

## Service Learning at Stony Run – Religious Education Committee Guidelines

1. What is it?
  - a. basic description
    - i. Service learning is a teaching method that combines meaningful service to the community with curriculum-based learning. Students improve their academic skills by applying what they learn in school to the real world; they then reflect on their experience to reinforce the link between their service and their learning. (Source: Learning in Deed, as published in MD Student Service Learning Guidelines)
    - ii. 3 types of service learning:
      1. Direct (face to face contact with the people they are helping, e.g., serving meals, tutoring, visiting elderly, assisting at special events in the community)
      2. Indirect (no personal/direct interaction with people receiving aid, usually resources are channeled to help alleviate a problem. e.g., packing lunches, making cards, community clean up, recycling drives, fundraisers)
      3. Advocacy (goal is to change behaviors through education & awareness on a particular issue e.g., via lobbying, public speaking, performing, letter writing or social media campaigns)
  - b. Service Learning in MD schools:
    - i. Maryland was the first state in the country to mandate SL requirement for graduation (1990s)
    - ii. Each school district has their own specific guidelines (e.g., Baltimore City & Baltimore County public schools, also private schools)
  - c. Key components of a good program
    - i. educational component – include clear objectives and evaluation/reflection afterwards.
      1. In reflection, students answer question cycle of: What and Why? So What? Now What?
      2. In evaluation, students reflect on the process: What did I learn? What went well? What should we change for next time? How can we expand or improve on this/what else can we do?
    - ii. 7 best practices of service learning
      1. **Meet a recognized need** in the community.
        - a. Primarily related to health, education, environment, public safety
        - b. Direct, indirect and advocacy projects are all permissible
      2. Achieve **curricular objectives** through service learning.
      3. **Reflect** throughout the service learning experience.
      4. Develop student **responsibility** (e.g., teamwork, organizing & scheduling activities, problem solving)
      5. Establish **community partnerships** (Provide opportunities for students to learn about their communities, explore career

- possibilities and work with diverse groups of individuals. Partner WITH community organizations rather than us/them separation)
6. **Plan** ahead for service learning
  7. Equip students with **knowledge & skills** needed for service.

MD State guidelines expect all service-learning experiences to meet all seven of the above guidelines. However, they acknowledge that is not always possible (e.g., if outside organizations don't know what the curricular objectives are). When experiences do not meet all seven guidelines, attention can be paid in the planning, preparation, and reflection portions to supplement as needed.

Most service projects can be formulated to meet these state guidelines. Well done service learning will strengthen students' sense of personal accomplishment, responsibility, pride, empathy and connection with diverse groups and perspectives. It is only ethical and appropriate to provide direct service in ways that are welcomed by the community being served. This is also true (but may not be as relevant) for indirect and advocacy service learning. Working in collaboration with those being served helps to ensure the most relevant and meaningful outcomes, as well as helping students learn about their communities and build community partnerships. Modeling this collaborative approach reinforces the Quaker testimonies of Equity and Integrity, as well as Community.

The MD state guidelines suggest that "participating in a variety of types of service is beneficial for students' social and civic development." They advise that programs can happen within an organization or community. Look for lessons that explore history, emphasize different perspectives & abilities (e.g. seniors & students, able bodied and physically challenged individuals).

If an activity serves the students' own community (school or other nonprofit organization) it must meet the 7 best practices & also address greater needs in the areas of health, education, environment, or public safety. (e.g. learning safe kitchen practices when preparing simple lunch helps to train youth to help elsewhere, discussing why "simple" lunch teaches Quaker history and values, and helping the adult volunteers teaches teamwork, following directions and staying on task. It also provides experience working with those of different ages, backgrounds, and abilities.)

Service learning activities must be inclusive and non-discriminatory. *Activities meant to convert others to a particular religion or spiritual view may not be counted towards the service learning graduation requirement.* Preparing for or participating in a religious service or religious education activity may not be counted.

Activities must NOT be to financially benefit a private, for-profit business, or replace paid staff of a nonprofit or for-profit business. Students may not be compensated with money, goods, or services.

## 2. Why it's important

- a. Service learning ties into the Quaker values of peace, integrity, equity, justice and service. We believe that "Revelation is an ongoing process." Friends are always looking for ways to grow ourselves and our connections within our community, and to other communities beyond our own. The principles of faith in action or witnessing our beliefs lead many Friends to acts of service. A well-ordered service learning program helps build lifelong habits and an appreciation for serving our internal and external communities.
- b. How it brings in teens – service learning is an important concern for many of our teens. They need to meet their graduation requirement, and some choose to do a lot more than that. The teenage years are a time when many youth disconnect from their religious communities, and this is a way to help them stay engaged, or come back in, particularly after the pandemic.
- c. Opportunity to
  - i. Build community.
  - ii. Learn important lessons.
  - iii. Develop skills.
  - iv. Discover interests.
  - v. Cultivate lifelong habits of service.
  - vi. Build resume & strengthen college application(s)

## 3. Different requirements for different schools

- a. Baltimore City Schools – Must be earned with a registered 501c3. Submit hours on organizational letterhead to student's guidance counselor, or use form provided by the school. Can go over 75 hours, will all be reported on their transcript. Must meet certain milestones to participate in social events each year.
- b. Baltimore County Public Schools – to be determined.
- c. AIMS (private schools) – to be determined.

## 4. What we can do

- a. Have frequent and various service learning activities
- b. Track service hours for youth (ages 13+)
- c. Report to schools using required format (Requirements vary by school and/or district. FSB has a 20 hour minimum with any outside organization.)

## 5. Expansion of program at Stony Run

- a. Start with HS ages.
- b. Incorporate MS ages as they want to participate.
- c. Some activities will be for all ages. Others will be just for teens.
- d. Have teens help plan some all-ages events, particularly over the summer.
- e. Have teens explain what service projects are to younger kids, help them learn why we do this, and why it's fun & important.
- f. Collaborate with other faith communities around Baltimore to pair up for service work (e.g., community clean up)

- g. Work with RE to expand to youngest kids.
  - i. Foster a culture of service.
  - ii. Help develop empathy.
  - iii. Bring practical awareness of abstract concepts.
- h. Work with our Peace & Justice Committee to expand the program to adults.
  - i. Some adults have particular interests and expertise they could share.
  - ii. Some adults want to help more, get more involved. Need easy ways to do it.

Resources:

State of Maryland Student Service Learning Guidelines

<https://marylandpublicschools.org/programs/Documents/Service-Learning/MDSLGuidelines.pdf>

Baltimore County Public Schools Service Learning Standards & Guidelines

[https://cdn5-ss3.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server\\_3696176/File/Student%20Info/Student%20Service%20Learning%20Guidelines.pdf](https://cdn5-ss3.sharpschool.com/UserFiles/Servers/Server_3696176/File/Student%20Info/Student%20Service%20Learning%20Guidelines.pdf)

Baltimore City Public Schools' only information:

<https://www.baltimorecityschools.org/graduation-requirements>

per Kathy Rogers' Fall 2022 conversation with Kate Wickham at Baltimore Polytechnic Institute, outside service learning hours must be earned through a registered 501c3. Can be reported on form or on letterhead. Students can submit paper copy, or organization can email students' guidance counselor directly.

Friends School of Baltimore

<https://www.friendsbalt.org/community/in-of-and-for-baltimore>

"Students engage directly in work alongside members of a community in order to bridge social, economic, and physical inequalities." ([2022-2023 FSB Upper School Family Handbook p 12](#))

Students should "participate in programs with a strong sense of social, environmental and/or educational justice that respect the integrity of the individuals and the community where they will be volunteering." ([p. 13](#))

Does NOT qualify for FSB students: teaching or babysitting at a religious place of worship, volunteering as a camp counselor (except MGP)

Sidwell's SL info on website: <https://www.sidwell.edu/about/service-learning>

Our service program embraces the Quaker values of justice, peace, community, stewardship, and equity. These ideals are taught through a lens of critical service learning, an approach that helps our School community engage responsibly and intentionally with the global community.

Students and faculty in PK–12 collaborate with local and global nonprofit organizations that focus on a range of social justice issues. We aim to serve our community partners while also working toward specific academic learning goals and providing opportunities for student reflection and lifelong action.

SSFS's SL info on website: <https://www.ssfs.org/school-life/community-service/upper-school>