



Education Commission
of the States

NCLC

NATIONAL CENTER FOR
LEARNING AND CITIZENSHIP

Learning That Lasts Field Guide



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Introduction

This *Learning That Lasts Field Guide* is intended to trigger discussion about ways to integrate and sustain high-quality service-learning, as well as to provide a clearer path to finding and employing the information in the Education Commission of the States' (ECS) 2002 publication *Learning That Lasts: How Service-Learning Can Become an Integral Part of Schools, States and Communities*. ECS worked with five states over a four-year period, whose efforts in service-learning were documented in *Learning That Lasts*. It identifies specific policy, practice and capacity examples at both the state and district levels across five domains critical to the integration of high-quality service-learning within a district: vision and leadership, curriculum, professional development, partnership and community, and continuous improvement.

This new resource addresses many of the challenges facing service-learning advocates and provides specific strategies to move service-learning from the margin to the mainstream in American schools. The *Learning That Lasts Field Guide* also expresses new knowledge, strategies and resources gleaned from efforts since 2002 – as collaborating states, districts and schools have increased the integration and sustainability of high-quality service-learning through policy, practice and capacity-building.

How To Use the Learning That Lasts Field Guide

The *Learning That Lasts Field Guide* offers a brief description of each of the five domains discussed in the original document. For each domain, there are key concepts and questions for readers to consider when undertaking this work. Each reader is encouraged to:

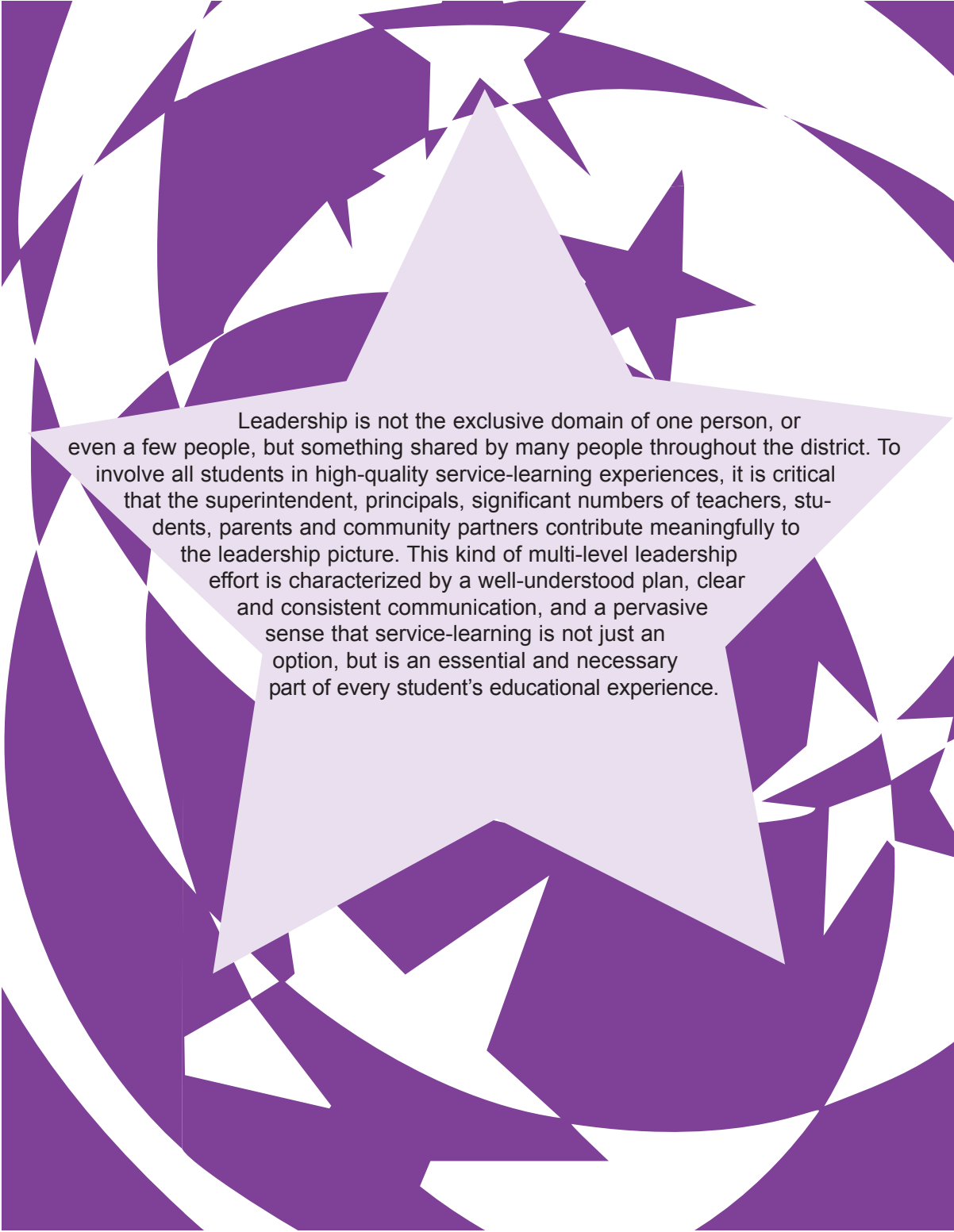
- Review the domain descriptions and consider them as the foundation for a high-quality service-learning program – in essence a logic model to advance this critical pedagogy into the lives of all students. For example, can a district integrate service-learning fully without a shared vision and leadership? Curriculum involvement? Professional development? Partnerships and community support? Continuous improvement?
- Examine the key concepts as indicators of a sustainable service-learning program. If each key concept is “in place” within a school and district, students would experience high-quality service-learning throughout their K-12 education.
- Ask yourself, your colleagues and your collaborators the questions that correspond to the key concepts. Responses will document current assets and deficits in your school and district, and suggest a set of corresponding actions to take.
- Consider the original *Learning That Lasts* as a text of resources that corresponds to the domains, key concepts and Ideas To Think About, with each chapter containing policies, practices and examples of infrastructure for service-learning to be a normal part of your school, district and community.

The Education Commission of the States (ECS) National Center for Learning and Citizenship (NCLC) is committed to providing policymakers, educators, students, parents, community partners and other education stakeholders with action-oriented strategies to integrate and sustain high-quality service-learning. The ECS NCLC is especially thankful

for the support of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation’s Learning In Deed Initiative, and the five states (California, Maine, Minnesota, Oregon and South Carolina) that examined with ECS the appropriate role for state- and district-level policies, the necessary elements of high-quality service-learning and the capacity needed to fully sustain a service-learning program that benefits all students.

ECS and the five states produced *Learning That Lasts* as a result of those efforts. It has been shared with over 1,200 individuals interested in integrating and sustaining high-quality service-learning. This *Learning That Lasts Field Guide* is both a complement to *Learning That Lasts* and a starting point to assist advocates of service-learning as they sustain the practice in districts.

Vision and Leadership



Leadership is not the exclusive domain of one person, or even a few people, but something shared by many people throughout the district. To involve all students in high-quality service-learning experiences, it is critical that the superintendent, principals, significant numbers of teachers, students, parents and community partners contribute meaningfully to the leadership picture. This kind of multi-level leadership effort is characterized by a well-understood plan, clear and consistent communication, and a pervasive sense that service-learning is not just an option, but is an essential and necessary part of every student's educational experience.

Vision and Leadership

Key Concept: A diverse group of stakeholders have a shared vision and leadership opportunities.

Ideas To Think About:

- What is the mission of the district/school? How can service-learning support that mission?
- What are the current school board goals? How can service-learning address those goals?
- Are teachers, students, community members actively involved in decisionmaking regarding service-learning plans and activities?
- Are students given meaningful leadership roles in projects, funding and planning?
- What learning opportunities are provided to all students to promote leadership, decisionmaking and problem-solving skills?
- Who will take responsibility for day-to-day coordination of service-learning?

For more ideas, please refer to *Learning That Lasts*:

- ★ See pages 30-31: A broad-based leadership team and a respected coordinator oversee service-learning efforts.
- ★ See page 34: Students assume leadership roles.

Notes

Key Concept: Service-learning is aligned with current and emerging local, state and national policies and priorities.

Ideas To Think About:

- How does service-learning align with and support education reform?
- How do key building, district and community leaders view service-learning? Do they see the connection between service-learning and the civic mission of schools?
- Does your district strategic/accountability plan include youth development or service-learning?
- Does the interviewing/hiring process address the knowledge and participation of faculty in service-learning?
- How do you communicate with local policymakers and support their efforts and goals? Do your policymakers provide resources (human and fiscal) for service-learning?
- What opportunities do students have to influence policies and procedures within the school?
- Do state department staff responsible for the implementation of the No Child Left Behind Act support service-learning as an option for meeting the law's requirements?
- How closely do you monitor emerging education issues for alignment with service-learning?

For more ideas, please refer to *Learning That Lasts*:

- ★ See pages 32-34: Service-learning is aligned with other school reform initiatives that are being implemented.
- ★ See pages 38-39: Service-learning is aligned with other school reform initiatives.

Notes

Key Concept: The district has a vision of what the district will look like when service-learning is fully integrated into your school, district and community.

Ideas To Think About:


- What group of people currently provides leadership for service-learning? Are there other leaders who may become advocates for service-learning?
- Do all stakeholders understand why service-learning is important?
- What are the district’s goals for service-learning? (For how many students? When and how often?) Which curricular areas “match” best?
- Will a service-learning leadership group develop an action plan to meet the above goals?
- What are the barriers to implementation?
- How will the district assess and update its goals and plans?

For more ideas, please refer to *Learning That Lasts*:

- ★ See pages 35-36: District and board goals, policies and strategic plans provide permission and resources for service-learning.
- ★ See pages 36-37: There is consistent and clear communication between the service-learning leaders and key stakeholders.
- ★ See pages 37-38: Ongoing efforts solicit and use funding to enhance service-learning.

Notes

Curriculum



The persistent drumbeat of school reform, standards-based education and testing emphasizes the importance of integrating service-learning into high-quality curricula that include assessments aligned with state standards. Service-learning advocates, therefore, need to enlist the support of all involved in curriculum work if they are to succeed and service-learning endures. In addition to the frontline of teachers, curriculum directors can be close allies if they are convinced service-learning can help students demonstrate achievement of standards. Students, administrators and community organizations also can help integrate service-learning into their own interests, beliefs and goals.

Key Concept: The structures and frameworks to develop and revise curriculum allow for the integration of service-learning.

Ideas To Think About:

- Are there districtwide committees for each content area? Does each school or grade span have content-area committees?
- How many (if any) curriculum coordinators are there? Do they know about and support service-learning?
- Is there a process for revising curriculum? How can service-learning be included in that process?
- Do teachers use the state curriculum standards as they facilitate service-learning activities?
- Are students able to articulate what they are learning (the standard they are addressing), as well as the service they provide?
- Are students required to complete an academic “capstone” or senior project? If so, how might service-learning be integrated into the process?

For more ideas, please refer to *Learning That Lasts*:

- ★ See page 45: Service-learning is acknowledged as a key instructional strategy in policy and practice.

Notes

Key Concept: Service-learning projects address curricular demands, student interests and community needs.

Ideas To Think About:

- How will classroom service-learning ideas be generated within your district?
- Do both students and teachers have input when identifying community problems and projects?
- Is there adequate training and support for teachers to learn how to incorporate student interests, community needs and curricular demands when doing a project?
- Is there adequate training and support for teachers to learn how to create a collaborative environment in the classroom that allows students to develop teamwork and problem-solving skills?
- Do teachers have opportunities to collaborate with other teachers in developing interdisciplinary projects?

For more ideas, please refer to *Learning That Lasts*:

★ See page 43: Students are involved in the planning and design of service-learning curriculum.

Notes

Key Concept: Service-learning aligns with the district or state’s content standards.

Ideas To Think About:

- Do service-learning projects provide students with real opportunities to learn through researching, writing and presenting issues related to their project?
- Do service-learning projects encourage the development of civic knowledge, skills and behaviors?
- Is there flexibility for teachers/students to identify specific knowledge and skills depending on the nature of the service-learning project?

For more ideas, please refer to *Learning That Lasts*:

- ★ See page 41: Service-learning is tied to curriculum and academic standards.
- ★ See page 45: Service-learning is aligned with state standards and assessments.

Notes

Key Concept:

Students are able to demonstrate and articulate the knowledge and skills (contained in state standards) acquired through service-learning.

Ideas To Think About:

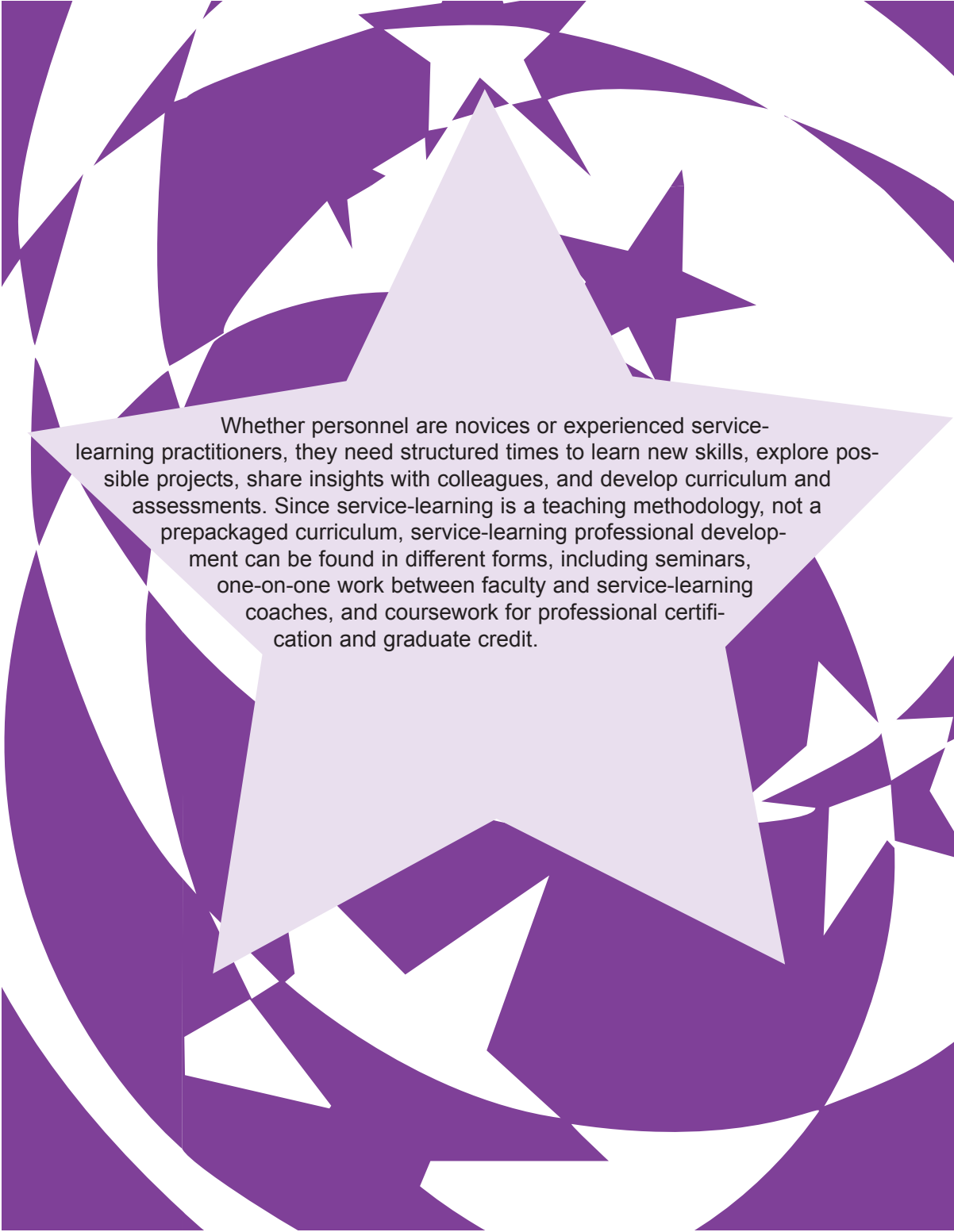
- How can a service-learning project incorporate both formative assessments (e.g., graphing data or letter writing) and summative assessments (research paper and presentations)?
- How will the generic rubrics/grading criteria already created for assessing assignments (graphs, letters, research papers, presentations, etc.) be shared among teachers and readily used within service-learning projects?
- Are there examples of service-learning projects that can be distributed to staff and students to help understand what service-learning is and is not?
- Do all students learn and apply planning, decisionmaking, communication and problem-solving skills?

For more ideas, please refer to *Learning That Lasts*:

- ★ See page 41: Service-learning is tied to curriculum and academic standards.
- ★ See page 43: Students are involved in the planning and design of service-learning curriculum.

Notes

Professional Development



Whether personnel are novices or experienced service-learning practitioners, they need structured times to learn new skills, explore possible projects, share insights with colleagues, and develop curriculum and assessments. Since service-learning is a teaching methodology, not a prepackaged curriculum, service-learning professional development can be found in different forms, including seminars, one-on-one work between faculty and service-learning coaches, and coursework for professional certification and graduate credit.

Professional Development

Key Concept: School and district faculty and other employees have regular opportunities to engage in training and to create a community of practice around service-learning.

Ideas To Think About:

- What are the underlying assumptions governing district-level professional development?
- Are professional development opportunities that include service-learning offered more than once a year? What sort of follow-up structure to formal training is in place?
- What other opportunities for ongoing service-learning professional development does your district provide? Are community partners invited to participate in service-learning training activities?
- What kind of incentives does your district offer to involve faculty and other school and district staff members in professional development for service-learning? Are there disincentives?
- Are there opportunities for teachers, students and community partners to participate in reflective practice as they learn together and provide support and critical feedback to each other?
- Are stakeholders able to visit other districts and communities engaged in service-learning?
- Are teachers involved in groups to support each other? Are teams of teachers and staff able to attend trainings together?

For more ideas, please refer to *Learning That Lasts*:

- ★ See pages 48-49: Districts provide regular opportunities for faculty and other employees to receive service-learning training.
- ★ See pages 49-50: Districts provide incentives to involve faculty in professional development for service-learning.

Notes

Key Concept: The district has partnerships with community-based organizations, higher education institutions or others to provide high-quality staff development opportunities.

Ideas To Think About:

- Do trainings include discussion of developmentally and age-appropriate activities, stages of service-learning planning, essential elements of service-learning, expected outcomes of activities and ways to assess service-learning?
- Do service-learning trainings include youth as trainers? What kind of leadership roles can students play in trainings and project development?
- Does your service-learning training include a service-learning experience?
- Who else in the community is engaged in service work your district can learn from and partner/work with?
- How can higher education students involved in service-learning activities provide support and assistance to K-12 teachers/students involved in service-learning activities?
- Are there opportunities for teachers, students and community partners to present their work? Where might such presentations take place?

For more ideas, please refer to *Learning That Lasts*:

- ★ See pages 50-51: Districts create partnerships with higher education institutions to provide high-quality staff development opportunities.
- ★ See pages 51-52: The state education agency creates networks and collaborates with other statewide education agencies to promote service-learning.
- ★ See page 53: State education agencies foster partnership with higher education to ensure service-learning is part of teacher education and that higher education institutions provide service-learning professional development to districts.

Notes

Key Concept: Teachers of various curricular areas have opportunities to discuss potential collaboration on service-learning projects.

Ideas To Think About:

- Is the schedule flexible enough to allow such interdisciplinary collaboration? In what ways might the schedule be restructured?
- Are there opportunities for teachers and students to share their service-learning projects with teachers and students of other curricular areas to examine points of intersection?
- In what ways can service-learning be integrated in subject/curricular-area-specific professional development opportunities?
- How might such collaborative opportunities enhance all curricular areas involved?

For more ideas, please refer to *Learning That Lasts*:

- ★ See pages 48-49: Districts provide regular opportunities for faculty and other employees to receive service-learning training.

Notes

Key Concept: Service-learning is incorporated into curricular activities, district initiatives and education reform strategies.

Ideas To Think About:


- How is service-learning linked to other educational reforms and other district initiatives? What kind of educational reforms have been implemented, and how can service-learning be integrated?
- How can the district celebrate and share successful service-learning partnerships and projects?
- Is a consistent professional development process used?
- Are continuing education credits for teacher recertification or licensure offered to educators participating in service-learning training?
- How can service-learning be used to assess student learning?

For more ideas, please refer to *Learning That Lasts*:

- ★ See pages 49-50: Districts provide incentives to involve faculty in professional development for service-learning.
- ★ See page 51: Multiple individuals and offices within the state education agency, including top leadership, perceive and act upon service-learning as a critical education strategy.

Notes

Partnership and Community



Community-school partnerships are an essential element of service-learning experiences in which students, teachers and community partners design projects to address community needs as part of their academic studies. Community-school partnerships can help students to increase their understanding and commitment to civic responsibility, and can help community organizations meet their goals. These partnerships may include community- or faith-based organizations, grassroots or advocacy organizations, other schools, colleges or businesses, or government agencies.

Key Concept: Community-school partnerships benefit schools, students and community partners.

Ideas To Think About:

- How do partnerships create a context for education beyond the classroom (applied academics)?
- How can external partners add context and expertise to a service-learning project?
- How do partnerships help students, teachers and community partners increase understanding and commitment to civic responsibility? In what other ways might students benefit from partnerships?
- How do partnerships increase adult participation in supporting education and youth participation to support the community?
- How do partnerships increase resources for education (funding, products, services and public opinion)?
- How might students help community-based organizations meet their mission and goals?

For more ideas, please refer to *Learning That Lasts*:

- ★ See pages 55-56: Partnership and Community chapter introduction.
- ★ See pages 60-61: Interview of Susan Abravanel.

Notes

Key Concept: Organizational structures exist to develop and support community-school partnerships.

Ideas To Think About:

- What community-school partnerships now exist? Can they be strengthened? How?
- Considering community needs and your service-learning goals, what government agencies, community- or faith-based organizations, other schools, colleges or businesses might be contacted?
- What teachers or community experts should be involved, and in what areas of expertise?
- How can you provide training for staff, students and community volunteers?
- How can districts present partnership models to new community partners?
- Would it be helpful to organize a community-school forum or a service-learning advisory committee to explore potential projects and partnerships?
- How can stakeholders define common interests, goals and budget?

For more ideas, please refer to *Learning That Lasts*:

- ★ See page 59: School and community partners have ongoing opportunities to meet, discuss expectations and, when necessary, revise the operations of service-learning activities.
- ★ See pages 59-60: Districts and community partners share trainings and other resources.

Notes

Key Concept: District, school and partner policies and resources encourage partnerships.

Ideas To Think About:

- What are the organizational and resource needs of the service-learning project and partners?
- How can districts and community partners share services and resources that are mutually beneficial?
- How can project leaders provide for ongoing communication, reflection and improvement?
- What district and/or school policies (such as liability, supervision and transportation) need to be in place for students to spend project time with community partners outside the school?
- What policies do community-based partners need to have in place to allow students to spend project time with the organization?

For more ideas, please refer to *Learning That Lasts*:

★ See page 59: School and community partners have ongoing opportunities to meet, discuss expectations and, when necessary, revise the operations of service-learning activities.

Notes

Key Concept: Community-school partnerships should be evaluated, documented and publicized.

Ideas To Think About:

- How can you evaluate the impact of the partnership and the viability of service-learning activities?
- Can you arrange project visits by community partners, administrators, public officials and the media?
- Can you provide models and tips for documentation, presentations and reflection activities?
- How can you publicize the results and benefits of service-learning and community partnerships?
- What public recognition events, publications or award ceremonies are there that may be appropriate?

For more ideas, please refer to *Learning That Lasts*:

- ★ See page 59: School and community partners have ongoing opportunities to meet, discuss expectations and, when necessary, revise the operations of service-learning activities.
- ★ See page 60: Partnerships are constructed at the state level in support of service-learning.

Notes

Partnership and Community

Key Concept: Partnerships need not be exclusive to the local level; consider potential partnerships at the regional, state and national levels.

Ideas To Think About:


- How can you link to larger partnerships (county, regional, state or national)?
- Are there school reform or community improvement programs that may relate to your project and warrant consideration as new partnerships?
- How can you explore the potential benefits and opportunities in these additional partnerships?
- In your state, is there a coalition of organizations and individuals that advocate for civic education? How can you connect with them?
- How can you connect with national resources and organizations?

For more ideas, please refer to *Learning That Lasts*:

- ★ See page 60: Partnerships are constructed at the state level in support of service-learning.
- ★ See pages 86-89: Additional Resources.

Notes

Continuous Improvement



In schools and districts that embrace institutionalization of service-learning, personnel continually review their efforts and look at ways to improve and enrich all aspects. High-quality continuous improvement provides an opportunity for staff, students and community members to learn from and support each other on a regular basis, to improve practice, to take responsibility for their own learning, to celebrate successes and to reflect upon student contributions.

While continuous improvement is imbedded within the other topics contained in this guide (vision and leadership, curriculum, professional development, and community-school partnerships), it is important for a district to think strategically and comprehensively about the manner in which continuous improvement efforts are structured throughout the district.

Key Concept: The district provides formalized opportunities for assessing service-learning and for continuous improvement of service-learning practice.

Ideas To Think About:

- How does the district assess service-learning outcomes?
- What evidence is necessary for reflective thought and action?
- What data are needed if the success of the school is to be valued and reliably determined?
- How can service-learning assessments link with other school or district assessment efforts?
- Are there opportunities for sharing and collaboration on improvement strategies among district staff?
- Is there an opportunity for staff, students and community members to learn and support each other on a regular basis, to improve practice, to take responsibility for their own learning, to celebrate successes and to reflect upon student contributions?
- In what ways can students be involved in designing assessment strategies?
- How can community partners provide feedback to the district based on their service-learning experiences?
- What are the predictable concerns that teachers, staff, students, parents and community partners are likely to face creating continuous improvement opportunities?

For more ideas, please refer to *Learning That Lasts*:

★ See pages 64-66: The district provides ongoing opportunities for experienced service-learning practitioners to improve their skills and share information with others.

Notes

Key Concept: High-quality continuous improvement is sustained through district policies and practices.

Ideas To Think About:

- What capacity does the district and the state have to provide opportunities for high-quality continuous improvement? In what ways can community partners and higher education assist?
- How can the reflective components of service-learning lead to continuous improvement?
- How can the district provide time for more substantive discussions of common problems, collaborative planning and refining practice that leads to student learning?
- How can the district structure opportunities to celebrate success and successful collective action?
- Do continuous improvement activities encourage emerging leadership and leaders among teachers, students, staff, students and community partners?

For more ideas, please refer to *Learning That Lasts*:

- ★ See page 66: Service-learning is included in district improvement plans.
- ★ See page 67: there are continual efforts to evaluate the impact of service-learning and to make modifications as needed.
- ★ See pages 68-69: Significant accomplishments are publicly acknowledged and celebrated.

Notes

Key Concept: Different evaluative processes and protocols better assess different types of practice.

Ideas To Think About:

- Is one type of evaluation or assessment used for all continuous improvement purposes? What processes are currently used? What other processes could be used, for what purposes and in what circumstances?
- Are there a set of standards to judge current practice and improvements?
- Is there accountability for both process and results? How can accountability systems be structured to both celebrate success and identify areas for improvement?
- How can research and best practice inform the creation of district rubrics to evaluate attainment of district goals through service-learning?

For more ideas, please refer to *Learning That Lasts*:

- ★ See page 67: There are continual efforts to evaluate the impact of service-learning and to make modifications as needed.
- ★ See page 69: There are state-level efforts to evaluate service-learning efforts.

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