

# 4<sup>th</sup> 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.

#### **Mapmaking: For Kids, By Kids**

This project has students describing their local environment during the "overview of the geography of the United States" unit of the first six weeks of the school year. As students learn about geography and the description of location, they will develop a description of their local environment for newcomers to the community. They will develop a map showing significant locations in their community and detailing different places for children to do fun activities at different times of the year (7.1.6 A, B).

The students should be given freedom to decide which locations they would like to include on their maps. Areas to consider would be parks and other outdoor recreational areas, boys and girls clubs, YMCA's and other youth centers, important landmarks, historical places, police and fire stations, etc. The students should be asked to identify those places that are important to them and that they feel any newcomer to the community should know. Perhaps the class could put together one large, colorful map with a detailed legend for display in the school.

### 4) Sample Lessons/Activities

#### **Situating Students in the Problem**

- Read stories about moving to a new community. Have students talk about what that must be like (i.e. not having any friends, not knowing where things are). Have students reflect on a time when they were new to a specific place such as on the first day of school.
- Talk about how many students are new to Philadelphia each year, and if possible, how many are new to the school.

#### **Research**

- Walk through the community to identify places of interest.
- Identify the key components of a map and the types of things that can be included in maps.
- Identify significant historical events in your area and identify their locations on a map

#### **Creating a solution**

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- Students create maps of their school and their community that meet the needs previously identified. The maps may help new students or younger students learn their way around the school or the neighborhood.
- Students should decide how to decorate as well as distribute the maps.

### 5) Sample Rubric

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

**Science** – Include different landforms in your map

**English** – Have students write poems about their favorite places in their community; have students write narratives to accompany the map and explain its features to the end user; have students interview older neighbors to learn about what the community was like at a different time and then draw maps that visually represent that time period.

**Math** – Develop a scale for the map

**Art** – Use different media to illustrate important local landmarks

### 7) For more information:

Community YouthMapping

<http://cyd.aed.org/cym/cym.html>

National Community Youth Mapping

<http://www.communityyouthmapping.org/Youth/>

Pennsylvania's Historic Architecture and Archaeology

<http://www.arch.state.pa.us/>

### 8) Local resources:

Delaware Valley Earth Force

<http://www.earthforce.org>

215-884-9888

Philadelphia Neighborhood Information Systems

<http://cml.upenn.edu/nbase>

215-573-4098

Rosenbach Museum

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<http://www.rosenbach.org>

This curriculum insert was developed by Megan Heckert, Program Coordinator at Delaware Valley Earth Force, 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.