

Chicago Public Schools

Service Learning Project Requirement

Policy and Resource Guidance

School Year 2024-2025



Chicago
Public
Schools

STUDENT
VOICE AND
ENGAGEMENT

How to use this guidance:

The first section provides information about The CPS Instructional Core and this vision is part of all the work we do every day in classrooms.

The second section provides general information and tools all service learning stakeholders in your school should read and be aware of in order to properly meet the CPS Service Learning Project (SLP) graduation requirement.

The sections that follow are organized by the various stakeholders identified within the SLP ecosystem visual map. The final section is composed of a collection of frequently asked questions (FAQs) with responses and links to the relevant policy or tools for clarity.

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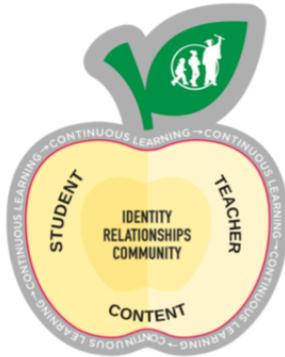
[Remote Learning Questions](#)

This policy and guidance document has been created for Chicago Public School's Department of Student Voice and Engagement. Questions should be directed to Margie Smagacz, Project Based Learning Manager at mdsmagacz@cps.edu.

CPS Instructional Core

Improving the CPS Instructional Core at scale is our top priority as a district. Grounded in our 5 year vision and Richard Elmore’s conceptualization of the instructional core, the CPS Instructional Core Vision represents what we want to be true for all classrooms across the district.

CPS Instructional Core Vision



To **educate for equity**, the CPS Instructional Core centers on **identity, community, and relationships**.

Students must experience core instruction that is responsive to and sustaining of who they are and what they bring, and empowers them to connect, to imagine, and to act as ethical, critical actors that shape the world.

To accomplish this vision we must operate with commitment to **Continuous Learning** to improve our ability to enact this vision, and to continuously strengthen our shared vision.

As teachers plan service learning projects,

- Students should be provided with **authentic, intellectual learning experiences** to ensure deep engagement as students act as real world problem-solvers and engage in elaborated communication through various mediums.
- Teachers should provide **just in time support and interventions** to ensure all learners experience success. They recognize that their identity informs their choices, and their relationship to content and students, and they reflect on their own identity and examine biases regularly.
- Content is **challenging (grade level appropriate and standards-aligned), meaningful, and responsive** to the communities and identities of students.

Service Learning Projects in Chicago Public Schools

Policy Overview

Beginning with the 2016-2017 academic year and moving forward, **all** CPS high schools must provide an opportunity for 9th through 12th grade students to complete **two** service learning projects as a requirement for graduation. CPS high school students' must complete high quality classroom-integrated service learning projects through the following two ways:

- (1) Successful completion of a project in a Civics or A.P. U.S. Government course
- (2) Successful completion of a service learning project in conjunction with any other course offerings, preferably during 9th or 10th grade.

The completion of service learning projects will be graded with a *P* for Pass or *I* for Incomplete and recorded in Aspen with the use of the appropriate course code and will automatically populate on a student's transcript.

Service learning project course codes are listed below:

Career & Technical Education	999902N	Physical Education	999602N
Civics	999801N	Science	999501N
English	999802N	Social Science	999502N
Fine Arts	999701N	World Language	999401N
JROTC	999702N	Independent Service Learning	999901N
Mathematics	999601N	Other Service-Learning	999402N

Service Learning & Civic Engagement

What is service learning?

Service Learning has been an integral part of Chicago Public Schools since 1998 as a vital means of elevating youth leadership and promoting learning that connects classroom and community.

Service Learning:

- Connects classroom curriculum with authentic community issues, assets, and research.
- Engages students in projects that serve the community while building social, civic, and academic skills.
- Begins with inquiry and engages student identity, leadership, and reflection.
- Positions students to take informed action on issues that contribute to their community and to democratic life.

What is civic engagement in CPS?

As a district, we have shifted our view of civic participation and readiness from one that focused primarily on individual responsibility, from volunteer hours, to a more participatory and justice-oriented participation. This shift requires us to consider and act on:

- What skills, knowledge, and dispositions do our young people need to be civically powerful and culturally literate today?
- What kind of people, and what kind of educators, do we need to be in order to educate in/for democracy?

How are service learning projects different from volunteer hours?

3 KINDS OF PARTICIPANTS

PERSONALLY RESPONSIBLE	PARTICIPATORY	JUSTICE ORIENTED
<p>Someone who...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is responsible works & pays taxes obeys laws donates time or resources volunteers to lend a hand in times of crisis 	<p>Someone who...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> is an active member and organizer of community efforts Knows how government agencies work Knows strategies for collective tasks 	<p>Someone who...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sees beyond surface causes of problems critically assesses social, political, and economic structures. Recognizes & addresses injustice knowledgeable of social movements & how to effect systemic change
<p>This person might...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> vote in an election contribute to a food drive donate money to a charity or organization stay up-to-date on local, national, & global news from a variety of news sources 	<p>This person might...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> organize a candidate forum or distribute voter education guides help to organize a food drive create awareness about an issue and motivate others to donate to a charity or organization petition a news station to cover a community event 	<p>This person might...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> work for voting rights and equitable access explore why people are hungry and work to address root causes meet with/speak to elected officials regarding a policy that impacts the issue reach out to a news media source about biased coverage

* adapted from What Kind of Citizen? Westheimer & Kahne, 2004

HOW DO YOU ENGAGE?

#EngageCPS #CPS Civics @CPS CivicLife

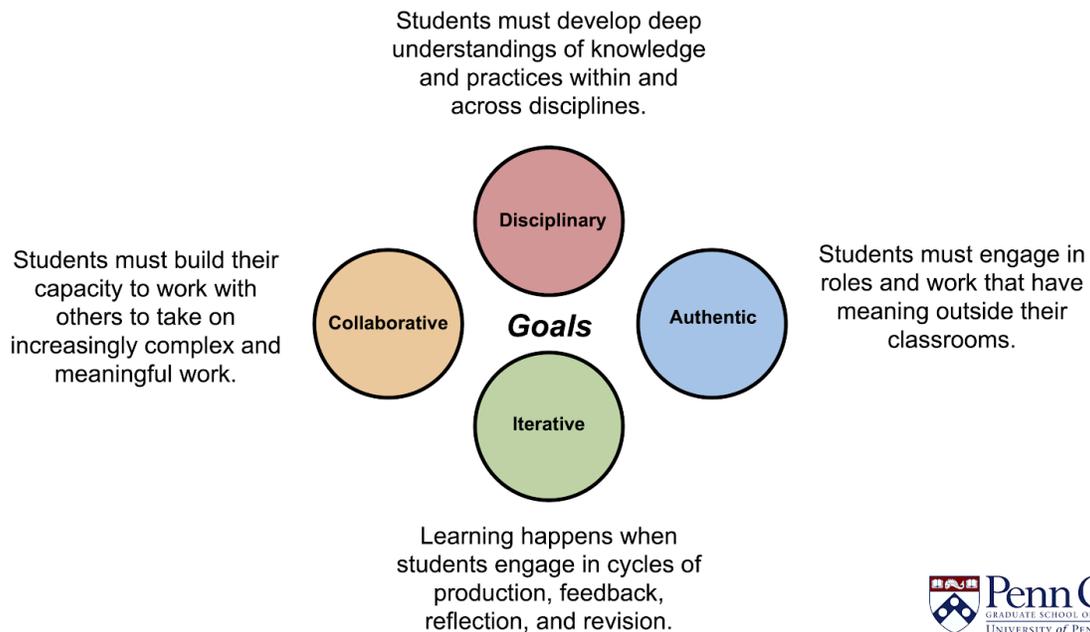
The two mandated classroom-integrated service learning projects are different from optional individual volunteer hours. Service learning projects are connected to curriculum and course standards and are well integrated into classes; they are not optional or extra. The table below further outlines the difference between service learning projects and volunteer hours.

Service Learning Projects	Volunteer Hours
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● HS graduation requirement ● Designed to promote project-based instructional practice and civic engagement ● Completed as part of a class, and is connected to classroom content ● Focused on participatory or justice-oriented civic action ● Programmed into students schedule by programmers ● Led by/graded by the classroom teacher ● Students need two projects to graduate, one of which must be in Civics class. Schools decide where the second project is offered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Not required for HS graduation ● Optional for any student to complete ● Students choose to volunteer ● Available as optional enrichment for community/ career exposure, scholarship and college applications ● Happens outside of the classroom. ● Completed on an individual basis - students choose to volunteer to fill a community need. ● Documented on student transcripts only ● Hours are logged in SIS (ASPEN) by counselors and appear under Awards in students' transcripts

Project Based Learning

Project Based Learning is a teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an ***authentic, engaging, and complex question, problem, or challenge through inquiry to action.***

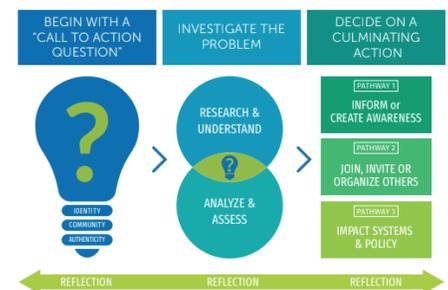
The following image explains the goals of project based learning.



Grossman, P., Pupik Dean, C. G., Kavanagh, S. S., Herrmann, Z. (2019). Preparing teachers for project-based teaching. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 100 (7), 43–48

In order for students to fulfill the Service Learning Project Graduation Requirement, **students are expected** to complete a project that aligns with the project based learning framework.

To assist in conducting teachers in conducting project based learning in the classroom, we have developed the Inquiry to Action Framework. The Inquiry to Action (IA) framework draws on existing frameworks and resources in the fields of project-based learning, action research, youth participatory action research, and civic learning.



The framework helps provide teachers and school leaders with key ideas, considerations and resources to successfully facilitate the various elements of the Inquiry to Action Project cycle with students.

There are three stages of the Inquiry to Action Framework.

Stage 1 - The Call to Action Question

Purpose: Build the foundation for students' inquiry by tapping into their prior knowledge and their own lived experiences. The Call to Action Question is essential to project based learning.

Open-ended:	The question is complex, allowing students to narrow over time and develop more than one reasonable answer.
Connected to students' identities and community:	The question should point to a problem that can be found amongst their peers or family, in their school, or in their neighborhood or city. In other words, young people can make contact with other individuals or groups that are impacted by or are actively working on this problem.
Rooted in the real world:	The question is authentic to time and place. The CAQ prompts students to engage meaningfully with other people in their school, community, or city.
Extends and Deepens Learning:	The CAQ is clearly connected to the enduring understandings, content, and skills objectives of the unit/course. The CAQ helps students to apply what they learned in class in a new, meaningful way - enabling deeper learning.
Investigative and Probing:	The question will prompt students to learn NEW information that cannot be learned by simply looking it up in a book or on a website.

Stage 2- Research, Analyze, and Assess

Purpose: Deepen students' understanding of the content and complexity of the issue. Contextualize the content through social and political lenses. Investigating the problem so that students can answer the CAQ requires research to understand the problem and its root causes. Students will also need to analyze the research collected to formulate solutions, and then assess and evaluate the possible solutions to the problem.

INVESTIGATE THE PROBLEM

Throughout the inquire, students will:

- practice & build mastery of the unit content & skills through the investigation of the problem.
- continuously unpack and narrow the question as they work to understand the complexity of the issue and the individuals, groups, institutions, systems, and policies connected to it.
- develop their own questions, analyze root causes, conduct action research, discuss and deliberate, reflect, define, and narrow their thinking on the problem as they begin to see various possible solutions.

RESEARCH & UNDERSTAND

ANALYZE & ASSESS

Stage 3 - Communicate Conclusions and Take Action

Purpose: Students will consider and synthesize the information their investigations produced to communicate conclusions through a summative assessment. Students can decide to take informed action by applying the information collected during the inquiry to either create awareness, organize or join others, or address policy or systems.

CONSIDER, PLAN, TAKE ACTION

- Students share, discuss, reflect, and prioritize the most important and relevant information they've collected.
- Pathways provide options and support for students in deciding if/how they will take culmination action of the project.
- Every culmination action should include an opportunity for students to engage with outside stakeholders connected to the problem.
- Choose one pathway or cover all three. The framework supports projects that span a few days or several weeks.

PATHWAY 1
INFORM or
CREATE AWARENESS

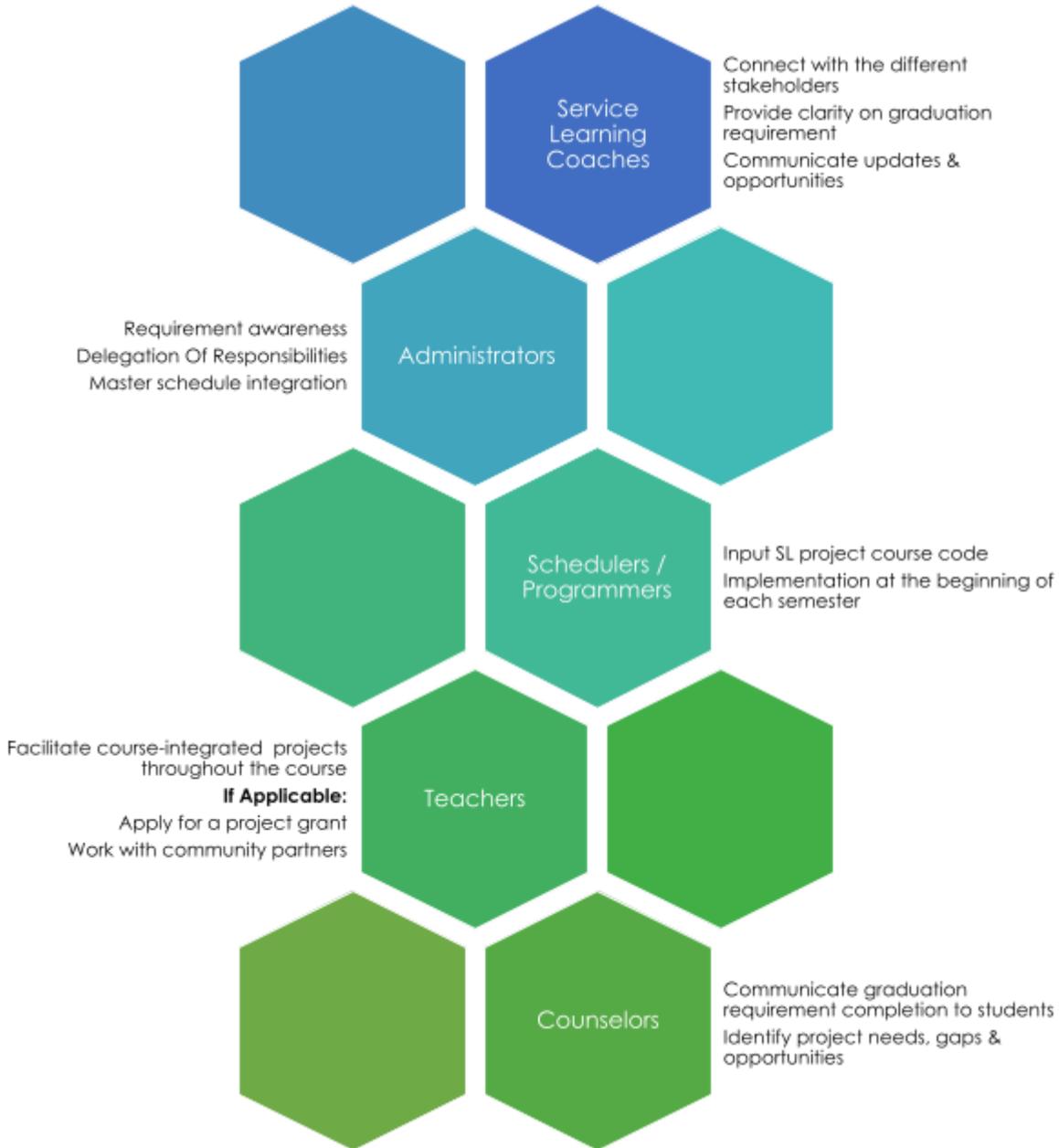
PATHWAY 2
JOIN, INVITE OR
ORGANIZE OTHERS

PATHWAY 3
IMPACT SYSTEMS
& POLICY

Access to the entire Inquiry to Action Framework is linked [here](#).

Service Learning Project Ecosystem

This visual map has been created to summarize the different school-based stakeholders and their respective contributions to a school's implementation of service learning projects.



Service Learning Ready: Checklist & Rationale

Being *Service Learning Ready* implies your school has made adjustments and is organized to address the service learning project (SLP) requirement for all of your students. Use this checklist to review and improve your current service learning project

strategy. A rationale is provided for each item to clarify the requirement and inform school stakeholders of the requirement nuances.

Checklist	Rationale
<input type="checkbox"/> SLPs are offered in Civics	Civics (or AP Gov) is a required course. One of the two required SLPs must be integrated into a student's Civics (or AP Gov) course.
<input type="checkbox"/> SLPs are offered in a second required course	The second required SLP can happen in any other course. One of the most effective ways to address this need is to facilitate a SLP in another required class all students will also take while enrolled in high school. In this way you ensure all students will get an opportunity to complete the second SLP regardless of other program tracking.
<input type="checkbox"/> Multiple SLPs are offered throughout a course to account for incomplete projects	Since SLPs are embedded in required classes like Civics, it is possible that a student passes the course but not the project. This creates a problem because a student in that situation will not be scheduled again in the passing course but will still need the SLP to graduate. This causes an extra burden on Civics teachers, for example, who then need to work with the student independently to complete a Civics SLP. To address this, courses that facilitate SLPs should offer more than one project throughout the school year, so that students have more time to make up project work and multiple projects from which to gain the SLP credit.
<input type="checkbox"/> Extra SLP opportunities have been identified	Charter & other high schools outside of CPS do not necessarily require SLPs. Students transferring into your school may have already taken one or both of the required courses which offer SLPs. Therefore, your school will need to identify other teachers, courses, or opportunities in which SLPs can be completed.
<input type="checkbox"/> SLPs are offered at different grade levels	In order to be proactive, strategic and not overburden 11th and 12th grade teachers, it is best to identify courses at each grade level that can provide SLP opportunities. Since Civics is generally an 11th grade course, it is recommended that a 9th or 10th grade course be chosen as the second required SLP course.
<input type="checkbox"/> SLPs are tracked regularly by counselors & students	Counselors & students need to track this graduation requirement just as they do other requirements. Students should be aware about which courses will help them meet this requirement and where they can check their status on Aspen. Counselors should be discussing this requirement and completion status when they meet with students and parents.

Service Learning Projects Timeline

There are several stakeholders, tasks and tools involved in implementing the Service Learning Project (SLP) requirement in CPS each school year. Please note, the time has

been identified as year/semester so you can adapt this timeline to your school's course calendar.

Tasks	Tools	Due	Notes + Next steps
Spring/Summer			
Decide/Review the classes in which SLPs will happen for the next school year.	SL FAQ Employee Intranet School's Master Schedule <i>Service Learning Ready: Checklist & Rationale</i>	By August, prior to the start of the school year	Make sure you have reviewed your SL school plan with your principal . Use the <i>Service Learning Ready Checklist</i> and discuss a contingency plan for incomplete projects and transfer students.
Identify rising seniors that are missing SLPs so that they can be scheduled in courses that provide SLP credit.	SLP Aspen Query Guidance (civics & second SLP) Junior SLP Status Data		Talk to counselors about missing credits so a strategy can be in place that addresses the students' graduation needs.
Beginning of Year/Semester			
Service learning project course codes are programmed appropriately by scheduler/programmer .	SLP Course Codes	First 2-3 weeks	Make sure your scheduler/programmer is aware of the correct codes to use.
Discuss with teachers how SLPs will appear in Aspen and review the Pass/Incomplete SLP grading policy.	SL Policy & Guidance Resource SL FAQ		Make sure teachers are aware they should leave the P or / grade blank until the project is completed and only assign an "/" at the end of the course if the project is incomplete.
Goal	Tools	Due	Notes + Next steps
Throughout the year/semester			

Work with counselors to identify and scheduler/programmer to enter any additional SLPs that are needed with the appropriate SLP course code.	SLP Aspen Query Guidance (civics & second SLP) SLP Course Codes SL Policy & Guidance Resource Senior SLP Status Data		Discuss new SLP needs with counselors, scheduler/programmer and teachers. This includes considering Independent Projects that may be necessary due to incomplete projects and transfer students.
Capture model examples of SLPs.	Google Drive CPS/OF Application		Create a folder to collect project artifacts such as pictures of events and student work. Tweet pictures with the hashtag #EngageCPS @ CPSCivicLife or send to mdsmagacz@cps.edu.
Communicate and share SL opportunities, strategies and resources with teachers and other relevant stakeholders.	Employee Intranet Monthly SL Newsletter SLP Grant Application		Remind teachers to apply for SLP grants. Create an email list of teachers so you can quickly share opportunities, strategies and resources you read about in the newsletters & Employee Intranet.
End of Year/Semester			
Ensure there is a plan for the 2023 school year for SLPs and next year's seniors. Review the Spring/Summer Goals			
Check in with teachers that P or / grades have been entered for SLPs. Counselors should begin identifying incomplete SLPs to help project student needs.	SLP Aspen Query Guidance (civics & second SLP) Filtering CSV Guidance SL FAQ	June	Remind teachers of P or / project grading policy. Identify next year's needs with counselors and recruit more teachers willing to incorporate SLPs into their courses next year to address needs.
Submit your school's SLP artifacts and SL Coach EOY Report.	Google Drive SL Coach EOY Report	June	Stipend is processed once your EOY Report is received.

Service Learning Coach



Responsibilities & Expectations

A service learning coach supports a school's strategic implementation of SLPs, using tools like the *Service Learning Ready Checklist & SLP Timeline*, in order to ensure all students meet the service learning project graduation requirement. For this work, coaches receive an annual stipend, at the end of the school year, after the school's service learning report is completed and submitted to the project based learning manager.

SL Coaches:	SL Coaches do not :
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● understand the SLP requirement, policy, and know the staff that make up the ecosystem of SL in their school ● work with the various SL school stakeholders (administration, programmers, counselors, and teachers) to strategize and implement a plan to address the SLP needs of students ● attend SL coaches PDs and receive periodic updates about the completion status of seniors ● have access to run SLP completion queries in Aspen for the Civics SLP and the Second SLP ● complete a SLP projection at the beginning of the year and a SL report at the end of the school year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● perform the jobs of the other SL school stakeholders; For example, unless the coach is also the school's programmer, the coach should not be programming SLPs in Aspen ● approve projects for teachers; Since projects are classroom integrated, teachers, along with students, design the scope and purpose of SLPs

Service learning project resources, including but not limited to, project ideas, lists of possible community partners, the current SL Grant Application, and curricular & pedagogical tools that support the implementation of quality SLPs can be accessed through SL newsletters, the SL Employee Intranet pages, and this guidance document.

Administrators



Responsibilities & Expectations

In order to most effectively oversee and delegate responsibilities so that all students meet the service learning graduation requirement, it is important that administrators become familiar with the roles & responsibilities of the staff that make up your school's [SL Ecosystem](#) and how they work together within the [SLP Timeline](#). It is also imperative that you consider the following to ensure your school is *service learning ready*:

- Identify or assign a service learning coach who can help strategize and coordinate with the other school stakeholders, your school's service learning projects.
- Of the two service learning projects required for graduation, one must take place within a student's Civics course as explained in the [Policy Overview](#). However, the requirement does allow schools to choose in which class(es) to program the second service learning project. Therefore, to reduce the confusion that can accompany an open-ended choice, the district suggests that principals align the second service learning project to a *core course* that all 9th or 10th grade students take or to a *grade level team*, rather than to an individual teacher. Those teachers must then be provided with time and professional development opportunities to be able to develop competence in leading SLPs that deepen content-area learning and strengthen civic agency.
- Develop a contingency plan to accommodate transfer students, students with incomplete projects, miscommunication or programming errors by identifying other courses or teachers with whom students can complete SLPs. For example, many schools are choosing to program service learning projects at every grade level to maximize students' opportunities to meet the graduation requirement. Independent service learning projects should be limited to when a student has missed all other opportunities.
- School programmers should complete the necessary training to effectively apply the SLP course codes. Once the appropriate SLP course code is entered, teachers will see the SLP course in Aspen and mark a grade of Pass/Incomplete in order for students to gain credit, which updates on their transcripts.
- Determine how you will acknowledge and celebrate the service learning work carried out by your students and staff.

Schedulers



Input SL project course code
Implementation at the beginning of
each semester

Responsibilities & Expectations

Programmers have the critical task of inputting the SLP course codes, without which, the completion of service learning projects are not recorded on a student's transcripts.

Programmers must enter the correct SLP course codes by the third week of the respective semester in which the SLP will take place. Therefore, service learning project course codes should be entered in the beginning of Quarter 1 and/or 3.

Service learning project course codes are listed below and apply to either semester:

Career & Technical Education	999902N	Physical Education	999602N
Civics	999801N	Science	999501N
English	999802N	Social Science	999502N
Fine Arts	999701N	World Language	999401N
JROTC	999702N	Independent Service Learning	999901N
Mathematics	999601N	Other Service-Learning	999402N

SLPs are classroom-integrated and should accompany a course a student is currently enrolled in. In the case that a student must complete a SLP but is not enrolled in a specific class that offers a project, the appropriate SLP course code must be entered for that student which best represents the content standards the project will encompass. Some important considerations when selecting the SLP course codes to enter are:

- One of the two required SLP course codes must be the Civics SLP course code. Therefore, when a student is completing or making up a Civics SLP, the Civics SLP course code must be entered, even if it will be completed independently by the student.
- The **independent** course code should be used when a student has no other options within the school and must work with a CPS community partner outside of school to complete a project.
- The **career & technical education** (CTE) course code should be used in conjunction with projects completed in courses such as culinary or business. Visit [CPS's CTE website](#) for more information on courses considered a part of the CTE pathways.
- The **other** course code should be used when the content standards applied in the project are not aligned with a specific content area. This can include, for example, a project led by a counselor that focused primarily on social emotional learning standards.

Teachers

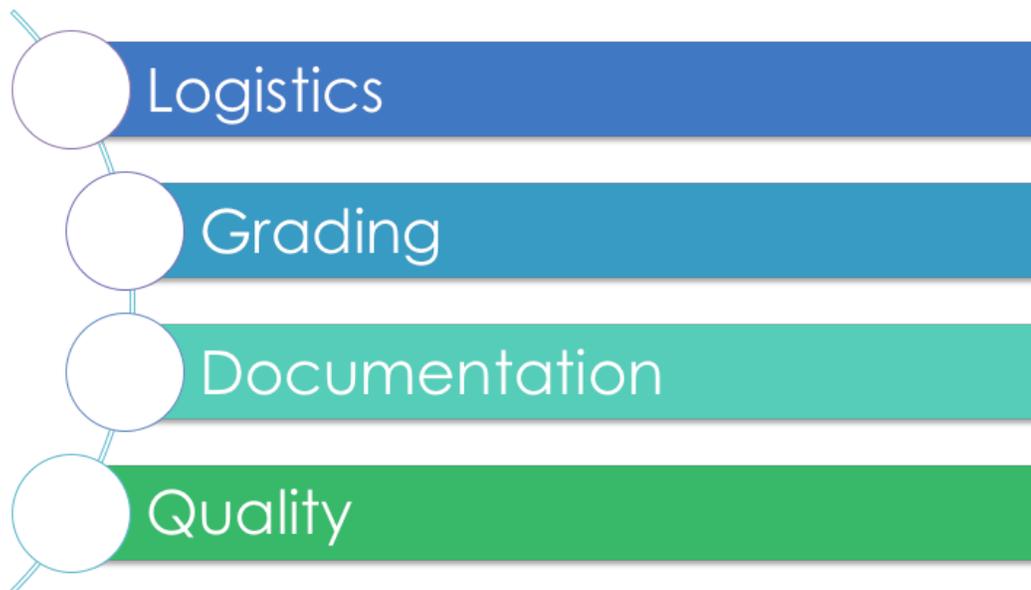
Facilitate course-integrated projects throughout the course
If Applicable:
Apply for a project grant
Work with community partners



Responsibilities & Expectations

Teachers are integral to the effective implementation of the service learning project graduation requirement. Service learning projects position students to take informed action and must be integrated into classroom course work and thus linked to current academic goals and curriculum while also building social, civic, and academic skills.

The teacher guidance that follows is organized within the subsequent sections to provide clarity for teachers implementing service learning projects in their classrooms. More guidance and tools for teachers can also be found within the SL Employee Intranet pages as they become available.



Logistics

Students cannot be given credit for any service learning projects that happen prior to beginning high school or during summer vacation. Classroom-integrated service learning projects must be led by a certified high school instructor teaching at a CPS high school. Service learning projects that are completed by students enrolled in an Academic Center program (7-12) can receive credit for completing a classroom-integrated service learning project **only if** the project is led by a high school teacher at a CPS high school. Thus, to meet this graduation requirement with fidelity, a SLP should be facilitated within a CPS high school course.

How should service learning projects be organized in a classroom?

Students may work on a project collaboratively, as an entire class, or the teacher may assign a different service learning project or a portion of a project to be completed individually or in small groups over the course of an academic quarter, semester or school year.

The length of a project will depend on the analysis and investigation needed to understand the problem being addressed, the magnitude of the informed action students are taking and the content and skills required to execute the action. The project may be added to an existing unit, as an extension or application of learning, or may be a new unit of study. In terms of impact, the student-led informed action(s) driven by the project can aim to bring about awareness, build solidarity, organize or drive change which addresses relevant issues within the school, locally, or globally.

Grading

The service learning project must be linked to current academic goals and curriculum and should build social, civic, and academic skills. Therefore, a teacher facilitating a project in a course will see that course's student roster listed twice in Aspen. Once with the course name and a second time with the appropriate SLP course code as listed in the [Policy Overview](#). For example an Algebra teacher facilitating a project will see their class roster listed as Algebra and again as a Mathematics service learning project.

Since the project is being completed in a course, grading for components of the project are determined by the teacher and should be put into Aspen, under the course, just as other course assignments and assessments would be. This means, for the Algebra example above, that the project is a part of the Algebra grade and thus assignments and assessments would appear in the Algebra gradebook, within Aspen.

The project SLP course code listing in Aspen should only be used to mark a “P” for pass or “/” for incomplete once a project is, or is not, completed.

The district recommends that more than one project is offered in a course to account for an incomplete project and/or that a student be given an opportunity to make up an incomplete course project and thus it is in the best interest of the student to hold off on inputting an “/” until the end of the course. Therefore, until the project is completed by a student or the course ends, leave the grade blank. At the end of the course, or when the student completes the project, mark the grade, under the service learning project course code, as P or /.

How can service learning projects be standards-based?

A service learning project is a course project that intentionally positions students to take informed action to address a relevant student or community issue. The action, however, should be informed not just by research and student interests but also the knowledge and skills inherent to the course’s content area. Thus, just as any other course assignment or assessment can be standards-based, so can a SLP.

For example, a biology class completing a SLP in which students host a community health fair may have been studying biological systems prior to hosting the fair. Students may have determined, based on what they learned about the anatomy and physiology of the human body, research about common health concerns in the community, and their own family health stories, that hosting a community health fair would be the most appropriate way to bring awareness to community members about the resources available to them. As an additional assessment, students may have developed workshops to be presented at the community health fair, in which they explain the biological and historical nature of some illnesses in collaboration with local health clinics. The biology teacher in this project may have been focusing on the NGSS performance expectation HS-LS3-3, which asks students to apply concepts of statistics and probability to explain the variation and distribution of expressed traits in a population. The research, thus also included mathematical analysis of both genetic and environmental factors which contributed to the illnesses.

How should service learning projects be modified for diverse learners (DL) or English language learners (ELL) ?

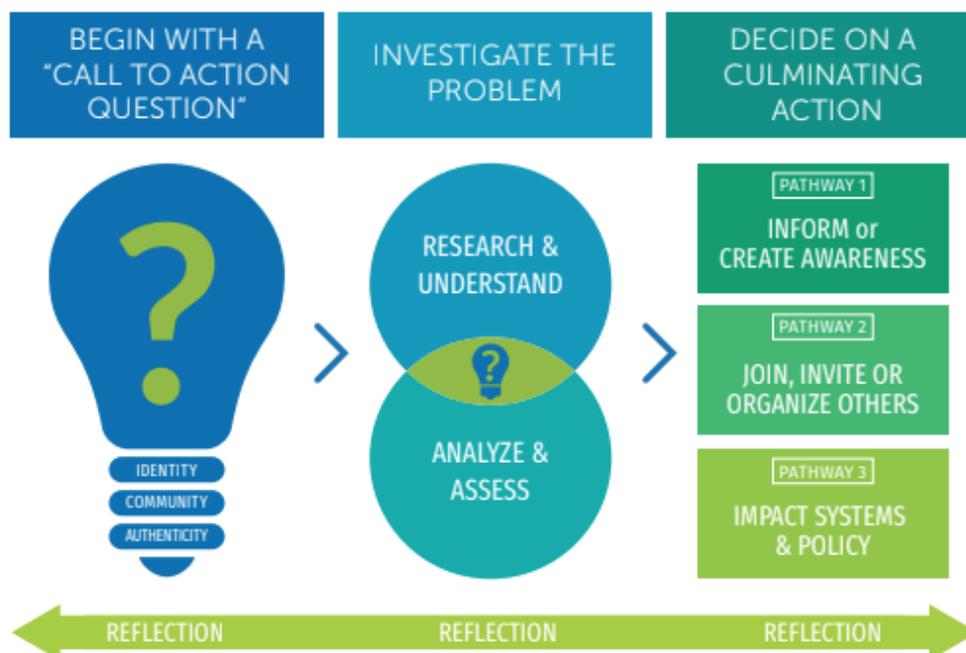
DL and ELL students must also complete two service learning projects to meet the service learning graduation requirement. Project modifications for DL or ELL students are at the discretion of the teacher(s) of the course in which the project is being facilitated and should be based on the student’s IEP or relevant bilingual services. The project is a part of the course and should be modified just as other course assignments or assessments would be.

Documentation

There is no documentation at the district level that needs to be submitted by a teacher facilitating a service learning project. However it is recommended that teachers hold onto important student artifacts, such as a culminating scored project rubric or a student product, just as teachers of other non-credit bearing courses do, in case there are questions about a student completing a project. There should, however, be communication between the project teacher and the service learning coach that a project is taking place, so that the coach can work with the teacher to verify the project is being coded appropriately. How this communication occurs is at the discretion of the school. [SL coaches](#) will be asked to complete a SL Report at the end of the school year in which they will be asked to submit a few project artifacts. Therefore, holding onto a few project artifacts helps the coach at your school also complete the school's end of the year SL Report.

Quality

The aims of [service learning and civic engagement](#) have shifted from individual responsibility to participatory and justice-oriented action. As we work to enhance the role of youth's civic engagement and readiness within our schools, the district and communities, we seek to promote learning that situates students as experts and leaders capable and able to bring about transformational change. To support the development of project-based learning that positions students to take informed action, the Department of Social Science and Civic Engagement has developed an Informed Action Framework, shown below, that can support the design of a service learning project. Access to the entire Inquiry to Action Framework is linked [here](#).



Additionally, as is true with educators who incorporate tenets of Youth Participatory Action Research, YPAR, or other justice-centered participatory curriculum frameworks, consider how you might address each of the following areas.

Area	Description
Experiential, action-based learning	Student work is made public by presenting or offering it to people beyond the classroom. Students are asked to publicly explain the reasoning behind the choices they made, their inquiry process, how they worked, what they learned, etc.
Student-Driven Inquiry & Decision-Making	Inquiry is sustained over time, academically rigorous, and driven by various embedded opportunities for students to take significant responsibility and ownership through student-generated questions, authentic expression of voice, and decision-making power on important matters throughout the project.
Contextualized through students' identity/lived experiences	The project has an authentic context, involves real-world tasks, tools, and quality standards, makes a real impact on the world and/or speaks to students' personal concerns, interests, or identities.
Contextualized through Call to Action Question	<p>The problem is focused on a central problem at the appropriate level of challenge for students. The central problem is framed by a driving question for the project, which is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Open-ended; it will allow students to develop more than one reasonable answer ● Understandable and inspiring to students ● Aligned with learning goals: to answer, students will need to gain the intended knowledge, understanding, and skills
Direct Application of Content Knowledge & Skills	The project facilitates the application of content knowledge, understandings, and skills derived from standards and central to academic subject areas.
Reflection guides work throughout	<p>Students and teachers engage in thoughtful, comprehensive reflection both during the project and after its culmination.</p> <p>Students are provided with regular, structured opportunities to give and receive feedback about the quality of their products and work-in-progress from peers, teachers, and if appropriate from others beyond the classroom. Students use feedback about their work to revise and improve it.</p>

Counselors



Responsibilities & Expectations

Counselors are crucial to making sure students and administrators are aware of service learning project needs. It is also imperative that you consider the following to ensure your school is *service learning ready*:

- Counselors are the primary staff members that students talk to when verifying what they need to complete in order to graduate. Therefore, it is important that counselors incorporate discussing the service learning project graduation requirement.
- Collaborate with the SL coach and programmer(s) to identify which courses offer an opportunity to complete a service learning project, aside from Civics. In this way, you can better advise students on how, or when, they will likely complete the second SLP.
- Communicate to administrators and the SL Coach if you see a gap or coding mistake so that student records can be accurate.
- Communicate to administrators and the SL Coach if you notice that a group of students are missing a Civics or second SLP so that this can be addressed and another opportunity can be designed for those students.
- Use the linked guidance to access and run SLP completion queries in Aspen for the [Civics SLP](#) and the [Second SLP](#)

SY2024 FAQ: Service Learning Projects & Requirement

Any CPS student that entered 9th grade in the 2016-2017 school year or after needs to complete two service learning projects (SLPs) as part of their high school graduation requirement. The following table of contents provides links to frequently asked questions and answers in regards to this graduation requirement.

[Transfer Students](#)

[Service Learning Project vs Course](#)

[Aspen Grading](#)

[Service Learning Project Course Codes](#)

[Shifting from Hours to Projects](#)

[Volunteer Hours](#)

[Remote Learning Questions](#)

Transfer Students

If a student transferred into our school from a charter where hours (not project) were completed, is this student exempt or can those hours be transferred into projects?

The policy is that any student enrolled in 9th grade in or after the 2016-2017 school year must complete 2 service learning projects. Unfortunately, we do not transfer hours into projects. Hours that students come in with (or complete) can be added in Aspen as volunteer hours but they cannot count towards meeting the service learning project requirement. The transfer student must be programmed into the minimum two courses that will provide them an opportunity to complete the two mandated service learning projects. For clarity on the minimum two courses, please review the information outlined in the [Policy Overview](#) portion of this guidance.

Service Learning Project vs Course

What should we do if a student passes and gets credit for the Civics course but does not pass the Civics service learning project?

Assuming the student no longer needs to take the course because they were already awarded civics course credit, they should work on a relevant, context-responsive social or political issue under the guidance of a civics teacher (preferably) or other adult. We recommend focusing on elections, the electoral process or the census. These are both accessible areas for an individual student to engage in a service learning project in civics - and we have guidance and a call to action question to help the student get started. To be clear though, this project should cover civics content and be coded by the programmer as a civics service learning project. Another option, if it's available at your school, would be for the student to take AP Government, assuming that course has a service learning project integrated, as this course also provides civics service learning project credit as outlined in the [Policy Overview](#) portion of this guidance.

If a student completes more than one service learning project in one course, will they get credit for more than one project on their transcript? For example, if a Civics teacher offers 2 projects, does that satisfy the 2 service learning project requirement?

No, students can only earn one service learning project credit from a course, though it is best practice to offer more than one project opportunity to account for an incomplete project. For example, only 1 project can be earned from a Civics course even if more than 1 project is completed by the student. The [Policy Overview](#) portion of this guidance explains that two distinct course opportunities must be provided for students.

If Civics projects are completed in different semesters, under a new roster, will the project that occurs in semester 1 and semester 2, count as a student's service learning Civics project 1 and 2?

Again, only 1 project can be earned from a Civics course even if more than 1 project is completed by the student. The [Policy Overview](#) portion of this guidance explains that two distinct course opportunities must be provided for students. Only 1 of the projects should be in Civics. The other project must be in a different course, preferably in a different grade level, and should therefore not be with the same teacher, the same school year. Accordingly, in order to meet this graduation requirement with integrity, students should not complete both projects with the same teacher and student roster

even if your school only programs Civics for one semester, and changes the course name to another social science course the other semester.

If a student has already completed both required service learning projects, can they opt out of completing a 3rd within a course they are enrolled in?

If a student has already met the service learning project graduation requirement, they do not necessarily need to complete a third project. However, it should be noted that since SLPs are classroom-integrated, as stated in the [Policy Overview](#) portion of this guidance, it is in the best interest of the student to complete the project, since it will impact their course work, and thus, grade in the class. In other words, because the project is a part of the course's learning targets & outcomes, not completing the project will impact a student's achievement and grades in said course. However, if a student chooses not to complete the project, they will receive an incomplete, or "/" on a non-credit bearing SLP which will appear on their transcript unless the student drops and withdraws from the SLP. Dropping or withdrawing from the SLP allows the student, who intends on not completing the SLP, to avoid having a non-credit bearing incomplete on their transcript.

Aspen Grading

I am a teacher who is facilitating a service learning project, SLP, in my classroom as part of one of my units. What type of grade should I be putting in Aspen for the project?

Let's say you are an Algebra teacher. You should see your class roster listed twice in Aspen, once as Algebra and the second as a Mathematics SLP. This is because a specific course code must be added by the school's programmer/scheduler in order for the SLP to appear on students' transcripts. You should assign grades for classwork as you normally would within your Algebra course for the project. The second listing of the roster as Math SLP will be used for you to assign a **Pass "P" or Incomplete "/"** grade for the project as noted in the teacher's [grading section](#) of this document. Please note, however, that you should hold off on inputting an "incomplete" until the end of Q4 to account for the student making up the project throughout the course. **If your course is only a semester long, an "/" should not be put in until the end of Q2 or Q4, depending on the semester.**

If more than one service learning project is offered in a course and a student does not complete a project and earns an incomplete, should I mark it as “incomplete” in the Aspen project grade book?

It is in the best interest of the school and the student to hold off on inputting an "incomplete" until students have been given multiple opportunities to complete a project. If, for instance, a student does not complete the project by the end of Q2, the teacher should leave the score blank on Aspen and give that student an opportunity to complete that or another project by the end of the school year. The teacher should then input a P, for pass, whenever the student does complete and pass the project or an I, or incomplete, if they do not, after having been provided additional opportunities as noted in the teacher's [grading section](#) of this document.

If a teacher does a service learning project in their class but not everyone is a participant, is a grade left blank for the non-participating students?

This question showcases two scenarios that need to be distinguished before deciding on your next steps. Scenario 1, the project was only offered to a small group of students who needed a project opportunity or scenario 2, the project was offered to all students but only a few actually participated or completed the project. In scenario 1, the most transparent thing to do is communicate with your programmer about which students in your course roster should also be in your service learning project (SLP) roster. There is no reason why all the students in your course roster should also show up in your SLP roster, since all students are not expected to complete the project. Doing this also allows all stakeholders (counselors, programmers, students, teachers, administrators, SL coaches and parents) to see who is expected to earn service learning project credit from your course. In scenario 2, since all students were expected to complete the SLP, but some choose not to, all your course roster students would also be on your SLP roster. At the end of the course, when inputting final grades, students who did not complete the project would receive an *incomplete* on their SLP as noted in the teacher's [grading section](#) of this document.

I am in a school where Civics is only offered as a semester course and therefore, Civics students only have 1 semester to complete a Civics service learning project. If the student does not complete the project, do I put an "I" or leave it blank when the semester ends? Is there a circumstance under which a service learning project grade should be left blank at the end of the course?

If your course is only a semester long, an "/" should not be put in until the end of Q2 or Q4, depending on the semester as noted in the teacher's [grading section](#) of this document. The only time a SLP grade should be blank is during the course when waiting for a student to complete or make up the project. When the course ends, a P or / should be put in.

I am a teacher who facilitated an independent service learning project in quarter 4. The student I was working with was not very responsive and unfortunately, did not complete the project until after grades were already due. What should I do now and what should I have done?

Though we understand that sometimes facilitating a SLP outside of regular course work is necessary, the downside is it can be harder to establish regular communication with the student. Working independently on a project that is not embedded in classwork, is not necessarily best for all students. Agreements on communication, expectations on due dates, and check in norms should all be established prior to having a student start a SLP outside of a class. Identifying a second staff member and parent with which to follow up with can also help in building more student commitment, follow through and urgency. In terms of modifying a SLP grade, talk to your administration about submitting a grade change so that the student can receive credit for the completed SLP as noted in the teacher's [grading section](#) of this document.

Why are service learning projects non-credit bearing, and therefore appear in the non-credit section of a student's transcript?

Service learning projects are non-credit bearing and receive a grade of pass or incomplete as noted in the teacher's [grading section](#) of this document. This is similar to

grades students receive for the constitution test or drivers ed test. Because SLPs are embedded in courses, students will receive grades for their project or contributions to a project, however, those achievements or mastery grades appear within the course gradebook, not the SLP course code. The SLP course code simply identifies on a student's transcript whether or not they have passed and therefore completed the SLP graduation requirement. The quality of their work or contributions is assessed by the teacher through coursework and documented within the course's gradebook.

What documentation is needed for service learning projects by teachers and students?

As noted in the teacher's [documentation section](#) of this guidance, there is no documentation at the district level that needs to be submitted by a teacher facilitating a service learning project. However it is recommended that teachers hold onto important student artifacts, such as a culminating scored project rubric or student product, just as teachers of other non-credit bearing courses do, in case there are questions about a student completing a project. Students should also get into the habit of holding onto important artifacts, at least until they verify the project does appear on their transcript. They can do so by speaking to a counselor or other staff members with access to viewing their transcript or graduation status.

How do I input a P (Pass) or / (Incomplete) for a project? Where do I do it?

For a SLP, the teacher will need to enter a P or / as explained in the [grading section](#). A teacher will not create assignments for a SLP within the SLP course code. Therefore, since the Aspen gradebook only accepts numeric values, the cumulative average will be blank. Entering P or / will need to be done as an override grade by clicking on the following dropdowns within their SLP gradebook as seen in the image below:

- Grade Columns - "Post Columns-Term"
- Term - "Term 2" if this is happening quarter 2 (as it is in this example)
- From there the teacher will see a FG column in this column and should enter the P or / as the override

why the transcripts need to be updated and the process by which the school verified that each student completed the SLP. Again, send your school's grade change form(s) and letter to Tony Howard, Executive Director of Education Policy and Procedures, at tthoward@cps.edu for edit approvals. There is existing Aspen guidance found in the *Grading for Admins User Guide* that explains how to add or edit course codes in transcripts once your edits are approved.

My school completed manual edits of course codes yet we do not see those changes represented in district SLP data we are receiving. Why is there a data discrepancy?

According to ITS, schools that have manual edits are showing error messages that do not allow their changes to flow to the data warehouse from which SLP status data is pulled. These schools will need to submit a ticket for this to be fixed until Aspen can give us another option. If your school has made manual edits or changes, please submit a ticket so that these changes can show up in our district SLP data pull.

Is there a different course code that needs to be used for a specific semester? In other words, are there different course codes used by programmers for a SLP in science semester 1 vs semester 2?

The service learning project course codes are not specific to any semester and are listed in the [programmer's section](#) of this document. There is only one course code for each specific type of SLP, which can then be inputted by a programmer at any point in the school year.

I am a programmer and I have been asked to input course codes for SLPs that will not take place until Q4 at the beginning of the second semester. Why are we being asked to do this so soon?

The reason we are asking SLP course codes to be entered at the beginning of each semester, instead of waiting until the end, is because that allows us to pull a course code usage report for your school and see what SLPs are projected for the school year's semester. This then allows us to make a more accurate assessment of whether your school is *Service Learning Ready* and on track to help students meet the SLP requirement. We also found that last year, some schools did not code the SLP correctly

and those schools will now need to do individual, student by student, manual transcript edits. We are hoping to catch those sorts of mistakes by having the course codes inputted sooner rather than later. The SLP course codes and more information can be found in the [programmer's section](#) of this document.

When a student earns two projects or more, where are those projects found in Aspen and recorded? How can a school see them?

A school can generate either the Official or Unofficial transcripts to see all the SLP earned by a student. A school can also look at the Transcript side tab for that student with the "All Records" filter to see which project they completed and when.

Transcript	<input type="checkbox"/>	School Year: 2017-2018	09	184101H	HS1 English I
Transcript	<input type="checkbox"/>	School Year: 2017-2018	09	184102H	HS2 English I
Transcript	<input type="checkbox"/>	School Year: 2017-2018	09	277101A	AS1 AP Human Geography
Credit Summary	<input type="checkbox"/>	School Year: 2017-2018	09	277102A	AS2 AP Human Geography
Grade Point Summary	<input type="checkbox"/>	School Year: 2017-2018	09	332101H	HS1 Biology
Grade Point Summary	<input type="checkbox"/>	School Year: 2017-2018	09	332102H	HS2 Biology
Programs of Study	<input type="checkbox"/>	School Year: 2017-2018	09	434101H	HS1 Geometry
Programs of Study	<input type="checkbox"/>	School Year: 2017-2018	09	434102H	HS2 Geometry
Graduation Summary	<input type="checkbox"/>	School Year: 2017-2018	09	558101H	HS1 Spanish I
Graduation Summary	<input type="checkbox"/>	School Year: 2017-2018	09	558102H	HS2 Spanish I
Assessments	<input type="checkbox"/>	School Year: 2017-2018	09	668201H	HS1 Exploring Computer Science
Assessments	<input type="checkbox"/>	School Year: 2017-2018	09	668202H	HS2 Exploring Computer Science
Academics	<input type="checkbox"/>	School Year: 2017-2018	09	990101R	RS1 PE I-Health
Schedule	<input type="checkbox"/>	School Year: 2017-2018	09	990102R	RS2 PE I-Health
Membership	<input type="checkbox"/>	School Year: 2017-2018	09	999501N	Science Service Learning Project
Transactions	<input type="checkbox"/>	School Year: 2017-2018	09	999602N	English Service Learning Project

Can teachers enter a P in quarter 1 and not quarter 2 to obtain credit? Or do they need to enter a P for quarter 1 and quarter 2? I'm not sure if the P entered in quarter 1 carries over to quarter 2 since it's an override.

In order for a student to receive credit and the grade/class to appear on the student transcript the grade must be posted in the Final Grade column which is only available for Quarter 2 (Semester 1) and Quarter 4 (Semester 2) for your school.

Should the programmer be entering the service project codes of the teachers who are completing projects in their classes as a class period/tied to a class period or should they be entered as no period?

The programmer should enter the service project codes as a class period tied to the same class period of the class conducting the service learning project. For example, if an Algebra teacher is conducting a service learning project in the first period. The programmer should create a class using the Mathematics service project code for the first period. So essentially, the teacher will have two first period class rosters, one for the Algebra class and one for the Service Learning Math credit class which will be graded with a P or /.

Shifting from Hours to Projects

I am having a hard time motivating students to get involved in community work since service learning has shifted from hours to projects. I am concerned that this shift is disempowering students as more ownership is being placed on the teacher of a course. It seems like students simply complete the project for a grade and I am forcing their involvement by threatening their course grade. How can this shift help promote more genuine service?

Found within the teacher's [quality section](#) of this document are important areas of focus when developing a service learning project with students. One of these areas, for example, is *student driven inquiry and decision making*. Our charge as a district is that service learning in classrooms is driven by various embedded opportunities for students to take significant responsibility and ownership through student-generated questions, authentic expression of voice, and decision-making power on important matters throughout the project. Unlike hours, which generally implied a day of volunteerism or service, the informed action project model requires a deeper learning and analysis of systemic issues before a student-led action can take place. Student ownership is catalyzed through the teacher's facilitation of the project. While the content and skills of specific disciplines may limit the focus or scope of a project, the project should still position students to be decision makers and guide the project's goals and outcomes. If students are allowed to investigate authentic issues or problems that impact their communities or lives, coached with relevant content and skills, and given ownership and decision making in how to address those problems, teachers should see more student ownership and motivation to question, learn and act.

As a teacher I am concerned this service learning shift from hours to projects has created an equity problem in terms of who now pursues volunteer opportunities. What can we do to promote all students to continue to complete volunteer hours in addition to completing the two service learning projects?

An important point to note about volunteer hours is that they can still be earned by students and could be a part of a larger service learning project. For example, while

studying food deserts and nutrition in a biology class, students may decide to investigate how their neighborhood addresses the nutritional needs of all residents, including the homeless. Part of their investigation into the needs of the homeless might include spending a day in a homeless shelter asking questions and distributing food. They are technically volunteering in a homeless shelter and those hours could be added to each student's volunteer hours. But those hours alone are not the service learning project. Instead, this day is one learning experience, part of a larger cycle of learning, in which students are trying to understand how they, as high school students and community members, can address the issue of food deserts and access to high quality nutritional food for all community members. Our district's [shift in civic engagement](#) to a justice-centered lens, implies our students are engaged in civic actions that move beyond a day of giving to systemic analysis and change.

Volunteerism can still be an important aspect of a school's culture. Schools can and should still continue to make students aware of opportunities to complete volunteer hours. Counselors and teachers should be talking to all students about how other awards and recognitions can be highlighted in college and career applications, beyond academics.

What is the current policy for volunteer hours?

Volunteer hours consist of a service or an activity performed by students to address social issues in the community, such as (but not limited to) poverty, disaster relief, education, the environment, homelessness, or community wellness. The student will need to receive written verification by an adult, non-relative supervisor of the volunteer hours, that both describes the services performed and documents the number of hours served. Students will provide this written verification along with the [Student Volunteer Hours Submission Form](#) and a written reflection to a school counselor. Once verified by a counselor, the volunteer hours will be logged into Aspen, populated under Awards.

Volunteer Hours

How do we input volunteer hours into Aspen?

Volunteer hours consists of a service or an activity performed by students to address social issues in the community, such as (but not limited to) poverty, disaster relief, education, the environment, homelessness, or community wellness. The student will need to receive written verification by an adult, non-relative supervisor of the volunteer

hours, that both describes the services performed and documents the number of hours served. Students will provide this written verification along with the [Student Volunteer Hours Submission Form](#) and a written reflection to a school counselor.

Once verified by a counselor, the volunteer hours will be logged into Aspen. Use the [Aspen Volunteer Hours Management Quick Guide](#) to assist you in entering volunteer hours.

How are current and previous volunteer hours viewed on a transcript?

All volunteer hours can be seen on the student transcript which shows this information on the last page under Honors and Activities:

		SEM WEIGHTED GPA:		
ACADEMIC INFORMATION		STANDARDIZED SCORES		
CUMULATIVE WEIGHTED GPA:	3.57140	04/10/2019	SAT	
CUMULATIVE UNWEIGHTED GPA:	2.85710	TOTAL		
CARNEGIE UNITS ATTEMPTED:	21.0	READING		
CARNEGIE UNITS COMPLETED:	20.0	MATH		
		ESSAY READING		
CLASS RANK:		ESSAY WRITING		
CLASS SIZE:		ESSAY ANALYSIS		
AS OF:				

Details	Options	Reports	Help	Search on FieldC001	S
Contacts					TS
Attendance	<input type="checkbox"/>	Type	Date		N
Behavior	<input type="checkbox"/>	Volunteer Hours	5/1/2018		
Transcript	<input type="checkbox"/>	Volunteer Hours	9/5/2017		
Assessments	<input type="checkbox"/>	Volunteer Hours	7/25/2018		
Academics					
Schedule					
Membership					
Transactions					
Documents					
At Risk					
Snapshots					
Awards					
Details					

Coaches and counselors can also see the volunteer hours information under the student's Awards side tab.

I recently noticed that I accidentally input volunteer hours as service learning hours this school year for several students. How do I fix this?

Unfortunately, the only way to fix this is to manually edit the incorrectly labeled hours for each student.

- A) First, record the number of hours completed and delete the incorrect records. In order to do so, access the student's *transactions* side tab and select the *events* sub side tab and take note of the volunteer hours (entered incorrectly as service learning hours). Record the number of hours for your use later and then delete those records.
- B) Re-enter the hours as volunteer hours. In order to do so, access the *school* top tab and select the *awards* side tab for each student and enter the volunteer hours here. Doing so will allow the volunteer hours to appear in the correct place on each students' transcripts.

What are acceptable ways to earn volunteer hours? Can a parent sign off on hours?

Volunteer hours consist of a service or an activity performed by students to address social issues in the community, such as (but not limited to) poverty, disaster relief, education, the environment, homelessness, or community wellness. The student will need to receive written verification by an adult, non-relative supervisor of the volunteer hours, that both describes the services performed and documents the number of hours served. Students will provide this written verification along with the [Student Volunteer Hours Submission Form](#) and a written reflection to a school counselor. Once verified by a counselor, the volunteer hours will be logged into Aspen, populated under *Awards*.

Remote Learning Questions

What grade can I assign for a service learning project being completed remotely?

Considering the district's remote learning grading guidance, a teacher has **3 options** when assigning a grade for a service learning project.

1. Assign a "P" for pass if a student successfully completes a service learning project remotely.
2. Assign a " / " for incomplete if a project was offered and was a part of the remote learning curriculum of the course but was not successfully completed by the student.
3. Leave the grade blank if a service learning project was coded but not offered to students as part of the remote learning curriculum.

Students at my high school complete a service learning project through my freshman math class. What happens if I don't have my freshman students complete a project remotely?

The first thing you should do is communicate with your administration and service learning coach about not offering the project so they are aware. In the short term, any service learning project not offered but coded by the programmer should be left with a blank grade field so as to not penalize students. In the long term, your school will need to come up with a plan for these students to be enrolled in another course, next school year, in which they will be able to complete a service learning project since they are not seniors and will not receive a waiver.

How exactly do we input a service learning project waiver for a senior?

Guidance on how to input the service learning waiver for seniors is forthcoming. Once it comes out, it will be shared with all relevant stakeholders.