ideally should:

- be fluent in the teaching and learning side of service-learning methodology as well as competent in helping teachers and students create curricular connections that maintain academic rigor and use appropriate assessment strategies for hundreds of service-learning projects.
- be a veteran teacher who has standing with faculty in the district. If this staff member has worked with similar students and successfully practiced service-learning, other teachers will be more inclined to accept his or her recommendations as sound.
- be patient and skilled at providing technical support to small groups of teachers and students.

A community expert who ideally should:

- be the counterpart of the service-learning expert, working intensively to cultivate relationships with community partners.
- have a background in community organizing, social work, or youth development.
- have a good reputation and be respected in many neighborhoods within the district. The more widely known this person is, the better.
- empathize with the experiences of people in community-based organizations, recognizing that often these organizations do not view schools and school districts as great partners. By acknowledging the history of community groups and their possible frustrations with a school or district, this expert works to foster mutual understanding and strengthen relationships between schools and community-based organizations.

Teachers on “special assignment” who:

- are critical for peer-to-peer training and project development. They can serve in this role for as little as one to two years, or serve in a part-time role so that they can still teach a reduced course load. These teachers should be respected faculty members who have fostered some of the most innovative and effective service-learning projects in the district.
- can demonstrate and talk about recently completed projects during service-learning teacher trainings.
- may also develop and promote their own service-learning projects as models.
- are seen by other teachers as easy to relate to and not as representatives of the central office. The teacher on special assignment can say during a training, “Let me tell you how I approached my school principal when I believed she was not fully supportive of my classroom’s project ideas.”

Maximizing central office staff time

The service-learning staff members should spend as much time as possible working on core functions. Core functions include planning and organizing professional development opportunities, cultivating relationships and partnerships with key community groups, and building schools’ capacities to support service-learning. Central office staff must build lines of communication with key offices in the district so that other staff members can provide additional resources and expertise to the initiative.

A central office expert in service-learning pedagogy could spend 150 hours writing a federal grant application. A community expert on staff could devote days to writing press releases, designing a service-learning promotional video, and courting local television coverage. However, these activities would greatly decrease the office's ability to perform its core functions. Instead, it is the district's communications office that should interact with the media; the grants office should take the lead role on writing applications; and the legal, business, and transportation offices should provide their services to the initiative as well. As we discussed in [Rationale for Requiring Service-Learning](#), the service-learning mandate should serve as important leverage in gaining support from these other offices.

Regional and school staffing

If a large school district is separated into regions, and regional offices oversee grade promotion and graduation requirements, these regional offices may have a staff member whose duties include service-learning. In Philadelphia, we placed one such staff member in each of our District's 22 "clusters."⁶ Mostly former teachers, these staff helped train teachers, build partnerships with community groups, and oversee the overall implementation process. While these staff were highly motivated, their time was spread very thin. We had sufficient funding to assign only 30-40 percent of their time to service-learning, and each staff member had 20 schools in his or her portfolio. Therefore, the depth of their impact often varied, depending in part on their individual skills and the receptivity of their schools.

Following a round of administrative staff cutbacks, we implemented a second staffing plan to employ a network of "service-learning teacher liaisons." The teacher-liaisons established a baseline of support and responsibility for service-learning in every school and spent eight hours each month serving the following roles:

- Interfacing between the central office and their schools. When there were opportunities for training, partnerships, recognition, seminars, guest speakers, or small grants, the liaisons promoted these with other faculty.
- Practicing and modeling service-learning for other teachers, and sometimes providing individual training and advising.
- Serving as the main advocate for service-learning in their schools. When principals began to decide how the school would meet the requirement, this role became particularly important.

Teacher liaisons convened monthly, primarily to share information and opportunities. However, we also developed a learning network and affinity group among them, allowing them to solve problems collectively and benefit from each other's experiences. Through frequent e-mail exchanges, liaisons actively supported one another by sharing successes and challenges in implementing service-learning school-wide.

We think that school-based teacher-liaisons are preferable to regionally based staff members, provided that the school principal supports and recognizes the authority of the teacher-liaison; other faculty members view this person as knowledgeable and helpful; and the liaisons can devote a critical number of hours towards service-learning. Staffing school-based teacher-liaisons provides greater returns than assigning regional administrators to serve 15-20 schools across multiple program areas. School-based staffing also puts "a face" for service-learning in every school building.

Service-learning is a complex teaching pedagogy. The rewards are immense, but the pedagogy requires teachers to invest in their own learning and maintain flexibility. Teachers who use this demanding teaching method without any supports often burn out quickly. Therefore, we believe that failing to build

⁶ A "cluster" in Philadelphia served 10,000 students in a neighborhood high school (and perhaps a specialty high school), two or three middle schools, and six or seven elementary schools.

networks, affinity groups, and other opportunities for teachers to share their experiences could be detrimental to a system-wide initiative.

Appropriate roles for AmeriCorps members and parents

In Philadelphia, 50 to 60 of our schools had one or more AmeriCorps members who helped to support and promote service-learning. They also helped to organize large projects and conduct reflection sessions. While some national service advocates see AmeriCorps members as the ideal school-based service-learning coordinators, it was our experience that Corps members and parents who were assigned to coordinate both the school and community sides of the partnership usually succeeded at only half this role.

The vast majority of Corps members and parent volunteers are energetic and enthusiastic about designing and promoting service-learning projects. Corps members are especially valuable in that they serve as positive role models for students and, by virtue of most of their ages, make service-learning a socially acceptable and even “cool” activity. Parents, on the other hand, often bring many local connections with community groups, spend valuable time (which teachers may not have) reaching out to new groups, and serve as chaperones. However, both these groups are ill-prepared to determine and plan curricular linkages for projects and are often unpersuasive in convincing faculty that they should embrace a new way of teaching. Further, Corps members and parents frequently do not have instructional experience or enough standing to fully succeed in the role of service-learning coordinator, particularly when service-learning has instructional implications, as in Philadelphia. In our experiences, a young Corps member or a parent cannot ensure the level of academic rigor and richness we expect from a high-quality service-learning project. As a result, we encourage districts to involve Corps members and parent volunteers in making community partnerships and assisting in the design and execution of service-learning projects, but we do not recommend relying on them as primary coordinators if resources are available to hire professional personnel.

Young people in governance and leadership roles

We believe that a necessary and powerful component of a system-wide service-learning initiative is supporting young people as leaders and decision-makers. Accordingly, we made every effort to place youth in roles that developed their leadership skills and provided them with access to the channels of power. Our goal was to allow students to participate in decisions that affected their schools and communities. Some examples of these opportunities include the following:

- Through the Youth As Resources Program, we implemented youth grant-making boards in eight high schools. Students surveyed and assessed the challenges and assets of their communities, solicited proposals, and distributed mini-grants for service-learning projects. In this way, these students participated in their own service-learning project, exploring how to best allocate resources and catalyzing other projects as well.⁷
- Youth-Driven Service-Learning Centers in selected high schools and middle schools distributed mini-grants and served as “mini-advisory boards” for service-learning in individual schools and clusters.
- The Freedom Schools Junior Servant-Leader Program provided culturally relevant academic enrichment, community empowerment training, and leadership experience to hundreds of high

⁷ For more information on Youth As Resources, check out <http://www.yar.org/yarwhat.html>.

school students. Students acquired not only skills but also the satisfaction of using organizational supports and structures to make a positive community impact.⁸

Improving youth voice

These activities and opportunities, along with some ambitious and challenging service-learning projects, certainly gave students outlets for leadership in Philadelphia. Nonetheless, our initiative did not change the school cultures enough to give students a stronger voice in some of the most important and pressing decisions facing their schools. In general, we found that most traditional student government structures “tokenize” youth by allowing them autonomy only in regard to social events and minor policies. When it comes to school budget appropriations, safety plans, professional development priorities, or student dress code policies, students are rarely “at the table.”

We think that excluding students from the decisions that affect their school—perhaps the most significant institution in their lives—is a missed opportunity to prepare young people to be good citizens. Learning and debating an issue, making a decision that affects oneself and one’s community, and then exploring and studying the consequences of that decision can be an empowering process for students. In hindsight, we should have used the initiative more strategically, helping young people become involved in the formal power structure of their schools and district. Change of this magnitude requires careful preparation involving students, principals, teachers, and parents. We are confident that, had the Philadelphia initiative had more years to develop and expand, we would have devoted resources towards making schools more democratic.

Infrastructure: Seven Key Points

1. A school district’s office of service-learning should be situated within the academic branch of the administrative structure.
2. The director of service-learning should be no more than two direct reports away from the superintendent or chief academic or executive officer.
3. The four key central office staff positions for a service-learning initiative are the director, the service-learning expert, the community expert, and teachers on “special assignment.”
4. Service-learning staff members should spend as much of their time as possible working on core functions, not on tasks better suited to a separate district office.
5. A school-based staffing plan provides greater returns than assigning regional staff to serve 15-20 schools across multiple program areas.
6. AmeriCorps members or parent volunteers are not well-suited to be the primary coordinators of service-learning sites if resources are available to hire professional personnel. However, they are effective as role models and liaisons to the community.
7. Service-learning should support young people as leaders and decision makers. Specifically, students need support to participate in the formal decision-making structures of their schools and districts.

⁸ Freedom Schools, a program of the Children’s Defense Fund’s Black Community Crusade for Children, has information available at <http://www.childrendefense.org/freedomschools/default.asp>.

Funding

Leveraging internal operating funds

In order to support the central office service-learning staff described in the [Infrastructure](#) section, the school district must make a serious commitment of funds. However, these funds should leverage significant resources from many other entities and sectors.

In Philadelphia, the District annually appropriated \$500,000 to \$600,000 in internal operating budget funds to cover central office staff costs. This amount represented merely 0.03% of the District's \$1.7 billion annual operating budget. The District and its many service-learning partners raised an additional \$3 to \$4 million annually in grants from external (categorical) sources. These funds covered professional development, research and evaluation, summer youth leadership programming, mini-grants for service-learning projects (see [The importance of mini-grants](#)), supports to service-learning provider organizations, and some other costs. The subsection below describes how and where we secured outside funding.

The large "service-learning provider organizations" also contributed \$8 to \$10 million annually in in-kind services. (See [School-Community Partnerships](#) for a [definition](#) of these types of organizations.) Some of these groups included the Pennsylvania Service-Learning Alliance, Institute for Service-Learning, National School and Community Corps, the Red Cross, Kids Around Town, City Year, the University of Pennsylvania Center for Community Partnerships, Earthforce, Champions of Caring, Need In Deed, the Greater Philadelphia High School Partnership, and the Temple University Center for Intergenerational Learning. Most of these groups were already engaged in service-learning activities before the District's initiative took shape. As our partners, they devoted staffing, materials, and other resources to specifically and strategically support our students and our initiative.

The final block of funding came from the 250 predominantly neighborhood-based community partners involved in service-learning projects across the District. These community groups boosted the initiative with approximately \$10 million annually in financial and in-kind resources. Many of these organizations hired additional staff members who, among other things, interfaced with local schools for service-learning projects.

In total, the District's \$4 million in internal and categorical funding comprised one-sixth of the annual \$24 million service-learning budget. The internal operating funds alone leveraged over 40 times their external funding.

Securing external public and private funding

Each year, in collaboration with the District's internal development committee and grants office, the director of service-learning pieced together a diverse mix of funding sources to support the initiative. Drawing on virtually every sector and level of government to gain funding from local, state, and federal sources as well as the philanthropic and business sources, the director and his office consistently courted new funding partners and attempted to stay "in front" of upcoming program expansions.

Public money. Over the years, many colleagues have asked about public sources of service-learning funding. The only public money that is federally designated for service-learning comes through the Learn and Serve America grants of the Corporation for National and Community Service. In Philadelphia, we received approximately \$250,000 per year from the state's pass-through of these funds. Since service-learning is an "allowable activity" for other public monies, we had to persuade internal District officials and sometimes the staff of external public agencies to allocate funds to service-learning that could have supported other programs.

We received funding from the City's Park Commission and from the Philadelphia Department of Human Services. We secured \$500,000 from the Pennsylvania Safe Schools Initiative. From the federal Department of Education, the District received Elementary and Secondary Education Act Title I, IV, and V funds, including the Perkins Vocational Education, Character Education, and Safe and Drug Free

Schools programs. Small portions of these federal formula monies were allocated internally within the District to support various components of the service-learning initiative. We also received funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, now called the Institute of Education Sciences, at the U.S. Department of Education. Lastly, from the federal Environmental Protection Agency, we received competitively awarded funds for environmentally focused service-learning projects as well as for mini-grants.

We would like to draw special attention to an additional source of public funds. The U.S. Department of Labor's Workforce Investment Act, formerly known as the Job Training Partnership Act, focuses on low-income youth with employment barriers. While each state and municipality allocates these funds in a slightly different way, service-learning directors should make sure their school districts have access to these funds for summer and possibly year-round youth leadership development and career opportunities using a service-learning framework. In Philadelphia, we used these funds to support the Junior Servant-Leader component of the Freedom Schools initiative for five years, thanks in part to a productive alliance with the Philadelphia Youth Network, the city's intermediary for youth workforce development.⁹ More than half of the approximately 6,000 students participating in these programs are engaged in service-learning.

Additional agencies that we did not pursue, but that most likely have resources to fund service-learning, include the federal Departments of Justice, the Interior, Energy, Health and Human Services, Transportation, Agriculture, Commerce, and Housing and Urban Development. Most of these agencies have divisions devoted to either youth programming or community improvements. We recommend that districts attempt to align service-learning purposes with a specific agency's mission and objectives.

Private money. Large national foundations as well as smaller, local and regional foundations contributed significant resources to the Philadelphia initiative. Some of these grants were parts of larger blocks of funding awarded to the District, while others were generated as the superintendent and director of service-learning courted institutions for funds specific to the initiative. Some small awards went directly to individual schools. Foundations also awarded grants to service-learning provider organizations as well as to our smaller community partners. These types of foundation grants were crucial because they often directly supported the district-wide requirement.

When our community partners applied to foundations for funding, these partners often consulted District service-learning staff members and requested a letter of support. Sometimes, program officers and executives from these foundations also asked for our input on proposals. Because the foundations viewed these awards as supporting our initiative, whether the District was the direct grantee or not, we thought strategically about each application and sometimes asked partners to fine-tune their proposals to align with the District's overall objectives. We also focused on the District's larger funding priorities, not just on the needs of service-learning, as we considered which philanthropic institutions to approach and when to do so.

We engaged businesses by demonstrating that service-learning projects could align with their vision or match their interests. For example, State Farm Insurance Companies supported service-learning projects related to automobile and traffic safety. Hardware stores donated costly paint and other supplies for murals. In other situations, we approached corporate community outreach departments or companies interested in making charitable contributions. The Comcast Corporation provided students, teachers, and some of our community partners with scholarships and a large recognition banquet. The Philadelphia Bar Association and the GMAC Commercial Mortgage Company contributed to the initiative. Because the

⁹ Funding for our local Freedom Schools and the Junior Servant-Leader component became more difficult after the resignation of Superintendent David Hornbeck. However, through our partnership with Marian Wright Edelman and the Children's Defense Fund, we were able to work effectively with local private and public funders to secure continued funding.

partnerships advanced their philanthropic objectives, generated public recognition, and garnered tax benefits, businesses found it rewarding to collaborate with us.

Final funding advice

Building a list of financial supporters for service-learning should not require tireless pursuit of every funding source in the country. There are many viable sectors and sources for funding. Gaining inroads and connections to each is a gradual process and so is the growth of a service-learning system. However, we do recommend doing homework upfront.

Creating a blueprint—a comprehensive work plan detailing the goals and activities of an initiative—is a great place to start.¹⁰ This blueprint should also contain potential funding sources, including in-kind services for each activity. This clear purpose prepares central office staff for long-term goals and encourages any potential financial supporter that the overall initiative can be expressed concretely. Funders will also appreciate seeing their potential niche in the larger scope of the initiative.

We then recommend working from the inside out. Start by advocating for and securing ongoing internal district operating funds. Then, approach public and private sources available locally and regionally. Next, use these first two types of commitments to demonstrate to state, national, and public agencies that the initiative has the matching funds and services necessary to warrant large commitments. Finally, with many pieces of the funding puzzle already in place and a completed work plan, approach national philanthropic institutions. Securing support from these groups can be difficult, but large foundations can make substantial commitments if they are interested in a district's work.

Funding: Five Key Points

1. To support the central office service-learning staff, the school district must make a serious commitment of funds. However, these funds should leverage significant resources from many other entities and sectors.
2. Districts should search creatively for public monies and persuade agencies that service-learning is the most compelling use of their resources.
3. Businesses find it rewarding to collaborate with districts because the partnerships advance their philanthropic objectives, generate public recognition, and garner tax benefits.
4. The clarity of an organizational blueprint prepares central office staff for long-term goals and encourages any potential financial supporter that the overall initiative can be expressed concretely.
5. Start by securing ongoing internal district operating funds. Then, approach local and regional funding sources. Next, use these commitments to approach public agencies at the state and national level. Finally, with many funding sources in place and a strategic work plan completed, approach national philanthropic institutions.

¹⁰ A two-page excerpt from Philadelphia's service-learning blueprint is included in Appendix C.

Professional Development

Goals and training profiles

Professional development for service-learning, both in its delivery and funding, must be integrated into the school district's larger professional development structure. Every district spends considerable operating funds on these efforts, and the director of service-learning must advocate for a significant portion of these funds. While external grants can cover some professional development costs, the district must commit its fair share.

As an illustration of the cost of faculty-staff time for a 16-hour service-learning retreat, consider the following figures. In Philadelphia, we trained 250 teachers during our summer retreats and employed 20 teacher leaders as facilitators. At that time, the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers had negotiated the cost of professional development at \$28 per hour and \$36 per hour for teacher leaders. In staff time alone, this training cost a total of \$123,520.

With 12,000 teachers in the District, we estimated that to meet the service-learning requirement, one-third of the faculty must meaningfully practice service-learning. Considering that not all teachers trained would employ service-learning with their students, we aimed to train 6,000 teachers. We feel strongly that presentations during free periods or even half-days cannot prepare teachers to effectively implement the major elements of good service-learning practice. Therefore, the majority of our trainings occurred off school grounds during the summer and ran for 12–16 training hours. Our major trainings included the following:

- A focus on why citizenship competencies and service-learning are important and a discussion of the many positive impacts of the teaching method.
- An explanation of what service-learning is and the district's required elements, including assessment.
- Answers to the "how" questions—transportation and liability issues, student accountability, applying for mini-grants, classroom versus independent track projects, and such.
- Experiential learning. Participants created "curricular webs," planned for the field component of service-learning, and left with a template for a potential project they could use in their own classrooms.
- Teacher-facilitated discussion in which teacher leaders offered examples of their own successful projects, thus providing authenticity and legitimacy to the event.
- Participation by staff members of key community groups.

Using outside consultants

The degree to which consultants are necessary in these types of trainings depends on the internal capacity of central office service-learning staff and teachers. When the board resolution in Philadelphia passed, the District already had a significant amount of service-learning underway. We cannot overstate the importance of this momentum in the early stages of the initiative and at training events. Before the District adopted its service-learning requirement, the District's school-to-career office was already increasing service-learning activities and training and technical assistance; and colleges and universities were developing service-learning partnerships with schools and communities. These initial activities led to a number of first-rate service-learning projects conducted by outstanding teachers. These "early adopter" teachers provided the grassroots momentum critical to launching an initiative with high-level, top-down support. These teachers in turn contributed to our earliest professional development sessions and allowed us to limit use of consultants.

We hired the National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC) to deliver the training in collaboration with our central office and teacher leaders for our first two multilayer training retreats. At the time, we felt that we did not have the capacity to plan logistically for 275 people and ensure a high-quality educational experience. We also wanted teachers to see that service-learning was not a fad or a homegrown initiative. NYLC's involvement demonstrated that service-learning was part of a legitimate, nationally emerging field. After two summers, we decided we had generated enough local capacity to run large, off-site trainings as well as regional and school trainings. We continued to use earlier models and materials, but we customized and adapted our approach. We were also able to subcontract some components of the training to local service-learning provider organizations that had built their own capacity by participating in earlier trainings.

Including community partners in training

We decided that training community agencies' staff alongside teachers was beneficial to the service-learning initiative for numerous reasons:

- Staff from large volunteer mobilization groups (the United Way, the Volunteer Center, Philadelphia's Promise, etc.) can quickly build momentum and introduce other nonprofits to the initiative.
- Local community agencies and their staffs understand the core challenges of a neighborhood. Many teachers do not live near where they teach and may have little knowledge of community organizations close to their schools. Training provided teachers with a chance to network with neighborhood agencies.
- Community partners must understand the mission and philosophy of service-learning. They need to grasp the differences between community service and service-learning, recognizing that service-learning projects must be academically rigorous. At these trainings, we were also able to describe the academic and citizenship outcomes we sought.
- We wanted community partners to understand that we did not view them as the primary "beneficiary" of service-learning projects. A partner's central role is to add real-world content and expertise to the issue or problem being addressed by students. When students, teachers, and community partners work collaboratively, everyone is more likely to embrace notions of mutuality and reciprocity.
- Because community staff or members did not require compensation for their time, the cost of including them was minimal.

Results and challenges

In four years, we trained many of the District's principals and senior administrators, 2,400 teachers, and hundreds of community partners. This figure is well shy of our original goal of 6,000. Limits on time and money were the main reasons for the reduced participation.

We believe that many untrained teachers may not have maximized the benefits of service-learning teaching and may have "checked off" projects without enough attention to the required elements. We also believe that a small percentage of teachers shouldered most of the burden, training their peers, leading several class projects per year, and advising countless independent track projects as well. However, by June 2002, we had trained enough teachers and put the necessary infrastructure in place to provide sufficient opportunities for students to meet the District's service-learning requirement.

Perhaps the more important challenge is to provide training and ongoing professional development to support teachers using service-learning methodology to its fullest potential. In retrospect, we would have liked more service-learning projects that addressed complicated, pressing, and contentious issues; involved civic inquiry focused on root causes of problems and their systemic solutions; concentrated on

social justice, advocacy, and community change (instead of direct service delivery); and included more youth voice.

We would also have liked to have spent additional time on intensive trainings with school principals, helping them understand how service-learning can support and strengthen a school's pedagogical and philosophical mission. In this way, principals might have become the local advocates for and catalysts of service-learning expansion. However, these wishes do not negate or discount the astonishingly large number of high-quality service-learning projects that were developed in Philadelphia. Rather, our goal is to see schools and communities benefit even more from all that service-learning has to offer.

Professional Development: Five Key Points

1. Major staff development trainings should focus on citizenship preparation, describe service-learning, answer logistical questions, engage participants experientially, and include teacher facilitators and community participants.
2. The degree to which consultants are necessary in running trainings depends entirely on the internal capacity of central office service-learning staff and teachers.
3. Inviting staff members from community groups to attend trainings benefits the initiative.
4. Ongoing professional development must challenge teachers to use service-learning methodology to its fullest. Trainings should encourage teachers and students to design projects that address complicated, pressing, and contentious issues, involve civic inquiry focused on systemic solutions, concentrate on social justice, advocacy, and change (instead of service delivery), and include "youth voice."
5. Additional time should be spent on intensive trainings with school principals, helping them understand how service-learning can support and strengthen a school's pedagogical and philosophical mission.

School-Community Partnerships

Categories and roles of main partners

Throughout this guide, we have mentioned different types of partnerships that the District and schools formed with organizations to provide “real-world expertise” to each service-learning project. At the core of the service-learning methodology are the connections between schools and groups, associations, institutions, and organizations outside the school district. In Philadelphia, recognizing that the success of the initiative relied both on the strength and number of these relationships, we set out from the beginning to form solid partnerships with such groups.

This section describes the types of groups that make ideal partners in service-learning efforts, their main roles, and the process for cultivating these relationships.

Civic or neighborhood associations. These groups often focus on particular street blocks or a neighborhood. Although these groups may not have any paid staff members, they often know a neighborhood’s history, assets, and challenges, and they include important local leaders and stakeholders.

Grassroots services and organizing groups. These organizations are often indigenous to a particular community. By virtue of their clear focus on areas of need (housing, healthcare, artistic and cultural programming, childcare, etc.), both local and community-wide groups are ideally suited for service-learning projects. Groups that focus on social action and advocacy are also valuable project partners since their activities encourage the deeper, active exploration required to address complicated, pressing, and contentious issues.

Youth activism organizations. These groups are usually focused on the most urgent problems facing individual schools and education policy at the district level. These organizations often have much expertise in mentoring young people and in helping them understand and access formal power structures.

Service-learning provider organizations. These organizations are adept at helping educators and students design high-quality service-learning projects. They often have existing relationships with schools and connections to local colleges and universities. To find local, regional, and national service-learning provider organizations, visit the National Service-Learning Partnership website at <http://www.service-learningpartnership.org>.

Social service clearinghouses and volunteer mobilizing groups. The well-known, large, civic institutions, such as the League of Women Voters, the Girl Scouts of America, and the United Way, can potentially catalyze hundreds of volunteers to support a cause. While the organizations themselves may not be ideal partners for individual projects, they have connections to virtually every nonprofit in the region.

Higher education institutions. Colleges and universities make excellent community partners. These institutions add standing and expertise to district work while providing an academic foundation for service-learning theory and practice. They also add significant financial and physical resources that a school district may not otherwise be able to access. Universities also have schools of education, which award credentials to the majority of teachers who will work in a local district. It is important to have good relationships with the leaders of the school of education to increase the chances that they include service-learning practice in their curriculum. If they do, teachers will have a significant head start when they begin teaching and may require fewer hours of preparation.

Other public and nonprofit institutions. Museums, zoos, nonprofit theaters, ballet and opera companies, park and recreation commissions, hospitals, courthouses, correctional facilities, government offices and agencies, faith-based organizations, and other institutions provide a wealth of content expertise and offer numerous service-learning project opportunities. Further, through the reputation and influence of these organizations, such partnerships can help amplify the voice of students in the media and assist youth in gaining entrée into policy-making discussions.

AmeriCorps groups. As we discussed in [Infrastructure](#), teams or “mini-teams” of Corps members can assist teachers and students in identifying community partners, organizing large events, and conducting reflection exercises. Because many Corps members are close in age to students, they often infuse a positive attitude and ethic of service into a school.

Forming partnerships

We recommend creating a written inventory of existing partnerships between schools and community groups as early as possible in the initiative. Almost every school already collaborates with at least a small number of community agencies, faith partners, or youth-serving organizations. It is the job of the central office staff to build a master list—preferably one that is separated by neighborhoods—of existing relationships and staff member contacts. Asking principals if they already have such a list for their own school is a good first step.

In Philadelphia, after creating this inventory from a long list of potential partners, we determined which organizations were appropriate for service-learning. We also tried to get a sense of whether the large organizations had the capacity to expand their programming to include or enhance service-learning activities. For a very few key groups, we planned to help them raise funds in order to do so. We then gave as many schools as possible edited lists of “already warm” potential partners in their areas. In the central office, we also started to organize some of the larger district-wide projects and encouraged schools to create formal systems to connect with community partners.

We believe it is not the exclusive job of the central office staff to form partnerships for every school or service-learning project in a district. Cultivating effective community partnerships for service-learning projects must be the collective responsibility of the central office, administrators, teachers, students and the wider infrastructure of community-serving organizations. In Philadelphia, we had over 250 community partners who participated in service-learning projects, including some that the central office found out about only after the fact and others that we never knew. This is not a sign that we had lost control of the initiative—on the contrary, it indicated that the schools and communities fully embraced and nurtured the service-learning process.

School-Community Partnerships: Three Key Points

1. The success of a service-learning initiative relies on the strength and number of connections between schools and groups, associations, institutions, and organizations outside the school district. Solid collaborations with such groups should be constructed from the outset.
2. A written inventory of existing partnerships between schools and community groups should be created as early as possible in the initiative.
3. Responsibility for creating school-community partnerships rests collectively with district, school, and community leaders.

Political Support

This section describes the methods by which a service-learning initiative builds support within the school district and then examines ways to gain support from external constituencies in the greater community.

Superintendent leadership

Several colleagues have asked if a prerequisite for implementing a district-wide service-learning initiative is a superintendent with long-term experience with service-learning practice. We think it essential to have a superintendent who firmly believes in the efficacy of service-learning, who can articulate its rationale, and who understands its connections to other district-wide priorities. However, it is not necessary to have a superintendent who has supported and championed service-learning for many years, although it is helpful.

In Philadelphia, the superintendent was undoubtedly the central catalyzing force behind the District's adopting the service-learning requirement. David Hornbeck's long-standing leadership for service-learning added credibility to the initiative and helped gain early support from key internal and external constituencies. When David left the District in 2000, the service-learning initiative lost its key prominent supporter and suffered setbacks. The new leaders did not define citizenship preparation as a central responsibility for the District. Therefore, strong support for service-learning and the initiative is not part of the District's current policies. However, as a testament to the several hundred deeply committed teachers, administrators, and community partners who firmly believe in service-learning, the work continues in earnest at the school and community level. Should the current leadership decide to embrace service-learning more fully or a new administration champion the centrality of citizenship education and service-learning, the network of committed practitioners remains strong. (See [Current use of service-learning in Philadelphia](#).)

To establish and grow a district-wide service-learning initiative, a superintendent must pursue, at a minimum, the following actions:

- explain the educational purposes that service-learning serves.
- highlight service-learning as a district priority in contacts with external stakeholders and the media.
- stress the importance of service-learning when addressing teachers, students, and administrators.
- prioritize service-learning in strategic planning and resource allocations.

Because of their broad impact, these types of support are integral to the success of a district-wide system. For example, if a superintendent fails to mention service-learning at a "state of the school district" speech or during a one-on-one interview with a major news outlet, this omission speaks volumes. The omission could indicate to administrators, teachers, students, and parents that, while service-learning is required, it is not highly valued. In short, the superintendent must consistently deliver the message about how service-learning is central to advancing district priorities.

Teacher and administrator support

Service-learning teachers must become the spokespeople and advocates to other teachers. In casual conversations, these teachers can persuade others of the efficacy of service-learning methodology. In our experience, it was more persuasive for teachers to offer real-life examples and applications rather than theory when talking with their colleagues about service-learning practice.

In Philadelphia, approximately 50 such teachers were effectively using service-learning for at least two years before the board resolution that created a service-learning requirement. We actively sought and engaged these teachers to serve as advocates both during the announcement of the new policy and

throughout the building of the local infrastructure. At the time, it was clear that, without the support of these teachers, implementing the initiative would have been extremely difficult.

The number of school principals who supported service-learning was much smaller at the outset. We employed these individuals to create excitement and support for the initiative among faculty and other administrators.

Another way to gain faculty support early in an initiative is to secure funding for professional development and project mini-grants from the outset. School personnel have become accustomed to being asked to implement unfunded mandates. Consequently, teachers are understandably wary of systematic initiatives or changes. Therefore, in Philadelphia, District leaders made certain that we had raised and appropriated a base level of funds to support the service-learning expansion. When teachers and principals saw that the service-learning requirement came with professional development and grant opportunities, they were much more likely to be supportive than skeptical.

Community leaders' influence

Every community has individuals and organizations who are actively engaged in youth, education, and neighborhood development issues. In [School-Community Partnerships](#), we described many such groups. Beyond the obvious role these groups play as partners in service-learning projects, some individuals and organizations become “opinion leaders” who affect the way others view social issues or current events. As such, these leaders should be educated about service-learning, if they are not already, and enlisted to help support the initiative. We found that supportive comments made, for instance, by a respected United Way director or faith-based leader went a long way towards building goodwill and support for service-learning expansion.

In Philadelphia, many area colleges and universities are active in local education and community issues. Professors from the University of Pennsylvania and Temple University who were long-standing service-learning leaders and practitioners attended District and community meetings. Their presence added a strong theoretical foundation and a real and perceived “intellectual gravitas” to the local service-learning initiative. In addition, we recommend using national service-learning leaders not only as technical experts but also as spokespeople. In some communities and school districts, outside experts are afforded greater credibility and weight than local personnel.

A service-learning advisory committee

To gain the broadest input and support for district-wide implementation, we recommend forming an advisory committee. This group of key stakeholders should reach consensus on an appropriate service-learning policy and the infrastructure to support it. In Philadelphia, over the initial two years of planning and rollout, our group met eight times as a whole and more often in subcommittees. The finished product of this committee’s work was a detailed strategic work plan. While our group was ad hoc, we recommend forming a standing committee that meets to oversee and advise the initiative.

Based on the Philadelphia experience, a list of recommended advisory committee members should include the following:

- director and other service-learning central office staff
- staff from core academic offices, including curriculum, professional development, and assessment and accountability
- the senior administrator to whom all school principals report
- principals representing all grade levels and types of schools (magnet, vocational, neighborhood school, etc.)
- teachers

- teachers' union representative
- students
- parents
- staff from organizations that support and promote service-learning
- staff from civic institutions and social service clearinghouses
- municipal government staff
- AmeriCorps leaders
- staff from grassroots, activist, and organizing groups
- university faculty and administrators

The success of the committee requires members who represent many dimensions of diversity, such as gender, race, and geography, but also have their fingers on the pulse of individual neighborhoods. We found that it was generally easy to recruit program staff from larger nonprofit organizations that can support their staff attending meetings. It is much more challenging to convince “on-the-ground” staff who provide direct services to a particular neighborhood to join such a committee. However, these individuals often have a keen awareness of neighborhood needs and recognize service-learning’s potential for addressing them. Including these types of advisors should ensure that student service-learning projects are not about charity but involve collaborative problem-solving with community residents.

Building Political Support: Five Key Points

1. The superintendent should firmly believe in the efficacy of service-learning, articulate its rationale, and understand its connections to other district priorities.
2. Teachers with prior service-learning expertise should be tapped to become spokespeople and advocates to other teachers.
3. When teachers and principals see that the service-learning requirement comes with professional development and grant opportunities, they are much more likely to be supportive than skeptical.
4. The presence of colleges and universities adds a strong theoretical foundation and a degree of “intellectual gravitas” to the local service-learning initiative.
5. In order to gain the broadest type of input and support for a district-wide implementation process, a standing advisory committee should meet to advise the initiative staff.

Roadblocks and Solutions

The following subsections describe some of the common roadblocks to implementing a system-wide initiative and ways to steer clear of them.

Existing policies

Many concerns about service-learning involve logistics and liability issues. In our experiences these issues are actually some of the least complicated because policies already exist to address these needs:

- Every school district should already have regulations and insurance policies in place that cover field trip protocols. Service-learning trips away from school grounds should be subject to the same regulations.
- Every district should already have an approved list of licensed and bonded bus companies that teachers can contact to set up transportation to project sites. Furthermore, in an urban district, many projects will take place within walking distance of the school, and transportation will be unnecessary.
- School districts have policies regarding supervision and chaperoning. Usually, the policy is expressed in a “maximum allowed” ratio of children to adults. This policy should also include rules governing when non-school employees who supervise students must undergo background checks.

The director of service-learning should work with the district’s offices of transportation, risk management, and legal affairs to find out about these policies. In a few circumstances, new policies may be needed. Then, central office staff must disseminate these regulations to principals and teachers. We believe that with a minimal amount of effort upfront, these challenges can be managed.

The importance of mini-grants

Other concerns about service-learning focus on costs for transportation or materials. Mini-grants can be critical to cover these expenses, and ultimately contribute to the success of a large-scale service-learning initiative—sometimes even a small amount of money can make or break a project. In Philadelphia, these grants were distributed by Youth as Resources, Youth-Driven Service-Learning Centers, the Pennsylvania Service-Learning Alliance, and the central office. The director of service-learning could often dispense \$500 mini-grants. We believe that, considering their small size, these grants bring substantial returns. Some benefits of mini-grants include the following:

- They affirm that service-learning is important and valued.
- They provide an incentive for students and teachers to consider pursuing a complex and ambitious service-learning project.
- When the proposal process is competitive (as it is with mini-grants given out by youth boards), classes are more likely to fine-tune and develop their project ideas to address the scrutiny their applications will receive.
- Mini-grants allow the central office to fill small funding gaps at the moment when cost concerns cause teachers and students to lose enthusiasm for a service-learning project.

Scheduling and report card grading

Because service-learning requires longer class periods, we consider double periods or “block rostering” to be a prerequisite for implementing a district-wide service-learning initiative. For students to travel to and from a project site with time for activities, a 45-minute period simply will not suffice. In Philadelphia, when the service-learning requirement was passed, school schedules already included longer periods.

Research shows that a significant amount of class time is lost during “ramp up and “cool down” times within short class periods. Therefore, if block rostering must be instituted before widespread use of service-learning is promoted, service-learning proponents should find many other school and community members in favor of a change. For schools that already have some longer periods, many teachers may not be comfortable with this scheduling. Service-learning projects provide a great way for these teachers to use 90-minute time blocks, moving away from traditional talk-from-the-front formats.

Since service-learning activities will be assessed and graded, school report cards must be altered to reflect this requirement. In Philadelphia, a place on every report card described whether a student had begun or fulfilled his or her citizenship project requirement for the next promotional benchmark or for graduation. It is necessary to work with the offices of assessment and accountability to ensure that report cards are altered accordingly.

Consistent and clear answers to common questions

In building support for and implementing any district initiative, the quickest way to generate cynicism and negativity is not having consistent and complete answers to the questions that almost always come up. Based on hundreds of meetings and interactions with administrators, teachers, parents, and students, we have developed a short list of the questions most often asked regarding system-wide service-learning expansion. Recommendations for responses to many of these appear throughout this guide. However, responses will depend on local planning and decisions.

- How will the service-learning projects be designed and assessed?
- Who will provide professional development support for teachers?
- How many and which teachers will participate?
- Who will establish the community partnerships for service-learning projects?
- How will service-learning fit into the time schedule of the school day?
- For projects requiring transportation, will school district buses be made available? Who will pay for these costs?
- Are special education students required to participate, and what additional accommodations and supports will be made available to them?
- Can faith-based institutions or political/advocacy organizations become involved as community partners?

Roadblocks and Solutions: Five Key Points

1. Logistics and liability issues can be addressed by existing school district policies.
2. Mini-grants of up to \$500 can play a pivotal role in supporting service-learning projects.
3. Double periods, or “block scheduling,” are highly recommended for implementing a district-wide service-learning initiative.
4. Since service-learning activities will be assessed and graded like any mandatory area, school report cards must be altered to reflect this requirement.
5. Consistent and clear answers to common questions are essential to building and maintaining support for a service-learning initiative.

Concluding Comments

Current use of service-learning in Philadelphia

The School District of Philadelphia recently began its third full school year under the governance structure of a School Reform Commission controlled by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and led by Chief Executive Officer Paul Vallas, the former school district chief from Chicago.

District leadership has focused on improving student achievement as measured by state standardized test scores and, through a combination of approaches, has achieved two consecutive years of improvement. These approaches include adopting a standardized curriculum; providing more professional development; discontinuing elective courses not directly aligned with the standardized curriculum; enforcing stricter codes of discipline; and requiring more math and reading courses, remediation for struggling students, and designated times for test preparation.

Service-learning is not central to the current District administration's reform agenda. The District's promotion and graduation policies no longer require the completion of a citizenship project through service-learning. The service-learning staff has been reduced from a full-time staff of six to one individual responsible for a variety of programs and initiatives in addition to service-learning. Despite these changes, use of service-learning has been sustained in some schools.

Approximately 15 community partners continue to work with over 50 schools doing some degree of curriculum-integrated service-learning instruction, including teacher professional development. The Pennsylvania Department of Education, through Learn and Serve America grants, continues to support six Youth-Driven Service-Learning Centers, including the District's flagship site at Simon Gratz High School. A multi-year \$2 million U.S. Department of Education service-learning grant, which the District secured in 2001, has been divided into a series of small contracts for several experienced service-learning training and technical assistance organizations to continue their work in schools. Recently, the District incorporated service-learning into its standardized high school social studies curriculum. Classes now use the well-regarded *Student Voices* civic and political engagement curriculum, sponsored by the Annenberg School of Public Policy at the University of Pennsylvania.

These developments in Philadelphia support some of our core beliefs about taking service-learning to scale in a district. Without supportive policy, central office leadership, and adequate staffing, extensive use of high-quality service-learning practice cannot last. While some teachers will continue using service-learning with their students, teachers who lack the support, resources, and experience to teach service-learning effectively will be unlikely to do so.

In Philadelphia today, approximately 50 to 100 teachers and 2,500 students are now engaged in service-learning, compared with 500 teachers and 200,000 students five years ago. Given the District's current priorities, fostering meaningful service-learning experiences for all students is no longer possible.

Feedback and closing words

We hope educators and advocates make use of the Philadelphia experience while promoting district-wide service-learning initiatives in their own localities. Please send your comments, thoughts, and questions about this guide to kholdsma@aed.org.

Creating a district-wide service-learning system is hard work but well worth the effort. Young people want to find their place in the wider community and feel they are valued. They want education to be engaging and relevant. They are yearning for opportunities to understand their world, especially as public issues become more diverse, complex, and challenging. Service-learning helps young people, and the adults who support them, address these challenges.

We encourage educational advocates to chart a bold and ambitious course for service-learning as a way to hone young people's citizenship skills. Best of luck. Our students and our democracy are counting on us!

Appendix A: Citizenship Cross-Cutting Competency

Introduction

Developing citizenship competencies is a life long process and responsibility that requires an early beginning and sustained exercise. Students need to engage in educational experiences across the grades that help them understand what their rights and responsibilities are as members of a community both inside and outside of school. Education in an atmosphere that honors and respects every person regardless of race, ethnicity, class, gender, religion, disability, or sexual orientation is fundamental for teaching students their rights and models what it means to be responsible for the growth and well-being of every member of the community.

Schools as communities are logical places for students to experience and develop the citizenship skills and knowledge required in a democratic society. This means that our schools and classrooms must be places where students have opportunities to practice citizenship competencies in a democratic environment. These opportunities could include participation in student government, safe corridor programs, small learning community (SLC) planning teams, class meetings during which students design and implement their own constitution, cooperative learning, peer mediation, problem solving and shared decision making. It also means that schools, classrooms, hallways, lunchrooms, and playgrounds must be settings where all students feel safe and free from ridicule or harassment.

Students need to understand that they have a place in the larger community beyond the boundaries of their homes and schools – as members of their neighborhoods, cities, countries, and as members of the global community. To encourage their understanding of the connection between themselves and the larger community, educators need to give students opportunities to thoughtfully learn about, reflect on, and address real world needs in any of these various communities. Students could organize a town watch, beautify a park, create a garden in an abandoned lot, paint a mural, work with public officials to seal and secure an abandoned home, write a community newspaper to highlight local, national, or global issues, or organize an after-school tutoring, recreation, and arts program for younger children. They could organize community members to work together for a needed change in the community. They could engage in study groups or guided conversations about race relations, religious diversity, or the impact people have had on the global environment.

Schools committed to citizenship education and service value the voices of everyone in the school community and are aware of the many pressing community needs both within and beyond the school building. To promote proactive and responsible citizenship, they create venues and opportunities for the expression of student concerns, interests, and social action. They are communities whose members – students, staff, and parents – see themselves connected to the larger world and act against injustice on their own behalf and on behalf of others.

What Does It Mean to be an Active, Responsible Citizen?

The citizenship cross-cutting competencies articulated below are intended to answer the question of what skills are required to be a responsible, active citizen. The list is divided into subsets of beliefs, knowledge, and skills to provide a clearer and more comprehensive explanation of these competencies.

By definition, these citizenship competencies are cross-cutting and will therefore overlap with other content standards and competency areas articulated in the Curriculum Frameworks, such as school-to-career, communication, and multiculturalism. Therefore, the listing of citizenship competencies articulates those qualities that are unique to the beliefs, knowledge, skills, and actions needed for effective citizenship and positive civic participation.

Beliefs

A responsible, active citizen:

- Has a personal vision of the relationship between self and the community (defined on multiple levels) and an understanding that a healthy community enhances quality of life. An active citizen understands that his or her actions affect the collective good of the community. He or she understands that he or she has the ability to serve the community and make a positive impact, and therefore understands that he or she has a place in the community and that that place has value. An active citizen understands that service to one's community benefits not only the community but also benefits him/her by increasing his or her connection with others and contributing to his or her sense of purpose;
- Understands that people have equal rights as citizens because respect for others is rooted in a belief in equality and justice for all;
- Believes that people's differences in race, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, class, and physical, emotional, and intellectual well-being, as well as differences in opinion and perspective, should be respected because respect and tolerance are essential to society's ability to self-govern and to the peaceful co-existence of all people. Further, he or she understands that to positively address public issues, problems, and needs, maximum public inclusion is required which necessitates respect and tolerance of others;
- Is willing to take risks for the benefit of the public good, believing that indifference toward injustice is unacceptable in and dangerous to a civilized society. An active citizen is also willing to challenge the status quo of society's norms and mores. This attitude is needed to test the rules and customs governing society so that the rules can be changed, if needed, or reaffirmed and made stronger by having withstood public challenge;
- Has a sense of obligation and duty to serve others as a condition for living in a civilized, democratic society.

Knowledge

A responsible citizen has knowledge of:

- The fundamental laws and rules that govern society, including the rights and responsibilities of individual citizens, as well as the rationale/policy for why they exist;
- The past/history – knowledge that helps him or her understand our society's diverse cultural heritage;
- The core elements that constitute a community and knowledge of different institutions where community may exist (i.e. family, school, neighborhood, peer group, church, team, club);
- The various roles of citizens in our communities and country;
- How particular communities' "systems" function – where the levers of power (i.e. decision makers and formal/informal bodies of influence) exist and how they can be accessed to address a community need or problem and to make the desired community change;
- The techniques and ramifications of challenging and changing the rules governing society;
- The concept of resources (land, labor, and capital) and the creation, allocation and distribution of limited resources as impacted by our economic and political system;
- Alternative governmental systems in which freedoms are not guaranteed or practiced, and of the impact these governmental systems have on their citizens.

Skills

An effective citizen has the ability to:

- Evaluate, formulate, advocate for, and defend a position on an issue of public importance using a variety of research materials and techniques;
- Think constructively and critically to develop alternative policies and solutions to address issues and needs of public importance;
- Assess the strengths, weaknesses, and needs of a community, and develop a plan of action to address these needs using a variety of resources;
- Assess the power structure of a community and develop strategies for solving public problems that recognize the functioning of that power structure.
- Recognize different viewpoints surrounding an issue, and assess and comprehend the interests or motivations that may be the basis of an opposing viewpoint;
- Work as a member of a team and effectively communicate with, persuade, and mobilize other members of a community to address a common issue or problem;
- Recognize and capitalize on the unique strengths that individual members of a community possess and can contribute to the common good;
- Peacefully and constructively resolve conflicts between him/her and another or among other members of a community.
- Instructional Strategies that Support the Development of Citizenship Beliefs, Knowledge, and Skills
- There are many varied ways for school staff to help students develop citizenship competencies. Two approaches that must be utilized in every school are service-learning and support for diversity and tolerance.

Service Learning

Service Learning is a method of instruction that has been recognized locally and nationally as a highly successful strategy for building citizenship skills among students while promoting interdisciplinary academic knowledge and skills. Because the District believes that all students should graduate with a deep understanding of what it means to be a productive and responsible citizen, the Board of Education voted on June 29, 1998 to include Service Learning and the creation of a “Citizenship Project” as promotion and graduation requirements for all elementary, middle and high school students.

A Citizenship Project, to be required by all students as of June 2002 for graduation, as well as promotion to grades 5 and 9, is the documentation of the individual student’s academic, personal, and citizenship growth that emerges from the Service Learning experience. The Office of Education for Employment will be recommending to the promotion/graduation committee on Service Learning that the Citizenship Project contain the following essential elements:

- (i) Require that students identify and meet an authentic community need;
- (ii) Contain real academic rigor through both curriculum integration with Philadelphia standards and competencies as well as personal and group reflection;
- (iii) Involve the participation of an adult connection (i.e. community partner) to share real world knowledge and expertise with the students;
- (iv) Engage students in applied learning and problem solving activities;

(v) Engage students in the active investigation and research of various issues surrounding the community need or issue being addressed; and

(vi) Result in the production of a portfolio (i.e. Citizenship Project) that successfully passes the District's assessment rubric, which, when completed, will contain the above five elements.

Since service-learning employs an authentic, hands-on problem solving approach to teaching and learning, students' participation in service learning activities will help them achieve not only the citizenship cross-cutting competency, but other school district standards and competencies as well.

For more information about Service Learning, teachers can contact their cluster-level School-to-Career Coordinator or the Office of Education for Employment at (215) 875-3801.

Actions: Examples of Service Learning Activities

The following are examples of service learning activities (or parts of activities) that teachers can use with students as instructional tools to help students acquire the specific beliefs, knowledge, and skills which comprise responsible, active citizenship. These illustrations are easily adaptable to a variety of issues and community needs.

Students participate in a community exploration during which they identify and record the assets and needs of their neighborhood. Assets may include other community members, public officials, community and public agencies that provide meaningful neighborhood services, religious institutions, business people and employers, murals and public art, open/recreational space. The needs may include safer neighborhoods with good community facilities, forums for communication around community issues, and after-school and evening activities for youth. They study the factors that may be causing a particular problem using research materials, interviews, and guest speakers. They learn whether a law or public entity governs the particular issue or problem. Students then devise a plan for how assets can be accessed and galvanized to solve the problem that students by consensus believe is most compelling. Students proceed with the plan.

Students learn how administrative decisions are made at their school or at the District level in preparation to advocate for some desired change or the establishment of new policy. They build consensus and a critical mass among several other students, then try their hands at the administrative process. If the students do not receive an "opportunity to be heard," they can devise a more forceful yet peaceful strategy to make their voices heard and possibly achieve the desired policy outcome.

Students become educated on a health issue like high blood pressure, smoking, alcohol/drug abuse, prenatal care, immunization, nutrition, or fitness. They invite health care practitioners, community health agencies, and health insurance companies to share information and wisdom. They then organize a health fair to disseminate this newfound knowledge to the school and community and develop a publicity campaign to attract people to the fair. They assemble a brochure or video of relevant information to distribute to your attendees.

Students learn a marketable skill, like web page design, and teach it to other students and community members with the intention of improving access to information and income. They can also consider designing web pages for local community organizations after fully learning about their mission, needs, and constituency.

Students honor and celebrate a local community hero by studying and interviewing the individual and his/her contemporaries, learning about his/her challenges and achievements, and creating an event to highlight this heroic individual. They might consider painting a school/community mural, constructing a monument, hosting school assembly, creating a photo collage, composing letters to newspapers, or writing biographies.

Students decide what public issues are important to them personally. They then learn what branch of government and what individual officials have power to address these issues. Next, the students develop a

“youth” policy platform around those issues, study the policy positions of different candidates seeking election for the relevant public office by researching, writing and calling for position papers, and inviting candidates to address the class. Next, the students officially endorse a candidate who could most effectively support the “youth” platform. They then go about an education/advocacy campaign in the community by submitting newspaper articles, posting flyers, hosting a town meeting, and registering voters.

Students organize a coat or food drive for people in need. They start by developing an outreach strategy for soliciting donations from businesses, the community, and classmates for donations. Students learn about the mission of the agency they are working through and meet some of the people the agency and, through it, the students are serving.

Students participate in activities at a senior center, developing relationships with the residents through letter writing, conversations and interviews, and writing oral histories about the lives and perspectives of the people. They might consider sharing an intergenerational project, such as a choir or theater production, or assembling a chess/checkers tournament.

Students study a particular disability, learning about the impact of the disability, then reaching out to agencies for awareness and sensitivity training. Once they are well informed, the students could create a fun activity they can share with other disabled students.

Students can test the environmental quality of a nearby body of water, learn about the laws governing water quality from a community or governmental agency, and determine whether water the samples are acceptable. If they are not, the students can contact the relevant public enforcement agency with their findings and try to detect what the pollutants are and where they originate. If the students believe they have identified the source, they can try to set up a meeting with a senior employee of the polluter to discuss their concerns and pursue a solution.

Students develop a recycling plan for the school building, or a plan to keep the building litter free. They can strategically place recycling bins or trashcans around the building for maximum impact. They can learn about options for disposing of the recycled goods, i.e. selling the recycled goods to raise money for a cause of the students’ choice.

Older students get trained by a reading specialist to provide literacy tutoring and assistance to younger children in the local elementary school. Students learn how to make age and reading level appropriate selections of the children’s books. Students should read the books in advance and develop appropriate questions and exercises (i.e. lesson plan) that will make the presentation captivating and productive.

To encourage school-parent-community interaction and communication, students set up a dinner series where they and their parents host dinners for teachers and community.

Support for Diversity and Tolerance

Too many students in Philadelphia and across the nation feel unsafe in their schools and classrooms because of intolerant behavior on the part of other students, and even adults, in the school setting. These behaviors – ranging from playground taunts to physical harassment – make it impossible for students to be fully focused on learning and, in too many cases, contribute to absenteeism, dropping out, depression, and other conditions that put students at risk.

Norms, rules, policies, and the behavior of school staff must make it clear that intolerant behavior on the basis of race/ethnicity, language, religion, income, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or any other distinguishing characteristic is unacceptable. Furthermore, schools have an affirmative responsibility to proactively welcome and include all students in the school community.

For ideas for activities, teachers can contact the Multicultural Resource Center, directed by Francenia Emery, at (215) 438-2729 for the Center’s resource guide. Teachers can also refer to such publications as *Beyond Heroes and Holidays: A Practical Guide to K-12 Anti-Racist, Multicultural Education and Staff*

Development, published by the Network of Educators on the Americas (NCEA) (202-429-0137). The web site for the Southern Poverty Law Project's Teaching Tolerance Magazine (<http://www.splcenter.org>) also contains ideas and strategies designed to help teachers foster equity, respect, and understanding in the classroom and beyond.

In addition, the District's twenty-two Equity Coordinators, a number of whom are experienced SEED (Seeking Educational Equity and Diversity) trainers, are available to offer guidance about teaching tolerance. Teachers can call their cluster offices to contact the Equity Coordinator who works with their school.

Service Learning is a teaching and learning strategy that emphasizes both service and learning goals in such a way that both service and learning occur and are enriched by each other. Key components of Service Learning include student ownership, a genuine community need, school/community partnerships, preparation and reflection and clear connections to curricular learning objectives. The service should drive the learning. It is not an add on. Programs that emphasize learning include a strong reflective component where students use higher order thinking skills to make sense of and extend what they learned from the service experience.

James and Pamela Toole

National Youth Leadership Council

1992

Appendix B: Essential Elements of Small Learning Communities in the School District of Philadelphia

RIGOROUS: Small Learning Communities are dedicated to the use of standards-based curriculum, instruction and assessment strategies that enable all students to meet District content standards and succeed in higher education and work

UNIFIED: Small Learning Communities are built around a unifying theme or instructional approach linked to standards

HETEROGENEOUS: Small Learning Communities include all children, including low-income, racial and language minorities, students with disabilities

SMALL: serve fewer than 400 students each

CONNECTED: Students and teachers spend most of their time in the Small Learning Community

MULTI-YEAR: Small Learning Communities are structured to provide a close relationship among and between students, staff, families, and communities over the course of several years

COLLABORATIVE: Teachers have sufficient time to engage in ongoing, meaningful planning and professional development activities in support of standards-driven teaching and learning and the Comprehensive Support Process. There is a Coordinator with some released time.

PARTNERED: Small Learning Communities are the locus for school-, cluster-, and work-based partnerships with employers, post-secondary institutions, social service agencies and community based organizations. Each SLC is connected to multiple partners in service of students' success in their current school placement

EMPOWERED: Small Learning Communities have the authority and resources to design and implement their own standards-driven instructional programs

ACCOUNTABLE: Small Learning Communities are responsible for improved performance of their students

Appendix C: Service Learning Work Plan Goals & Strategies through June, 2002 - excerpt

Goal/Objective	Strategy/Details	Milestones	Resp. Parties (tentative)	Budget	Resources/ Supports
<p>Goal 1: To provide by June, 2002 professional development to 4,000-6,000 teachers in the methodology of project-based instruction using Service Learning as the framework. By June 1999, each school should have 5% of teachers using SL as part of instruction; June 2000 = 20%; June 2001 = 30%; June 2002 = 40%¹. Currently, approximately 500 teachers have received extensive training (beyond an introductory overview) and 200 teachers are actively using SL with their students. The following “streams” of professional development are designed to reach these prospective targets</p>					
<p>1.1 Increase the number of teachers using SL as an instructional tool through a variety of internal and external providers; provide professional devel. to a minimum of 600 teachers in 98-99, 1,800 in 99-00, 1,800 in 00-01 and 1,800 in 01-02</p>	<p>(a) Cluster-based PSRC’s², in collaboration with TLN, are responsible for delivering teacher workshops in project-based/SL instruction; PSRC’s will also coordinate workshops delivered by Central Office (EfE) and external providers listed below</p>	<p>PSRC’s should assure through their own delivery of training and the coordination of outside delivery that the annual percentage targets listed above are met for the schools in their respective clusters. EfE database (see goal 3) will be the info collection tool</p>	<p>EfE and Cluster Leader supervision of PSRC’s; TLN coordinator and facilitator collaboration</p>		<p>³</p>

¹ These milestones are meant to be achieved by a combination of all internal and external providers, not by the PSRC/TLN efforts alone. Also, the percentages/capacities are based on the assumption that approximately two-fifths of the teaching faculty at each school need to be using SL for all students to have a meaningful SL experience to meet the upcoming P/G requirement. This figure takes into account that a small percentage of students will meet their SL requirement not through the context of an academic class (i.e. independent track SL). A mechanism is being created to monitor/guide/assess independent track SL experiences.

² Post-Secondary Readiness Coordinators have an array of STC responsibilities, including Service Learning. With respect to SL, the PSRC’s also play a significant role in the community partnering function discussed below, in addition to professional development.

³ PLEASE NOTE THAT FOR THIS VERSION OF THE BLUEPRINT, WE HAVE LEFT BLANK FUNDING INFORMATION TO PRESERVE ANONYMITY.

of students involved each year:

'98-99 -- 15,000

'99-00 -- 25,000

'00-01 -- 50,000

'01-02 -- 70,000

<p>(b) Central Office Staff (Ken Holdsmen, Director; categorical liaison to be hired; college intern; h.s. WBL student) salaries and benefits</p>	<p>Central Office will manage/coordinate all phases of SL implementation contained in this plan; Bob Coccagna & Elyse Topolsky will work centrally but are accounted for in PSRC budget above</p>	<p>EfE</p>		
<p>(c) EfE generated workshops: (i) large annual summer training; (ii) regional professional teacher network workshops for higher level training and project sharing</p>	<p>(i) 300 teachers trained at Camp Kweebec by NYLC (June, 1998) Summer trainings for 300 teachers per summer in 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2002 (1500 total teachers reached through summer trainings); sessions incorporated into L&L summer content institutes (ii) regional teacher network to develop "Lead Teacher" capacity of 75 SDP teachers/year</p>	<p>EfE, "lead teachers" and NYLC L&L, EfE, "Lead Teachers" and external providers ----- EfE, TLN and PA Serv. Learn. Alliance</p>		
<p>(d) Identify a SL Lead Teacher in each school to provide 3 hrs./week (e.c. time) peer-to-peer and small group support to teaching colleagues</p>	<p>By September, 1999, have LT's in place at 25% of all schools By September, 2000, have LT's in place at 50% of all schools By September, 2001, have LT's in place at 100% of all schools</p>	<p>Lead Teachers selected through T-4 process with criteria weighted toward demonstrated SL & project-based experience</p>		
<p>(e) Learn & Serve Master Teachers to provide teacher training (currently 3 Master Teachers in SDP) Learn & Serve Mini-Grantees</p>	<p>Train approx. 100 teachers/yr. from present to 2002 Approx. 12 recipients/yr. ('98-2002)</p>	<p>EfE and teacher grantees</p>		