



**2016-17**

# **Community Service Learning For Thomas County Middle School**

**Guidelines for Teachers, Parents, and Students**  
**Community Service Learning For**  
**Thomas County Middle School**

### **What is Community Service Learning?**

Community Service Learning (CSL) is an educational process, which enhances the quality of life within the school and the community. Community Service Learning combines instruction, 21st Century Skills, and voluntary participation in supporting activities or obtaining contributions of goods.

### **What are the benefits of Community Service Learning for Middle School Students?**

- Students receive an invaluable learning experience outside of the normal classroom setting.
- Service learning places curricular concepts in the context of real-world situations.
- Students analyze, evaluate, and synthesize these concepts using problem-solving skills, while at the same time helping their community.
- Students generate positive school-community relations and relations within the school.
- Students experience a good feeling of people helping people.

**The key to determining whether or not the service meets the criteria is asking the question,  
*Who benefits from the service?***

**The answer should be:  
*Those organizations which are identified as an educational institution, those with non-profit status,  
Or an individual in need.***

### **What types of activities constitute Community Service Learning?**

- Activities which benefit the school or community provided that the community organizations benefiting from the services are non-profit, with the exception of hospitals, nursing homes, or educational activities.
- Activities which are not self-serving for a student or the student's family member.
- Activities which **are not tied to a grade** (i.e. - Musical performances with school groups to such places as nursing homes, will not count if the activity is tied to a grade in the music class.)
- Activities which render service to individuals who cannot otherwise provide for themselves.
- **In order to receive the MERIT designation, a student must earn a minimum of 20 service hours each year.**
- **Six (6) of those hours may be earned through donations or contributions to charitable organizations. The remainder must be earned through service activities.**
- **Up to ten (10) hours may be earned each summer and applied to the first nine weeks hours.**
- **Students are encouraged to explore various opportunities. Fifth grade students should volunteer in at least two (2) different locations. Sixth-Eighth grade students should volunteer in at least three (3) different locations.** Exceptions may be allowed, but students should receive prior approval.

### **What types of activities MEET the criteria of Community Service Learning?**

- Participating in service projects as a member of a service club or community organization.
- Students who leave school to participate in an elementary school, as a part of an **instructional program** approved by the principals in each school may receive service credit for the instructional time rendered.
- Volunteering one's services at a local hospital, nursing home, etc.
- Volunteering one's service to individuals, i.e. senior citizens or the disabled.
- Hosting outside groups for school festivals.
- Volunteering for the Board of Elections or political campaigns.
- ALL tutoring (not paid); including tutoring done before or after school, during lunch or study hall.
- Outreach programs of religious organizations and other non-profit organizations, which provide service to the poor, sick, needy, etc.
- Participating in events, i.e., marathons, walks, races, which benefit **charitable organizations**. One hour of service credit will be awarded for each hour of service provided to the charity. Students may NOT receive credit for more than four (4) hours.

#### **Activities that qualify for service credit MUST:**

- demonstrate volunteer, non-paid service.
- benefit an educational or a non-profit.
- benefit hospitals, nursing homes, or an individual in need.

#### **Activities that qualify for service credit MUST NOT:**

- be self-serving for the student or the student's immediate family member.
- be tied to a grade in any way.
- be tied to a class requirement/assignment.

Individual projects not specified in these examples may be accepted. Students are responsible for identifying and establishing service activities. **Check with teacher if unsure.**

### **What procedures must be followed in order to receive CSL credit?**

1. Since not all activities are approved, students and parents need to be aware of which services qualify or do not qualify. Teachers can guide students on the appropriate activities.
2. Each student will provide the designated teacher with a signed Service Learning form, certificate, or other means of valid documentation which indicates the type of project completed, the dates of the project, and the amount of hours spent to complete the project. **Such documentation will require the signature of the adult responsible for coordinating the efforts of the project. A parent signature will not be accepted unless the parent was the responsible party.**
3. As each project is completed, the designated teacher will provide a signature confirming credit for service rendered.
4. The designated teacher will review forms at the end of each nine weeks. **A running total of hours will be placed on report card envelope. Any questions or discrepancies must be addressed within one week. This allows students two weeks after the end of each grading period to resolve discrepancies and turn in any missing documents. Students will not receive credit for previous service after this grace period.**

#### **Check your Community Service Form for the following:**

1. date(s) of service,
2. number of service hours provided,
3. name of the person or organization benefiting from the service provided,
4. description of the service performed, and
5. name, signature, and contact information (phone or e-mail) of the adult supervisor of the service.

**Thomas County Middle School  
MERIT Community Service  
2016-17**

**Instructions: *Complete ALL sections***

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Homeroom: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) of Service: \_\_\_\_\_ # of Hours: \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Person Information:**

Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby verify the hours of service listed above.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Community Service is an action, performance, or a “hands on” activity by an individual without compensation or academic credit whose effort will directly benefit others. Participation or membership in an extracurricular club or organization does not constitute community service (i.e., meetings or rehearsals).

**Students may earn up to six (6) hours of community service through projects involving donations such as Project Christmas Child, Salvation Army Can Drive, Ronald McDonald House Can Tab collection, etc. Students should check with their teacher for more detailed requirements.**

**Students will have two weeks after the end of a nine weeks term to receive credit for time earned during that term.**

**Students should not miss academic classes in order to complete the community service requirement.**

**\*\* Remember....it is the student’s responsibility to turn in forms in order to receive credit. Teachers will verify service, but credit may be issued only if the form has been placed in folder.**

**Student’s verification signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent’s verification signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**FOR TEACHER USE ONLY**

Date Reviewed: \_\_\_\_\_ Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ Denied: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher Initials: \_\_\_\_\_