

Ruthven - Ayrshire High School
Service Learning Handbook



Ruthven - AyrshireCommunity School District
www.ruthven.k12.ia.us

What is service learning?

- Service learning is a teaching method designed to involve students in authentic and meaningful service to their school and surrounding communities.
- Service learning makes connections between the classroom and the community and provides structured time for students to reflect on their service experiences.
- It is intended to instill a sense of civic responsibility by encouraging students to assess their impact upon the community as active contributors to society.
- Service learning incorporates character education through cooperation, acts of kindness, and leadership opportunities.

How does service learning connect to the Iowa CORE?

Where some states have added a specific number of service learning hours to be required for graduation, the State of Iowa has left that decision up to the districts. The state has instead utilized the Iowa CORE to include service learning in the Standard of 21st Century Skills:

21st Century Skills

In 9th through 12th grade, students continue to expand their knowledge of fitness and nutrition concepts by developing and monitoring personal fitness plans. They will explore public health policies, national and global financial issues, and evaluate how their families and communities are affected. Students will participate in the community through service projects, job-shadowing or being a mentor/mentee.

How has Ruthven - Ayrshire incorporated service learning into its curriculum?

Students in Middle and High School will receive much of their 21st Century Skills and service learning education during Advisory. Students will have the opportunity to serve their school and surrounding communities through activities such as: High School Lunch Crew, community clean up projects, assisting with recycling, etc... Service Learning hours are requirement for certain clubs and extracurricular privileges such as National Honor Society and Open Campus. Service Learning is will also be a major component of Titans Jam. Students will be asked to reflect upon and provide artifacts of their service learning in order to advance to graduate. Students will also be encouraged to expand upon their service learning opportunities outside of school time. Students who earn 30+ service learning hours each year will receive the purple cord to wear at Graduation.

What counts as service learning?

Service learning activities are divided into three distinct categories:

Direct Service, Indirect Service, and Advocacy:

Direct Service

Examples:

- Working with youth through education / recreation programs
- Working with senior citizens
- Working with sick or disabled individuals
- Preparing / serving food for others
- Assisting with recycling

Indirect Service

Examples:

- Collecting / distributing food items or clothing
- Organizing fundraisers for special causes or events
- Engaging in neighborhood beautification projects
- Engaging in local conservation efforts

Advocacy

Examples:

- Informing the public about a variety of issues through newsletters, website, Channel 3, etc.
- Working with local political organizations
- Speaking on behalf of underrepresented segments of the community

Which steps of the service learning process count as hours?

Students who are involved with planning a service learning project may count that planning time as service learning hours. For example, if a school hosts a canned food drive, students involved in the planning of the drive would earn service hours, while students who only make donations would not. Similarly, students who are performing service as part of a class assignment may count the hours they spend in class preparing for the service, as well as the time they spend in actual service. However, travel time to and from service activities is not counted.

What is the difference between community service and service learning?

Both community service and service learning benefit the community, but service learning also helps students master the skills they are learning in school.

Can students earn service learning hours through religious organizations?

Yes. The service activity must have a secular purpose and be based on a recognized need in the community. Activities must impact individuals beyond the immediate religious community. These activities may not include preparation or participation in the performance of religious services.

Can students earn service learning hours through political organizations?

Yes. All service must occur in a public place under the supervision of an adult, to include “Get out the Vote” campaigns and volunteering at the polls. Service learning hours will not be awarded for financial solicitation.

Can students earn service learning hours in after school clubs?

Yes. Service learning hours that students complete as part of membership in an after school club should also count towards the expectations for their grade. However, students do not earn hours for activities that only benefit the club.

How does Ruthven-Ayrshire monitor student service learning hours?

Students will need to complete the Service Learning Form found at the end of the Handbook. Students will also participate in special projects built into the Advisory program

Our service learning projects connect directly to the Iowa Core.

