



Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.  
State Superintendent of Schools

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June 23, 2017

Dr. Boyd J. Michael  
Interim Superintendent  
Washington County Board of Education  
10435 Downsville Pike  
Hagerstown, Maryland 21740

Dear Dr. Michael:

Thank you for the submission of the Washington County Public Schools Service-Learning Implementation Plan. As you are well aware, service-learning combines curriculum-based learning and meaningful service to the community. Maryland continues to be recognized as a national leader in the service-learning field. The goal in Maryland is to continually refine and strengthen programs to ensure that all students receive the maximum benefit from initiatives that teach students about responsible citizenship. The Maryland State Department of Education's (MSDE) expectation is that service-learning programs are high quality and meet or exceed criteria presented in the *Maryland Student Service-Learning Guidelines*.

In January and February 2017, several committees met to review local education agency (LEA) service-learning plans, make recommendations for strengthening plans, and provide feedback on LEA implementation strategies. Review committees included representatives from across the State and from various stakeholder groups including teachers, community based agency representatives, students, LEA central office representatives, higher education faculty, staff from the MSDE, and other state agency staff.

The purpose of *Service-Learning Implementation Plan Review Feedback* is to promote continuous program improvement to enhance students' experiences with service-learning statewide. The committee that reviewed Washington County Public Schools' plan, and the staff at the MSDE, are providing the following feedback that includes detailed commendations and recommendations. This information should prove useful as you continue to enhance and strengthen your service-learning program.

Dr. Boyd Michael

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- Washington County Public Schools' Service-Learning Implementation Plan meets *Maryland Student Service-Learning Guidelines*. However, possible program modifications and enhancements are suggested. Any adjustments to the plan to address recommendations should be submitted electronically for review via Google Drive in the school system's service-learning folder at <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B76ZqJjC5zVtWIVzSXktNmtZUFk>.

The MSDE is requesting posting of a final approved version of Washington County's comprehensive plan in the service-learning section of the LEA's website by September 1, 2017. This localized plan will provide a resource to students, parents, community organizations, and other LEAs.

The implementation plan review process will enable the MSDE to better understand the systemic support necessary to nurture strong service-learning programs. The MSDE service-learning staff will share general program insights with service-learning coordinators in the near future.

If additional information is needed, please contact Julie Ayers, Service-Learning Specialist, by email at [julie.ayers@maryland.gov](mailto:julie.ayers@maryland.gov) or by phone at (410) 767-0357. Ms. Ayers will be happy to assist you.

Best Regards,



Karen B. Salmon, Ph.D.  
State Superintendent of Schools

KBS/mm

c: Mary L. Gable, Assistant State Superintendent  
Julie Ayers, Service-Learning Specialist  
Robin Handler, Local School System Service-Learning Contact

Attachments

Maryland State Department of Education

# Service-Learning Implementation Plan Review Feedback

For plans effective 2017-2020

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School System:	<b>Washington County Public Schools</b>
X	Meets Maryland Student Service-Learning Guidelines <i>(possible program modifications suggested)</i>
	Meets Most Maryland Student Service-Learning Guidelines <i>(some program modifications needed)</i>
	Does Not Meet Many or Any Maryland Student Service-Learning Guidelines <i>(revisions required)</i>

### **Overall Commendations**

1. An accountability mechanism exists to evaluate infused project quality and verify completion. Project proposals are submitted to the service-learning coordinator for review and feedback at the beginning of the year. Once projects are complete, teachers submit an assessment of the project based on the 7 Best Practices of Service-Learning. Washington County Public Schools is actively working to strengthen the quality of infused projects so they meet community needs and strongly align with the curriculum standards (Best Practices 1 and 2).
2. The high school program offered for one credit promotes students continued involvement in their communities beyond the 75 hour graduation requirement as well as student leadership (Best Practice 4).
3. The infrastructure ensures that service-learning leadership and management effectively share responsibility for the program. The plan to recruit more Service-Learning Fellows will build greater local capacity for service-learning leadership (Best Practice 6).
4. There is designated funding to support service-learning (Best Practice 6).
5. A Spanish version of the service-learning brochure is made available to the public in an effort to ensure all students are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to complete projects and fulfill the graduation requirement (Best Practice 7).

### **Overall Recommendations:**

1. Amend the Annual Goals and Timeline section of the plan to be more complete, comprehensive, and specific regarding the activities that will be undertaken over the next year to support the service-learning program.
2. Clarify the action component of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade infused service-learning project. What community need is being addressed?
3. Develop and share a scoring rubric for evaluating appropriateness, quality, and feasibility of service-learning experiences for use by individual schools in an effort to enhance consistency across Washington County.
4. Utilize various types of technology to notify the public about service-learning and projects being implemented (e.g. Instagram, Twitter, etc.).
5. Create P-20 partnerships with higher education institutions to catalyze projects that have collective impact on the community and expose P-12 students to higher education life.