

Information regarding Student Service Learning (SSL) hours for Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) Youth in association with Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church.

# Program Overview\*

*\*Review all aspects of the website [www.mcpsssl.org](http://www.mcpsssl.org) for comprehensive Student Service Learning (SSL) program information.*





Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) believes that service learning addresses recognized community needs and is connected to curriculum goals. All indirect, direct, and advocacy action include the phases of preparation, action, and reflection. Quality service learning provides the student with knowledge, skills, attitudes, and career exploration opportunities that lead to effective citizenship in an increasingly diverse and interconnected world. MCPS is committed to quality service-learning experiences for all students.

## MCPS SSL Program Details

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1. Students may begin to earn student service learning (SSL) hours the summer after completing Grade 5. They continue to accrue hours through middle and high school.
2. MCPS students will complete 75 service-learning hours for graduation. Students who enter MCPS for the first time in:
  - Grade 6 will complete → 75 hours for graduation.
  - Grade 7 will complete → 65 hours for graduation.
  - Grade 8 will complete → 55 hours for graduation.
  - Grade 9 will complete → 45 hours for graduation.
  - Grade 10 will complete → 35 hours for graduation.
  - Grade 11 will complete → 20 hours for graduation.
  - Grade 12 will complete → 10 hours for graduation.

*\* Special awards are offered for those in Middle and High School who exceed the required amount of hours.*

3. Students complete the service-learning requirement through
  - Full participation in the SSL aspects and successful completion of specific middle school and high school courses. (Grade 6 science, Grade 7 English, and Grade 8 Social Studies, National, State and Local Government, and specific high school electives identified in the MCPS Course Bulletin),
  - Full participation in service activities promoted by school-sponsored clubs and organizations, and full participation in opportunities and organizations preapproved for SSL
  - Organizations and opportunities identified with a graduation cap icon  are MCPS SSL approved at the website [www.mcpsssl.org](http://www.mcpsssl.org). Organizations with this graduation cap icon  have attended an orientation and provided information to the Montgomery County Public Schools and the Montgomery County Volunteer Center about their organization and service-learning opportunities.
  - Organizations identified with the graduation cap icon  have provided basic information about their agency. For further information about what it means to be MCPS SSL Approved please see the Frequently Asked Question "What does it mean to say an organization and volunteer opportunity are 'Approved' for Student Service Learning by Montgomery County Public Schools?".
  - Students interested in earning service-learning hours with organizations that are not identified with a graduation cap icon  on the website must submit MCPS Form 560-50, Individual Student Service Learning (SSL) Request to the school-based SSL coordinator in advance of any service.

- All service for which SSL hours are awarded must be performed with approved nonprofit tax exempt organizations.
- Adults (not relatives of students) representing the approved organization must supervise secular opportunities that address real community need in public places.
- Must award 1 SSL hour for every hour of service in the community earned outside of the instructional school day. Maximum of 8 hours within a 24-hour period.
- Must cover the 3 phases of SSL: Preparation, Action, and Reflection
- Must verify student service and learning by reading student sections of MCPS Form 560-51, Student Service Learning Activity Verification before completing the Organization information (hours provided, activities, supervisor signature etc.).
- Must not provide opportunities that involve door-to-door canvassing or telephone solicitation.
- Must not provide financial compensation to students for their service.
- Must not award SSL hours for involvement in opportunities that occur in \*private residences.
- Must not permit discrimination or harassment of any kind

Three phases are covered in high quality student service learning (SSL):

## Step 1

**PREPARATION** to make meaningful contributions in response to recognized community needs.

## Step 2

**ACTION** to achieve curricular objectives, and develop responsibility.

## Step 3

**REFLECTION** to consider the impact of the action and what was learned.

Quality service-learning experiences result in the strengthening of character, development of new skills, exploration of careers, and an expanded sense of community.

## PREPARATION of Student for the Service-Learning Experience

- Identify a secular project that is educational and meets a community need.
- Set the expectations and steps for engagement.
- Specify specific skills needed.
- Share aspects of the organization and career paths that are available.
- Identify the adult who will train, supervise, and guide the student.

## ACTION Supervised Throughout the Service-learning Experience

Consider the action involved in the service:

- **Direct Action** involves secular activities such as tutoring, visiting children in a hospital, serving food at a food kitchen.
- **Indirect Action** involves secular activities such as collections of food, clothing, toiletry items, fundraisers, and community clean-ups.

- **Advocacy Action** involves secular activities such as writing letters to officials stating an opinion on a topic, or speaking publicly about an issue.
- **Supervise the action** in a public place.

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## REFLECTION of the Service-Learning Experience by the Student

- Assist student as necessary to understand the need they addressed.
- Identify who benefited from the action that was taken.
- Survey what the student learned about him/herself.
- Identify the academic area connected to the service-learning experience.
- Celebrate service and learning.
- Encourage continued involvement.
- Explore potential career goals as a result of this experience.

Simply put, a student at Cedar Lane may earn SSL hours by serving a need of the greater community (not just Cedar Lane) in a public space with supervision by a representative of Cedar Lane (not the youth's parent) as long as it has nothing to do with worship services.

\* Students may earn SSL hours for preparing meals in their homes for later delivery to community shelters sponsored by the Montgomery County Coalition for the Homeless and Interfaith Works. See details on the website [www.mcpsssl.org](http://www.mcpsssl.org).

Must verify service-learning experiences using MCPS Form 560-51 Student Service Learning Activity Verification and submit it to the school-based SSL coordinator according to the following timelines:

- the last Friday in September for service performed during the summer;
- the First Friday in January for service performed during the first semester
- the First Friday in June for service performed during the second semester.

For comprehensive information regarding the MCPS SSL Plan please go to the website <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/ssl/> or speak with the SSL coordinator in any middle or high school. To find more SSL opportunities, check out the Montgomery County Volunteer Center website:

<http://www.montgomeryserves.org/volunteers/student-service-learning-ssl>

Watch this: <http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/ssl/pages/media.aspx>

For more information, contact the Coordinator of Youth Ministry here at Cedar Lane.