

Sustaining Service-Learning in Wisconsin

*Somerset
Students
Constructing
a Circuit
Training
Station*



*What Principals, Teachers
& Students Say About
Service-Learning*

A Report Compiled by the
Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction



2000-2001

A Message from the State Superintendent

Over the past decade, Wisconsin has gained recognition as a national leader in service-learning. Through a Learn and Serve America grant from the Corporation for National and Community Service, Wisconsin schools have embarked on projects that combine community service with classroom learning in a practical way that deepens knowledge and fosters community spirit in our young people. From the smallest town to the largest urban center, students have found new enthusiasm for learning through opportunities to apply their skills and strengths to benefit their communities.

The value of service-learning has been established. As principals attest in this report, it works in elementary, middle, and high schools and with all students. The goal now is to fully integrate service-learning into the educational mainstream so that it occurs naturally.

It is time for schools, school boards, and communities to formally adopt service-learning as part of their mission. I challenge you to join me in sustaining this unique and powerful approach to learning.



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State Superintendent*

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410 S 3rd St.
River Falls, WI 54022*

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kirkhamconsult@inexpress.net
or stanley.j.potts@uwrf.edu*

The National Learn And Serve Initiative

Learn and Serve America is administered by the Corporation for National Service, which supports school and community-based efforts to involve K-12 students in the performance of worthwhile service activities within their communities. Learn and Serve America provides funds to the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) for statewide allocation. These dollars are distributed to the 12 regional cooperative educational service agencies (CESAs) to foster and grow service-learning programs within Wisconsin schools. For CESA contacts, see page 13.

For more Research and Evaluation Tools and Research Information, see page 14.

Introduction

In Wisconsin, service learning as a teaching methodology has grown tremendously over the past few years. Linking service with learning is an excellent way for our youth to learn the skills they need to be successful citizens and productive workers.

This report is a summary of a number of surveys conducted by the DPI of administrators, teachers, and students. Most of the information is from a survey responded to by 80 principals who have experienced service-learning in their buildings. They responded to questions about policy and practices that relate to sustaining service-learning.

Principals reported that when service-learning is integrated in one area, such as across grade levels, it is more likely to be integrated into another area, such as across disciplines.

When service-learning is implemented schoolwide, more teachers in the school are likely to link service learning to academic standards. Also, when a principal believes in service-learning as a schoolwide approach, more schoolwide projects result.

For more information about service-learning in Wisconsin, please visit the DPI web site at www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dtc/ffgcsp/slhomepage or call Jeff Miller at 608/261-7494.

What Is Service-Learning?

Service-learning combines service to the community with student learning in a way that benefits both the student and the community. More than simple community service, service-learning integrates community projects with classroom learning, linking directly to academic curriculum, while responding to real needs of communities.

Examples of service-learning projects undertaken by students at all levels, from K-12 through university, include preserving native plants, designing and building neighborhood playgrounds, tutoring younger children, testing the local water quality, creating wheelchair ramps, preparing food for the homeless, developing urban community gardens, and starting school recycling programs.

Importance of Service-Learning

A national study of Learn and Serve America programs shows that effective service-learning programs have helped students improve academic grades, increase attendance in school, and develop personal and social responsibility. Whether the goal is academic improvement, personal development, or both, students learn skills in critical thinking, communication, teamwork, civic responsibility, mathematical reasoning, problem solving, public speaking, computers, scientific method, research, and analysis.

Status of Service-Learning in Wisconsin

The DPI distributed a survey to all principals in the spring of 2001. Principals were asked to identify and report service-learning activity in their building. Out of a total of 2,050 surveys distributed, 576 were returned and tabulated. Listed below are the preliminary findings.

- Number of students who participated in service-learning 71,747
- Number of service-learning projects 4,004
- Number of teachers who participated in service-learning projects 3,075
- Number of service hours 550,473
- Number of students with disabilities involved in the project 7,525
- Number of service-learning courses 61

Principals were asked to distinguish between community service and service-learning by using the principles that apply to the DPI service-learning four point test found on page 15.

www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dltcl/bbfcsp/sl4ptpge.html

In a 2000-2001 survey of teachers involved in service-learning through the Learn and Serve America project, 88.8% of the teachers reporting indicated that as a result of service-learning, ongoing partnerships between school and the local community have increased. In the same report over 97% of the teachers indicated that the students learned more than they would have through regular classroom instruction!

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction Survey Results

*A National Evaluation compiled by Brandais and Associates can be found at:
www.servicelearning.org/res/LSReport.pdf*

Service-Learning in Wisconsin

Annually, more than 20,000 Wisconsin students contribute over 250,000 hours of community service through the Learn and Serve America program.

Each of the 12 regional cooperative educational service agency (CESA) awards mini-grants to schools that submit a qualified proposal for a service project connected to the curriculum. The grants help defray costs associated with starting a service-learning project or improving ongoing service-learning efforts.

To view a sample of the questionnaire please go to: www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dltcl/bbfcsp/pdf/slsurvey.pdf

Principal Survey

In June 2000, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction surveyed principals to discover the connection between policy and implementation of service-learning programs in K-12 schools. Eighty Wisconsin K-12 principals who had introduced service-learning into their schools formally through Learn and Serve America grant programs responded to the survey. Responses came from approximately equal numbers of elementary, middle, and high schools.

Because principals are responsible for both policy and implementation, they were asked to rate the importance (their own personal belief) of service-learning and the current status (practice in their building/district) of eight elements influential in sustaining service-learning.

Grantsburg Middle School students found a need to provide picnic tables for a local park. During the planning process the 7th graders became aware that only the 8th graders had acquired the knowledge needed to ensure that the platform corners were square. Applying the Pythagorean Theorem, the eighth graders became hooked on the project as they taught the seventh grade students and demonstrated that learning and service do connect.



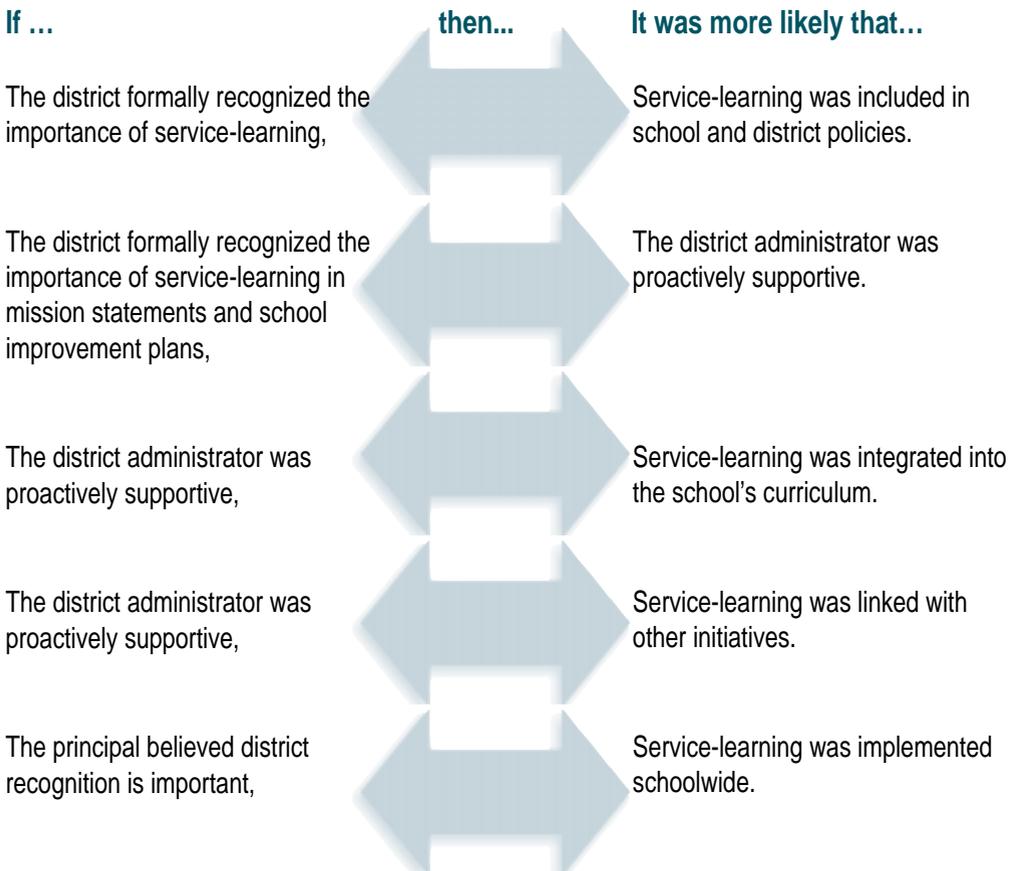
Glenwood City
7th grade students
map walking trails.

What Principals Say

The survey results from the 80 principals suggest positive relationships between policy and implementation.

District Support Highly Influential

The survey results show that the most influential factor in sustaining service-learning is the active participation of the district administrator in setting service-learning as a priority. When a district formally recognized the importance of service-learning, policy was more likely to reflect this. In addition, if a principal believed in the importance of district support, a higher level of schoolwide implementation was more likely.



“Student energy is incredible when they are working on a service-learning activity. Service-learning is making our curriculum more relevant to our students while bringing more positive attention to our building. Service-learning is the key to turning around a nation of disenfranchised youth and creating youth who have a vested interest in their society.”

*Principal Rich Pertzborn
River Bluff Middle School, Stoughton,
A National Service-Learning Leader School*

“I believe service-learning is an important part of every child’s social and academic development.”

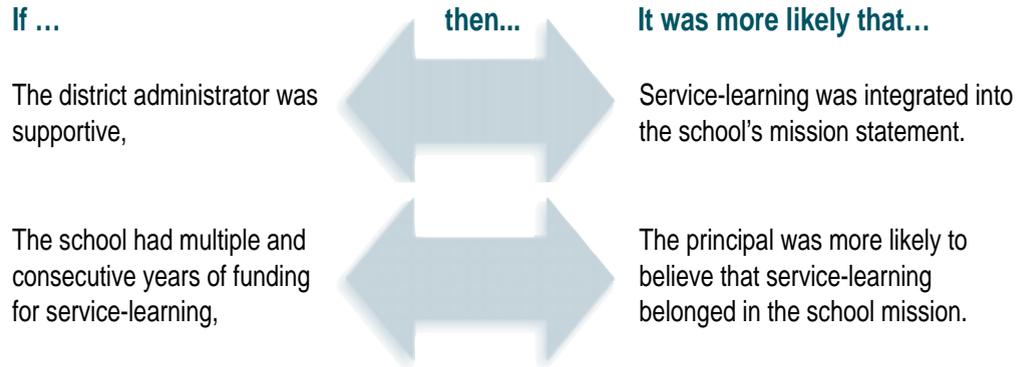
*Kristi Cole,
Humboldt Park,
Elementary, Milwaukee*

Sample School Board Policy

Our school board endorses the use of service-learning as a teaching methodology that can and should be used by all teachers to support student achievement through service to the community. Further, we recognize that service-learning is an effective vehicle to reinforce specific academic content areas in the classroom, and that our district learner objectives and benchmarks can be reached through service-learning. To that end, we urge all building administrators to participate in inservice opportunities on service-learning methods and provide leadership for service-learning coordination. Further, we encourage principals to include service-learning in each building's staff development plan.

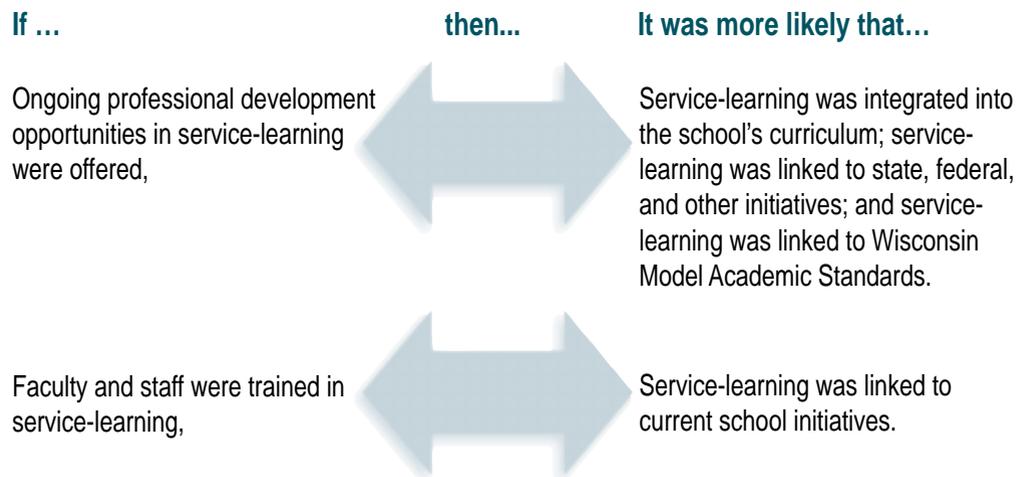
Proactive Support and Sustained Funding Affect Policy.

The survey results showed that school mission statements were more likely to include service-learning given the presence of proactive district support. Also, a sustained experience through multiple years of funding made it more likely that a principal would deem service-learning essential to the schools mission.



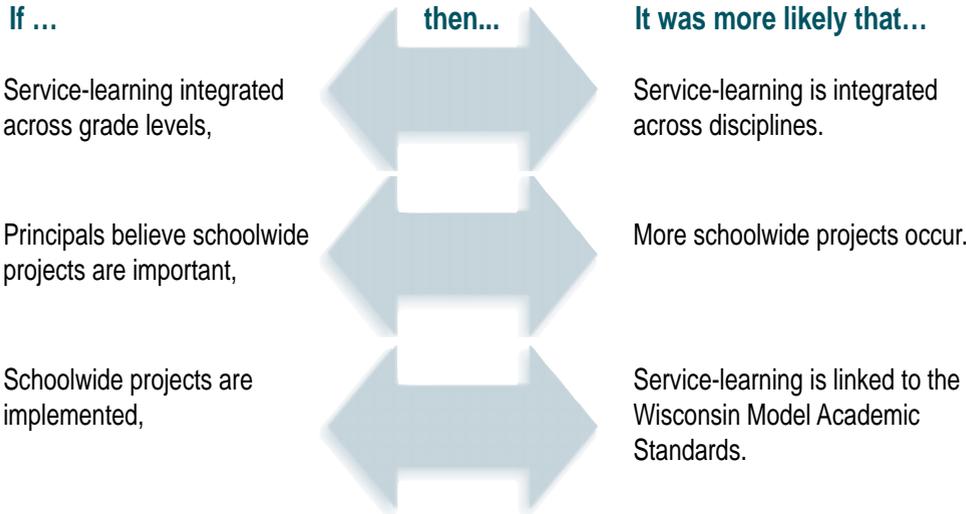
Professional Development Affects Implementation

Staff training was correlated with the use of service-learning. When teachers had opportunities for training and ongoing staff development in service-learning, they were more likely to integrate service-learning into the curriculum and link it to other initiatives.



Synergistic Effects

When principals reported that service-learning was implemented and integrated in one area, such as across grade levels, it made integration more likely in another area, such as across disciplines. Survey responses also showed that when schoolwide projects were implemented, more teachers were likely to link service-learning to academic standards. Also, when principals believe in service-learning as a schoolwide approach, more schoolwide projects occur.



Wisconsin Model Academic Standards Linked to Service Learning

Because service-learning can be applied to any field of study, Wisconsin schools have demonstrated that service-learning projects help meet learning requirements for Wisconsin Model Academic Standards.

A DPI publication is available to help schools make the connection to state standards at: www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dltcl/eis/pubsales/partnr

Stoughton River Bluff Middle School
students present their ideas to CNN staff in Washington, D.C.



“Our student representatives will meet monthly with the counselors to come up with service-learning projects that will make our school and community better than it already is.”

*Al Maudal,
Sunset Elementary,
Whitehall*

“Service-learning is an infused part of the elementary curriculum.”

*Winfred Abney,
Philips Elementary
School*

“Our Helping Skills course at the 8th grade level attempts to get the student prepared to give back to the community. It is a good link to our graduation requirement of 36 hours.”

*Peggy Larson,
Winneconne Middle
School*

Belief and Practice

Survey results showed that practices lag behind beliefs.

Principals were asked whether they believed each of the elements listed was important and whether each of the following elements had been achieved in their school.	% believed to be critical or important	% reported having achieved or somewhat achieved...
1. District formally recognizes service-learning as part of its mission or school improvement plans.	82%	54%
2. This school formally recognizes service-learning as part of its mission or school improvement plan.	85%	54%
3. District policies currently support and sustain quality service-learning practice.	65%	39%
4. District administration is proactive in supporting service-learning and provides leadership in implementation.	86%	61%
5. Service-learning is organized by large-scale, schoolwide, and thematic projects that are integrated into the curriculum.	73%	51%
6. Service-learning is linked with other school/school reform initiatives.	68%	37%
7. District has ongoing professional development opportunities to support service-learning.	52%	22%
8. Service-learning activities are deeply integrated with academic curriculum and address the Wisconsin Model Academic Standards.	77%	29%

Conclusion

The survey of principals implementing service-learning shows that practices lag behind beliefs. Principals believe more strongly in service-learning than they are currently able to show through practice, suggesting a need for greater resources and support for service-learning activities. The survey also suggests that policy influences implementation and that implementation influences policy in a continuous cycle, with certain factors playing more influential roles, particularly the active participation of the district administrator/principal. Consecutive years of funding also influences the ability of schools to integrate service-learning into the school curriculum, change policy, and link projects to other initiatives when service-learning becomes implemented schoolwide and supported through professional development. Teachers are able to make connections to the Wisconsin Academic Model Standards.

What Teachers Say

Responses to a 2000-2001 survey of Wisconsin teachers who brought service-learning projects into their classrooms through Learn and Serve America mini-grants revealed other dimensions of the success of service-learning. Perhaps most significant:

97.9% of the teachers agreed that as a result of the service-learning project, students learned more than they would have through regular classroom instruction.

This learning was reflected in grades.

46.4% of teachers reported that students' grades improved while they participated in service-learning.

Survey results also suggested the synergistic potential of service-learning on a teacher-to-teacher basis:

77.1% of teachers reported that other teachers in their building had become more interested in service-learning after seeing their colleagues experience.

"This is our sixth year of service learning projects and they are one of the most positive things that I am involved in. My kids love service learning and so do I! You would be amazed at the pre and post tests that I give my students. It is amazing to see all of the things students learn. Service learning is wonderful for ALL students."

"Students were very involved in planning and carrying out every aspect of the project. The students took great pride and ownership in their project and learned far more than they would have in a traditional setting."



Sun Prairie
students help paint
a fence at a child
care center.

“Service-Learning has provided students with another opportunity to make a positive difference. Our students do more than just talking about problems; we are taking positive action.”

“Service-Learning is very worthwhile... it is great to see students build relationships between young and old.”

“Students not only learned the value of doing something for others; they learned new skills.”

What Teachers Say

Attendance, punctuality, discipline, and even drop-out rates were all positively affected.

35.8% of teachers indicated that student absence days decreased during the service-learning project.

42% of teachers reported that discipline referrals decreased during the service-learning project.

22.5% of teachers reported that the number of students who were late to class decreased during the service-learning project.

Service-learning also proved to be highly inclusive of all kinds of students. Teachers reported:

15.7% of students participating in service-learning had disabilities, and **24.6%** of students participating were at-risk.



Glenwood City Middle School

students celebrate the stream cleaning project.

What High School Students Say

In 2000-2001, high school students participating in service-learning in Wisconsin were surveyed about their experience. 1,991 surveys were returned.

Students said Service-Learning Activities...	AGREE	DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW
Developed personal qualities in me such as confidence and self-reliance	62%	11%	27%
Helped me to acquire new skills, interests and knowledge	77%	12%	11%
Gave me an opportunity to be creative and see my ideas put to work	69%	16%	15%
Broadened my understanding of people and places	67%	14%	19%
Helped me see how what I study in school is connected to my life outside of school	61%	21%	18%
Acquainted me with career possibilities	46%	34%	20%
Taught me job skills	56%	26%	18%
Made learning more interesting	71%	15%	14%
Should be used in all my classes	52%	25%	23%
Taught me how to work as a team member	71%	16%	13%
Helped me better understand what I study in class	44%	35%	21%
Helped me better understand my community and how it works	62%	19%	19%
Encouraged me to continue doing community service and volunteering	57%	19%	23%
Improved school spirit in my school	41%	34%	25%
Helped me improve my grades	29%	45%	26%
Helped improve my attendance	33%	45%	22%
Helped me to get in less trouble in school	33%	43%	24%
Helped me reflect more on my learning	54%	24%	22%
Helped me with problem solving	49%	28%	23%

“This whole project (quilting) is trying to make us better people and teach us life lessons to take with us outside of school. If we all think about it, we all have learned something that will make us better people to be on this planet.”

“Service-learning gives people the opportunity to learn what it is like to do the job. It makes school more interesting. I enjoyed service-learning because it gave me an idea of what I need to do in my future to major in teaching in college.”

“Service-learning gives me a chance to help others and gain credit; it makes English more interesting. service-learning helps me develop work skills and be responsible.”

“Service-learning helps the day go by faster and makes school fun.”

“I learned more about science and how much work teachers do.”

What Elementary Students Say

In 2000-2001, elementary school students participating in service-learning in Wisconsin were surveyed about their experience. 1,071 surveys were returned.

Students said Service-Learning Activities...	AGREE	DISAGREE	DON'T KNOW
Taught me new and different things.	86%	5%	9%
Taught me about jobs and careers	55%	23%	22%
Allowed me to meet new people and visit different places	82%	11%	7%
Taught me how to work with my classmates	81%	11%	8%
Helped me better understand what I study in class	63%	19%	9%
Made learning more interesting	82%	9%	9%
Made learning fun	83%	8%	9%
Encouraged me to be creative and use my own ideas	77%	7%	16%
Helped me to see how what I study is used outside of school	64%	16%	20%
Helped me better understand my community and how it works	71%	17%	12%
Gave me more confidence in myself	76%	14%	15%
Helped me to become better at solving problems	66%	18%	16%
Made me want to continue volunteering and doing community service	72%	10%	18%

“Service-learning is cool! Yes, it does help me get more out of school by teaching me about jobs. It means gaining new information and learning new skills for adult hood. It helps me with math. I learned new things and how to help people.”

“It means you learn by doing service in our community.”

I have fun with the things we do, and we learn things with some of the activities.”

“Service learning means that you learn how to help your community and teaches you to volunteer. It helps me get more out of school, and learning is easier.”



Somerset Middle School
Students work on a circuit training station.

Cooperative Education Service Agency (CESA) Contacts

Listed below are CESA contacts for service-learning. They will assist local schools in service-learning grants administration, training sessions, and resource materials.

CESA 1—Sharon Wisniewski

2930 S Root River Pkwy
West Allis WI 53227
Phone 800-261-2372 ext. 439
E-mail: wisniews@cesa1.k12.wi.us

CESA 2—Dane Co Office

Eric Smith
517 North Segoe Road #210
Madison WI 53705
Phone: 608/232-2865
E-mail: esmith@cesa2.k12.wi.us

CESA 3—Gary Baxter

1300 Industrial Drive, PO Box 5A
Fennimore WI 53809-9702
Phone: 800-261-0000
E-mail: sbaxter@mail.tds.net

CESA 4—Judy Aakre

923 East Garland Street, PO Box 157
West Salem WI 54669
Phone: 608-786-4836
E-mail: aakrejud@cesa4.k12.wi.us

CESA 5—Tim Belleau

626 E Slifer Street, PO Box 564
Portage WI 53901-0564
Phone: 608-742-8811 ext. 418
E-mail: belleaut@cesa5.k12.wi.us

CESA 6—Jackie Schoening

2300 State Highway #44, PO Box 2568
Oshkosh WI 54903-2568
Phone: 920-236-0515
E-mail: jschoeni@cesa6.k12.wi.us

CESA 7—Lynn Mullins

595 Baeten Road
Green Bay WI 54304
Phone: 920-492-5960 ext. 635
E-mail: lmullin1@cesa7.k12.wi.us

CESA 8—John Knickerbocker

223 W Park Street
Gillett WI 54124-0320
Phone: 800-831-6391 ext. 227
E-mail: knickerb@cesa8.k12.wi.us

CESA 9—Dave Kunelius

304 Kaphaem Road, PO Box 449
Tomahawk WI 54487
Phone: 715-453-2141 ext. 245
E-mail: davek@cesa9.k12.wi.us

CESA 10—Mary Lorberter

725 W Park Avenue
Chippewa Falls WI 54729
Phone: 715-720-2036 ext. 204
E-mail: mlorbert@cesa10.k12.wi.us

CESA 11—Cindy Becker

225 Osterman Drive
Turtle Lake WI 54889
Phone: 715-986-2020
E-mail: cindyb@cesa11.k12.wi.us

CESA 12—Jim Lee

618 Beaser Avenue
Ashland WI 54806-2751
Phone: 715-682-2363 ext. 124
E-mail: jiml@cesa12.k12.wi.us

Department of Public
Instruction Service-
Learning

<http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dltcl/bbfcsp/lhmpage.html>

608/261-7494

“As a CESA Service Learning coordinator, it has been exciting to see the enthusiasm students have for learning as they implement a service learning project in their school and community. Service Learning not only enhances classroom learning while meeting many of the academic standards, but also addresses the Standards of the Heart which are needed to ensure we have a new generation of good, caring, and productive citizens.”

Cindy Becker CESA 11

If you are searching for the latest in service-learning research this link includes a listing of research findings: www.learningindeed.org/research/slresearch/

The Compendium of Assessment and Research Tools (CART) is a database that provides information on instruments that measure attributes associated with youth development programs. www.cart.rmcdenver.com/

A self assessment tool is available to help your building determine your current service-learning status: www.servicelearning.org/res/shumasses.pdf

Service-Learning and Assessment: A Field Guide for Teachers is available at: www.servicelearning.org/pdfs.html

Resources

The national and regional organizations listed below can provide further resources for those interested in initiating and sustaining service-learning programs.

Learning From Experience: A Collection of Service-Learning Projects Linking Academic Standards to Curriculum: This guide has been designed to show the service-learning process in action. It presents outstanding examples of successful service-learning projects as described by teachers throughout Wisconsin. All projects provide an important community service and link the curriculum to multiple state standards.

pubsales@dpi.state.wi.us 800/243-8782

To order from DPI publications: www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dltcl/eis/pubsales/partnr_3.html

National Youth Leadership Council

1910 West County Road B, St. Paul, MN 55113-1337 • 612/631-3672 • www.nylc.org

National Service-Learning Cooperative – Essential Elements of Service-Learning: For Effective Practice and Organizational Support.

This document uses a rubric to help teachers and organization implement service-learning. It is available through the National Youth Leadership Council:

1910 West County Road B, St. Paul, MN 55113-1337 • 612/631-3672

Compact for Learning and Citizenship

www.ecs.org/html/projectspartners/clc/clc_main.htm

The Compact for Learning and Citizenship (CLC) is an organization of chief state school officers, district superintendents, service-learning professionals and others who support service-learning. Members are committed to linking school-based service and service-learning to K-12 curriculum and to organizing schools to maximize community volunteer efforts. CLC is a partner with Learning in Deed. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation in 1998 launched Learning In Deed, a national initiative to engage more young people in service to others as part of their academic life. www.learningindeed.org/

Wisconsin Intergenerational Network (WIN)

WIN is a statewide network of organizations and individuals who believe that interaction and cooperation among generations contribute to the health and well-being of individuals and society. WIN provides opportunities to agencies and individuals to share information, resources, and skills; encourages stronger linkages between agencies serving children, youth, families, and elders to promote intergenerational involvement; researches public policy that affects all ages; and engages in advocacy.

PO Box 6664 / Madison, WI 53716 • 608/224-0606 • www.wi-win.org

The Corporation for National Service

The Corporation for National Service (CNS) is the federal agency that funds the Learn and Serve America Program. The Corporation also funds AmeriCorps and the National Senior Service Corps. 202/606-5000 • www.cns.gov

The Learn and Serve National Service-Learning Clearinghouse (NSLC) is a comprehensive information system that focuses on all dimensions of service-learning, covering kindergarten through higher education school based as well as community based initiatives.

www.servicelearning.org

Wisconsin Service-Learning 4-Point Test

Stan Potts of the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction developed a 4-point test to help assess the quality of service-learning projects:

- 1) **Youth Involvement/Empowerment/Youth Voice:** Effective service-learning projects allow students to take a leadership role in helping to identify the community need and create a plan to begin solving the problem.
- 2) **Genuine Service:** Effective service-learning projects form partnerships with the community to identify projects that will provide genuine service. Such projects must clearly benefit the community, and students must understand how the project makes a difference and why.
- 3) **Link to the Classroom:** Effective service-learning projects link directly to academic curricula. Specific learning objectives are set and outcomes are measures. Frequently, teachers team up to involve more than one classroom and sometimes multiple grades and disciplines.
- 4) **Reflection/Evaluation:** Effective service-learning projects build in opportunities for student reflection before, during, and after the event, using written, verbal, or other means for reflection. Students should be involved in the evaluation of the service-learning effort, and the project's degree of success must be measured.

Find Out More

Contact your local CESA office (see p. 13) for further information regarding Service-Learning opportunities and funding in Wisconsin.

For a comprehensive overview of the Service-Learning program, go to the Service-Learning Website:

www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dltcl/bbfcsp/slhmpage.html.

or e-mail:

jeffery.miller@dpi.state.wi.us

Service-Learning Is:

- an **acknowledgement** that young people are a community's greatest resource and that each community must help young people become democratic citizens who contribute to their community.
- a **community reform model** that uses community-school partnerships to revitalize education and directly involve youth and community members in increasing academic achievement while creating safe and civil learning environments in and out of school.
- a **teaching and learning method** that values active learning and experimentation, and that continues to ask young people: What did you learn? What does it mean? What actions can you take with the knowledge you have gained?

Used with permission (modified) of the National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC).



National Service-Learning Exchange
A Peer Network for Technical Assistance

Contact us:
www.nslexchange.org
1-877-572-3924

The National Service-Learning Exchange will provide you with a Service-Learning Peer Mentor to:

- answer your Service-Learning questions;
- offer ideas and suggestions for success;
- and support your efforts.

Funding for this project provided in part by the Corporation for National Service, Department of Service-Learning

National Service-Learning Exchange operates a national network of volunteers (K-12 educators and administrators, higher education faculty and leaders of community-based organizations) with expertise in service-learning. They are available at no cost to help you develop or enhance your service-learning efforts. If you are interested in starting or strengthening your service-learning program, please contact the North Central Regional Office of the Exchange (located at the University of Wisconsin - River Falls) at the toll free number: 877/572-3924, extension 4, or directly at 715/425-3157 and ask for Linda Jacobson. You can also send an e-mail message to exchange@uwrf.edu





DPI's Bright Beginnings/ Family-School-Community Partnerships Team

The DPI Bright Beginnings/Family-School-Community Partnerships (BB/FSCP) team brings together staff and programs that focus on building strong communities. The core team includes staff in community education, early childhood education, nutrition education, youth service-learning, and family-school-community partnerships. The team works collaboratively with Title I, Student Achievement Guarantee in Education (SAGE), Special Education, the ChildCare Information Center, and Student Services, Prevention and Wellness.

The team connects with Parents Plus of Wisconsin, the PTA, Wisconsin Community Education Association, Wisconsin Intergenerational Network, and others to provide training and workshops on partnerships.

The DPI through the BB/FSCP participates in the **National Network of Partnership Schools**, which offers resources to schools and districts for developing or enhancing partnerships for the purpose of improving learning. The network is based on the research of Joyce Epstein at Johns Hopkins University. Using the research and information gathered from partnership schools, the team develops "Learning Together" resource packets for schools.

Service learning is connecting meaningful service projects, designed by students and teachers, to classroom learning. The DPI receives a grant from the Corporation for National Service to promote service learning. It disseminates funding through the CESAs to schools (see page 13 for your CESA contact).

Through the Corporation for National Service, the DPI has received a **VISTA** (Volunteer in Service to America) grant and an **AmeriCorps** grant to promote literacy and family-school-community partnerships. Nearly 40 schools and CESAs host either an AmeriCorps member or VISTA to help start up and develop tutoring and to support partnerships. The DPI also has a VISTA that staffs its family center and works with the VISTAs and AmeriCorps members around the state.

Community education provides an excellent vehicle to bring together community resources to serve all learners in the community. There are many examples of community education around the state, and the team helps school districts network as well as serve as a resource.

The team's **nutrition education** consultant promotes community partnerships to help school staff, students, and their families develop healthy attitudes toward nutrition. The team administers a Team Nutrition grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to promote an understanding of the new national dietary guidelines. Good eating results in good learning.

Early childhood consulting focuses on blending early childcare and education to benefit the whole community. The team approaches early childhood issues from a community focus, encouraging schools to work within their communities to come up with the best programs for its young children and families. The Early Childhood consultant coordinates the Wisconsin Early Childhood Collaborating Partners.

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