

3rd Grade Social Studies

1) Introduction: Service-learning is tailor made for teaching Social Studies. The essence of both service-learning and social studies is helping students understand the world around them so they can be effective citizens and leaders. Service-learning brings students into direct contact with real-world community problem-solving. The experience provides a context in which to explore the impact of government, policy, and economics on our every day lives.

2) Definition of service-learning:

Service-learning is a form of teaching and learning that engages students in meaningful service activities in their schools and communities as part of the standard academic curriculum. Integrated into (but not limited to) the school day, service-learning connects young people with structured activities that address human and community issues, and that provide opportunities for increased student academic engagement, civic responsibility, personal and social development and the acquisition of critical thinking skills.

The following concepts are central to good service-learning practice. Evidence of these elements as well as their alignment with Pennsylvania state standards and the School District's promotion/graduation requirements are key to model practices.

- **Student voice in choosing, developing and implementing a project:** Service-learning works best when students are involved in something relevant and meaningful to them. Encourage student participation and sharing of responsibility in all aspects of a project.
- **Identification of genuine need:** The “community” identifying the need can be the class, the school, the neighborhood, a community partner, the city, etc. Goals for addressing problem have the support of designated community and clearly defined goals.
- **Mutual benefit for students and community partner(s):** Students acquire knowledge and skills, and in return contribute a short or long-term solution to the problem. Sensitivity to needs and/or limitations of all parties is important.
- **Sustained student involvement:** Length of project can vary but should span a minimum of 6 weeks. Projects with greater richness and complexity may last a semester or an entire school year.
- **Rigorous, multidisciplinary research:** Projects should meet content standards in at least two academic disciplines and demonstrate writing and research competence. Research can explore root causes/effects, potential solutions or public policy related to the problem.
- **Ongoing reflection:** Reflection activities should occur throughout the project. They reveal cognitive and affective learning and can incorporate speaking, writing and/or multimedia strategies.
- **Assessment of student learning and project impact:** Evaluates academic, personal and social development as well as whether stated community need has been met/addressed. Rubrics and other authentic assessment tools are preferred.

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- **Culminating presentation:** Presentations or exhibitions of learning allow students to demonstrate what they have learned for the benefit of others, including community partners.
- **Final celebration:** Positive change and collaboration is hard work! Acknowledge and celebrate the contributions and accomplishments of all who were involved.

3) Sample Project Description

A sample project description is included for your convenience. This particular project is not required, however, it is designed to fit the core curriculum for this subject and it reflects a common issue or problem in many of Philadelphia's communities. Teachers are encouraged to transform this project and take it in new directions.

Civic Access and Your Role in Philadelphia's Communities

This is a multi-dimensional project that can support or cut across each of the different 6-week units of third grade social studies. Its free-standing elements include mapping and geography, economics, cultural heritage and civic decision-making -- which combine to address aspects of all six focus questions pertaining to community. Service-learning is supposed to be embedded in a context of inquiry and research, so students perform background studies before and during service.

Through this project - as students study the many communities to which they belong - they explore how they can contribute toward improving one of those communities. *Service outcomes* include information acquisition and dissemination about direct civic participation in their community, as well as progress in addressing a real community issue.

Students will connect with civic organizations and public agencies in their communities, interview the people and learn why and how they operate, attend public meetings (if possible), identify an issue of concern, and help mobilize one of their communities to address it. Students should be given as much self-determination in selecting their issue and service as possible, but they might be encouraged to select among these categories: transportation, environment, public health & safety, civil relationships or cultural life. Maybe they'd choose to focus on health: they'd follow a Councilperson's work on City Council, learn about the pros and cons of public health issues, report back to their neighborhood, and write an editorial letter to the Daily News expressing their concerns.

The project develops along similar paths as the curriculum. For example, the school community itself resides in a given neighborhood within the larger jurisdictions of the School District network and the municipality of Philadelphia. Philadelphia, in turn, can be visualized as a hub for the greater five-county and tri-state region and so forth.

4) Sample Lessons/Activities with Resources

- Students begin by creating a physical, floor- or table-sized street map of the school within a square mile or two, using little pictures (or models or symbols) of homes, libraries, recreational facilities, commercial buildings, houses of worship,

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- public health centers – all the neighborhood resources (or blight). (7.1..3; 7.2.3A; 7.3.3; 7.4.3; 8.2.3; 8.3.3 B; 5.1.3)
- If transportation is their issue, they'd focus particular attention to what rail and bus routes go through this neighborhood, and how students get to the school. Designations for N, S, E, W should be clear, as well as general orientation toward the rivers and major historical landmarks in Philadelphia to provide context, perspective and reference.
 - Students then locate their neighborhood on a larger map of Philadelphia. (Good street maps are available free of charge through Automobile Club memberships.) Locate specifically City Hall, the Municipal Services building, the Free Library of Philadelphia, the School District Administration Offices, SEPTA headquarters, the International Airport and 30th Street Station, among others.
 - In one lesson, students could detail the public transportation route they'd take to get from school to City Hall to attend a City Council meeting. Then they can share this information with the school community and beyond, providing a public service to their neighbors.
- Students study the City of Philadelphia website: www.phila.gov (5.1.3; 5.2.3; 5.3.3)
 - Each student can ask him/herself a question about something he/she wants to learn from the site (in writing), and then share the findings with the class. For example: *Who is my City Council representative?* (Providing useful information to others, once more, is one form of service.)
 - [If you're having trouble developing useful home-grown questions, go to the FAQ link (Frequently Asked Questions) and have a heyday! There are numerous categories. For instance, a question posted under Health is, "Where and how is air quality measured?" Use the response to stimulate further student thinking about other questions having to do with air quality, causes of pollution, and what consumers, businesses and government regulation can do about it.]
 - Assign students to collect some questions about the city from home, from a neighbor or other community member, and from students and teachers in other classes of the school. Discuss these in class. They then select the 10 that interest them the most, and use the website to try to *start* to answer these questions.
 - Students then contact – through websites and telephone (www.phila.gov with links to City Council Maps or Find Your Council District) – (5.1.3; 5.2.3; 5.3.3)
 - Their school neighborhood's Representative on City Council
 - Another "At Large" Representative on City Council
 - And at least one organization affiliated with their school neighborhood. Such organizations may be found through the Mayor's Neighborhood Transformation Initiative (www.phila.gov/nti or 215-686-2154) or through the Philadelphia Neighborhood Development Collaborative (www.pndc.net or 215-665-2637).

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- If your neighborhood map also included an historic site, public health center or library, call there.
- Invite these representatives to visit your class to discuss
 - the work of the group they serve, the issues it addresses, and how that organization is set up and funded;
 - any of the questions they selected from their earlier exercise above;
 - the process of neighborhood problem-solving or community enhancement, and the methods by which they could partner or get involved directly with these groups. (5.1.3; 5.2.3; 5.3.3; 8.2.3; 8.3.3 B)
- Now have students narrow the study down to one of the issues addressed by one of these groups that also coincides with an issue/question that they'd raised.
 - Address your research/interview standards by having students inquire into the background history of that issue and how it got to be a problem.
 - Why hasn't that problem already been solved? Are there opposing viewpoints about it? (Find representatives in the community who represent alternative perspectives. Ask proponents who their opponents are!)
- What are the economic implications of this issue? (6.1.3; 6.2.3; 6.3.3; 6.4.3; 6.5.3) (Even third graders can learn general concepts of taxes, budgets, tradeoffs, etc.)
 - Contact the Pennsylvania Economy League (www.peleast.org or 215-563-3640) for help with the economics and budgetary aspects of this issue.
 - Contact the City Managing Director's office (215-686-3480) and/or the Department of Commerce (215-683-2001).
- Use the resources you've already found to determine the governmental jurisdiction that encompasses your issue (5.1.3; 5.2.3; 5.3.3)
 - Find out when officials of that jurisdiction hold public meetings, and what is on that meeting's agenda.
 - Contact a representative from that meeting and explain your interest to attend the meeting to hear that topic addressed. It's possible that there is a committee meeting or alternative venue that would be better. Also ask about time and protocol for comments or questions from the public.
 - Arrange to attend the meeting. Prepare with appropriate questions or comments to share. Your questions might include probing what public actions you could take to help address the problem.
- For additional public service, mobilize a public information or action campaign to share your new insights about the process and content with your neighborhood and school communities that you identified at the beginning of this project. (5.1.3; 5.2.3; 5.3.3)
 - For example: Third grade students in Philadelphia and other big cities have taken specific actions, partnering with their city council representatives and police, to make their school neighborhoods safer by reporting abandoned cars and lots

5) Sample Rubric

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Rubrics can be used at all steps of the service-learning process. Each activity can have its own rubric, and you can use a cumulative rubric to assess student work at the end of the project. Here are two sample rubrics that assess student learning, one on developmental growth and one on task completion.

See attached

6) Multidisciplinary Connections

Math: In mapping and community investigation: measure; represent to scale; locate & estimate; etc. (2.3.3 E,F,G; 2.4.3 A&B; 2.6.3 A; 2.8.3 A; 2.10 A&B)
In study of budgets, economic implications of issues: (2.1.3 A,B,C,D,E,G,J,K,L; 2.2; 2.3.3 A,E,H; 2.5.3 A,B,C; 2.6.3 D; 2.8.3. F,H; 2.11 A&B)

Science & Technology: “Unifying Themes” in terms of systems, networks, change, scales & models and inquiry: (3.1.3 A,B,D,E; 3.2.3 B)
In study of specific neighborhood issues, frequently: (3.1.3 E; 3.2.3 A,C,D; 3.3.3 A,D; 3.4.3 B,C; 3.5.4 B) also safety & public health; environment & ecology; and careers.

RWSL (Language Arts): Throughout inquiry, interviews, research, website exploration, and dissemination of information and solutions, etc.: (1.1.3; 1.2.3; 1.4.3; 1.5.3; 1.6.3; 1.8.3)

7) For More Information

Great Government for Kids
<http://www.cccoe.net/govern/>

Kids.gov
http://www.kids.gov/k_gov.htm

PBSKids: Democracy Project
<http://pbskids.org/democracy/educators/>

8) Local Resources

City of Philadelphia Departments and Services
www.phila.gov

Additional examples:

Philadelphia Department of Recreation: www.phila.gov/recreation/index.html
215-683-3600

For Neighborhoods: www.phila.gov/neighborhoods

Department of Commerce: www.phila.gov/commerce or 215-686-2001

Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission
215-238-2875

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www.dvrpc.org

Committee of Seventy

215-557-3600

www.seventy.org

League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania

800-692-7281

<https://www.palwv.org/>

Free Library of Philadelphia

215-686-5322

www.library.phila.gov

This curriculum insert was developed by Dr. Ann Rappoport, Director of Kids Around Town, as part of a collaborative effort between the School District of Philadelphia and several local community-based service-learning organizations, designed to integrate service-learning with the new core curriculum.

Revised by Ben Sereda, Administrative Coordinator PHENND, 8/20/2020