THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEMOCRATS'

GUIDE TO

Montgomery County Public Schools
www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org
MCPS
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

STUDENT SERVICE LEARNING PROGRAM

SSL, A WIN-WIN

Democratic campaigns and organizations can always use the help of enthusiastic young people, and in exchange we provide experiences that can empower students and awaken their sense of civic pride. But for students seeking to meet student service learning requirements, certain guidelines must be met.

Under tightly prescribed circumstances, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) students are permitted to earn Student Service Learning (SSL) hours for political activities like assisting Precinct Officials on Election Day, supporting the efforts of the MCDCC Headquarters and satellite offices, working for individual candidates, and participating in Serving Our Community Committee (SOCC) activities.

This pamphlet is intended to serve as a ready reference regarding the purpose of the SSL program and your responsibilities toward MCPS students seeking SSL hours. ***Please review "SSL Program Overview" and "Basic SSL Guidelines" before promising SSL hours to MCPS students.*** (For comprehensive information regarding the MCPS SSL program, visit the program website at www.mcpsssl.org.)

SSL PROGRAM OVERVIEW:

The Student Service Learning Program seeks to address recognized community needs and connect them with curriculum goals. It offers students the opportunity to recognize their civic and social responsibilities, and to discover their power to make a difference in their community.

Still, some days, we really need students to just answer phones or stuff envelopes. Even these tasks can fulfill program goals, when built around SSL's three learning phases: **preparation**, **action**, and **reflection.**

CHECKLIST FOR SERVING OUR COMMUNITY COMMITTEE (SOCC)

BEFORE STUDENTS ARRIVE:

√ Make sure the student has obtained the appropriate approval. (See "Basic Guidelines.") Long-range planning by the SOCC will allow opportunities to be preapproved on the website.

√ Identify a student supervisor. The supervisor must be a non-related adult, aged 18 or above. Students must be supervised at all times, *regardless of the activity.*

√ Make sure the student volunteer's activity will occur in a public place. For example, making cookies in someone's kitchen is not allowed.

WHEN WORK BEGINS:

√ Greet your students; explain the day's duties, and introduce them to the student supervisor.

AT THE END OF THE STUDENT'S ACTIVITY:

√ Make sure students complete MCPS Form 560-51, *Student Service Learning Activity Verification*.*****

This form asks students to reflect on their experience; you can help by posing questions that will elicit a thoughtful response. (See "Reflection" under SSL Program Overview above.)

√ Read the student's "reflection" response before signing off on the number of hours worked. (Students are responsible for bringing the completed form to the SSL coordinator in their schools.)

CHECKLIST FOR CANDIDATES

BEFORE THE STUDENT BEGINS WORKING:

√ Make sure student has obtained the appropriate approval from the SSL Coordinator at his or her school, using MCPS Form 560-50, *Request for SSL Preapproval.* (See "Basic Guidelines.")

√ Identify student supervisor(s). Students must be supervised at all times by a non-related adult, aged 18 or older.

√ Make sure the student's activity will occur in a public place. For example, making posters in someone's basement is not allowed.

WHEN WORK BEGINS:

√ Greet the students; explain the day's duties, and introduce them to the student supervisor.

AT THE END OF THE STUDENT'S ACTIVITY
### (OR AS REQUIRED— SEE "BASIC GUIDELINES")

√ Make sure the student completes MCPS Form 560-51, *Student Service Learning Activity Verification*.

This form asks students to reflect on their experience; you can help by posing questions that will elicit a thoughtful response. (See "Reflection" under "Program Overview.")

√ Read the student's "Reflection" response before signing off on the number of hours worked. (Students are responsible for bringing the completed form to the SSL Coordinator in their schools.)

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♦PREPARATION:

MCPS allows students to earn hours for service performed for political organizations and campaigns to encourages an understanding of and participation in the political process. Take this opportunity to acquaint students with various aspects of your organization. Detail processes and set expectations; make sure students are adequately trained for their tasks and know who they can turn to with questions. Explain the project's benefits: The stuffed envelopes will welcome and educate new voters; quickly answered phones help us better serve our neighbors.
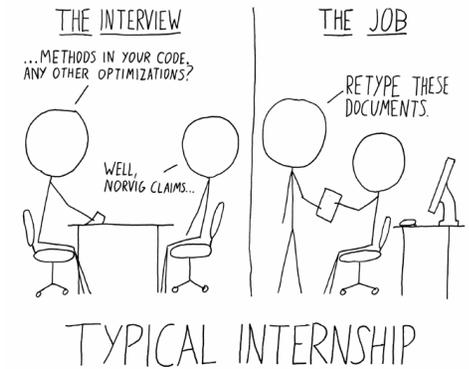
♦ACTION:

Try to mix action types. **Direct Action** involves activities such as telephone canvassing, dispensing information, registering people to vote or assisting at a polling place on Election Day. **Indirect Action** *includes* assembling materials for mailings or distribution, collecting food or clothing, and helping with community clean-ups. **Advocacy Action** can include such activities as lobbying the legislature and speaking publicly about the issues.

♦REFLECTION:

Consider the action, its impact on the community, and the student's feelings related to continued service and future career goals. The supervisor should ask the volunteer questions such as, "What happened today?" "What aspects did you enjoy?" "How did you feel about your service?" "Did this experience help shape ideas about your future?"

BASIC SSL GUIDELINES

♦ **All SSL activities must be _pre_-approved**. No SSL hours will be awarded for hours worked prior to approval, even if approval is subsequently given.

♦ Students can find pre-approved opportunities in two ways: (1) The organization and opportunity are tagged as SSL approved on the website link at www.mcpsssl.org. (2)The student submits **MCPS Form 560-50**, _Request for SSL Pre-approval_ to the school SSL coordinator PRIOR to beginning the service.

♦ MCPS Form 560-50 must be submitted to the school SSL coordinator and approved **in advance of any service with individuals running for public office**.

♦ Service learning must be documented on MCPS Form 560-51, _Student Service Learning Activity Verification,_ and turned in to the SSL coordinator by students, by the last Friday in September, the Friday before first semester exams begin and the Friday before second semester exams begin.

♦ **All service must occur under the supervision of a non-related adult (18 or older), representing the candidate or organization.**

♦ **All services must occur in a public place.** Services cannot be performed in a private residence.

♦ All services must be secular in nature, be based on a recognized need in the community, and be completed outside of the instructional day.

♦ **Door-to-door distribution or financial solicitation is prohibited. No door-knocking.**

♦ All services must be performed without financial compensation.

♦ One service-learning hour is awarded for one hour of service, up to a maximum of 8 hours in a 24-hour period.

♦ The organization must comply with all federal, state, and local laws that forbid discrimination on the basis of race, creed, gender, age, disability, religion, and/or national origin.

♦ The organization must prohibit verbal abuse, threats, and physical violence directed toward others.

♦ The organization must prohibit sexual harassment.

CHECKLIST FOR PRECINCT OFFICIALS' ELECTION DAY ACTIVITIES

BEFORE ELECTION DAY

√ The MCDCC (as an approved organization) offers students the opportunity to earn SSL hours for helping you at the polls on Election Day. If a student from your precinct calls to help, we will notify you and ask you to call the student to confirm and arrange a schedule.

√ Make sure you have adequate copies of the MCPS Form 560-51, _Student Services Learning Activity Verification._ Several copies will be included with your election literature on Bag Pick-up Day. If you need more, you may make copies, or call the MCDCC office.

√ Designate someone to supervise students if you unable to do so on Election Day. The supervisor must be a non-related adult, aged 18 or above. Students must be supervised, _regardless of the activity._

ON ELECTION DAY:

√ Greet your student volunteers. Explain the day's duties and why they are important. Introduce students to other supervisors..

AT THE END OF THE STUDENT'S ACTIVITY:

√ Make sure the student completes MCPS Form 560-51. This form asks students to reflect on their experience; you can help them by posing questions that will elicit a thoughtful response (See "Reflection" under SSL Program Overview..)

√ Read the student's "reflection" response before signing off on the number of hours worked. (Students are responsible for bringing completed forms to the SSL coordinator in their schools.)