

What Is Service Learning?

- Service Learning occurs when students apply what they learn through research, through observation, through experience, and in the classroom to the real world.
- Service learning is different from community service. Community service is based on performance of hours without intentionally building on learning outcomes. Service learning involves a community partner connection along with the applied problem solving of an authentic need, issue, or problem in the community.
- There is no required number of hours that students must spend with their community partners. However, there must be evidence that service learning has been integrated into every student's senior project.
- Service learning can be approached in many ways. Some students will be working closely with specific organizations, charities, and causes. Other students may decide to research a particular topic and create a product that meets a need in the community. For example, someone researching organ transplantation might decide to raise awareness about the importance of young people becoming organ donors. This can be done by creating a video, visiting classrooms, or organizing an activity in which all new drivers in his or her grade, class, or neighborhood become organ donors. The possibilities are endless.
- Some teachers may decide to focus the class on one issue, problem, or need in the community. The entire class would be working together in conjunction with a community partner.