

The Ballard Service Learning Program

One of the graduation requirements for the Seattle School District is 60 hours of service learning. Service learning is giving time, without pay, to a non-profit or government agency. Service learning allows students to learn and to apply academic, social and personal skills through real life, hands-on activities. Students make a difference and address authentic community needs. As part of service learning, students are asked to reflect and report on their experiences.

Students may fulfill up to 15 hours of their service learning graduation requirement during the summer between 8th and 9th grade as long as it meets the criteria set by the school. Any hours completed during the summers between 9th and 10th grade and 10th and 11th grade that meet the service learning requirement can be counted toward the 60-hour graduation requirement.

Once students have met the 60-hour service learning requirement, this appears on their transcript as “service learning completed P”.

The first 20 hours of service learning are a requirement when a student takes health class.

Most students take health when they are in ninth grade. Students benefit tremendously by gaining a sense of what service learning is, getting involved in the community and school, and completing a third of their required hours in their freshmen year. Students this age are working on figuring out who they are and where they want to be involved as they grow up. Among other things, they gain the following:

- Enhanced self-esteem as they take positive risks and succeed
- Increased personal responsibility and communication skills
- Greater sensitivity to the needs of others
- Strengthened ties with the community
- More civic engagement and social responsibility
- Greater use of critical thinking skills
- Opportunities for active learning outside of the classroom
- Ability to explore careers and develop job-related skills

Surveys of health students at the end of the semester reveal that what they most got out of their experience was that they had fun and that they made friends. We want our freshmen to be engaged.

What are the steps for completing the first 20 hours of service learning in health class?

In the first week of health class, students complete a questionnaire that identifies their interests, plans they already have for service learning, and obstacles they face in meeting this requirement.

The service learning coordinator comes to the health class and meets with each student individually at the beginning of the semester and a second time in the semester, if needed. The service learning coordinator offers suggestions about non-profit and governmental organizations and upcoming opportunities. The student is informed that their parent or guardian must approve of where they are completing their service learning. If there is any question about whether or not the organization the teen is volunteering at meets the requirements for BHS, please check with the service learning coordinator or the health teacher.

How are service learning hours documented for students in health class?

Each health student receives a service learning time log designed specifically for health class. (Extra copies of that form are always available in the health classroom.) When a student volunteers, the adult supervisor at the service site must sign and provide a phone number (for verification purposes) beside each time entry. If the student volunteers somewhere and doesn't have the official form along, the non-profit organization can put the necessary information—specifically, the name of the student, the name of the organization, the event, the number of hours, and the supervisor's signature and phone number—on letterhead. Certificates that the student has been awarded can also be submitted. Students sometimes work with parents at non-profit organizations, and that is acceptable. An adult who is not a relative of the student must sign the service learning time log. Peers cannot sign the time log.

What if the health student does more than 20 hours? Less than 20 hours?

If the student does more than the first 20 hours, the additional hours count toward the rest of their high school requirement. If the student does not complete 20 hours by the end of the semester that they take health, they lose 10 points for each hour below 20 hours. If a 10th, 11th or 12th grade student in health class already has hours documented, those hours can count for the health class requirement.

Where do you find the documentation form for students not in health?

Service learning documentation forms are on the BHS web site: <http://ballardhs.seattleschools.org/> under services, then click on service learning documentation form. You can also pick up a copies of it in the counseling/career center or the main office.

How do you complete the district's service learning form?

- Each student fills out the student information and organization information section.
- Take the form to your supervisor to complete the verifying information section. You can attach letters or certificates from your organization or a printout of your hours with a supervisor's signature in place of getting them to sign the documentation form. Staple the alternate documentation onto the school's form and write "see attached" on the line where your supervisor would usually sign.
- When your hours are entered into PowerSchool, staff will sign the teacher signature line on the bottom of the page.
- Complete the second page of the documentation form---the reflection questions---at a minimum, once per organization. In the reflections, students write about what they observed, felt and learned and any other thoughts about their service learning activities.
- Turn completed forms in to the counseling office or the main office. The service learning graduation requirement is not met until the completed paperwork is submitted.
- All documentation needs to be signed by an adult who is not related to the student and the reflection questions on the back must be completed. Peers cannot sign the time log.

When should the 60 service learning hours be done?

It is best to work on the service learning hours steadily through high school. Students can choose whether you want to do them in the summer or during the school year or some of each. Once you find an organization or two that match your interests, continue to work with them on an ongoing basis, if possible.

Although it is not to their advantage, many students end up finishing their service learning hours during their senior year. They are busy making decisions about their future that year, and, if they haven't finished their hours, they also miss out on the chance of including all their service learning activities on their résumés. It is much better to complete the service learning requirement before the fall of their senior year.

Completed documentation forms can be turned in anytime while the student is in high school; the hours don't expire. The final deadline for when hours can be turned in is in the second semester of a student's senior year. The exact date will be set each year by the counseling staff. Check the senior calendar for the date.

What is the Above and Beyond Service Learning Award?

Students who want to earn the Above and Beyond Service Learning Award need to document at least 240 service learning hours---four times the 60 service learning hours required for graduation. If students already have 240 or more hours turned in to the counseling office, they do not need to do anything else in order to receive the award. They can include this honor on their college applications even though they do not receive the award until Awards Night.

Are service learning hours sometimes done during class time?

Most service learning will be competed outside of the regular class time. However, several Ballard teachers build service learning into their curriculum. There are many opportunities to contribute time to programs that are part of or support Ballard High School, for example getting hours through the horticulture, music and drama programs. Several of the clubs and sports teams at Ballard have opportunities where involved students can earn service learning hours, too.

Are there any circumstances that change the service learning requirement?

If students transfer into the Seattle School District part way through their high school career, the service learning hours are prorated. Fifteen hours are subtracted for each year out of district. For example, a student that comes in from out of district at the beginning of his/her junior year would only need to do 30 service learning hours.

Students with an IEP should check with their IEP teacher about how many hours of service learning will be required for them. This is handled through their IEP teacher.

Where are non-profit and governmental organizations found?

Seattle has many non-profit and governmental organizations that welcome teen volunteers. Your student may already be involved with a non-profit or governmental organization where she/he can document service-learning hours.

To look for more volunteer opportunities, click on any of the websites below. This is not a comprehensive list.

<http://ballardhs.seattleschools.org/> click on services <https://volunteer.uwkc.org/> <http://volunteermatch.org>
<http://www.phinneycenter.org/> <http://www.seattlemca.org/> <http://www.earthcorps.org/> <http://nordicmuseum.org/>
<http://www.spl.org/about-the-library/support-your-library/volunteer-opportunities/service-learning-volunteer-opportunities-for-high-school-students> <http://www.wta.org/> <http://cedar.greencitypartnerships.org/> <http://mtsgreenway.org/volunteer>
<http://trailvolunteers.org/> <http://forterra.org/events> <https://www.evergreenmtb.org/> <http://www.volunteer.gov/>
<http://www.seattle.gov/parks/volunteer/volunteer-calendar> <http://www.groundswellnw.org/>
<http://www.friendsofspl.org/> <http://skullyserves.com>

There is a service learning bulletin board that lists upcoming volunteer opportunities located outside the counseling office. Online, that list can be found at www.ballardhs.seattleschools.org under services.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Grayce Mitchell, service learning coordinator, at 252-1015 or gamitchell@seattleschools.org.