

# Community Service Learning

## Philosophy

According to the National Commission on Service Learning, community service learning is “a teaching and learning approach that integrates meaningful community service experiences...to enrich learning, foster personal growth, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.” Community Service Learning combines SERVICE with LEARNING.

PVCSD Board of Education Goal Regarding Community Service Learning:

*“As the community is an integral part of the education process of our students, the students should take an active role in the community. The District will establish requirements for our HS students to participate in community service projects.”*

Putnam Valley School District defines community to be a group of people working together for common goal. The “community” can either be within our own school (such as a club, a team, a classroom, a grade) or in the greater community at large (local, town, state, country, world). Service Learning must provide a non-paid service to benefit others.

Students can decide on how to proceed with their community service learning experience by reviewing what their interest and talents are. A student may also take into consideration their future career goals. Some of the fields that have service learning opportunities are in education, health, environment, churches, government and business.

## Rationale

- ❖ Promotes learning through active participation
- ❖ Promotes social, emotional and cognitive learning and growth
- ❖ Allows students to make a positive difference and fosters connections within the greater school community
- ❖ Fosters a sense of compassion for others and promotes character development
- ❖ Teaches the importance of community participation by allowing students opportunities to use their skills and knowledge in identifying needs, challenges and solutions in their community
- ❖ Extends learning beyond the classroom
- ❖ Empowers students to explore career interests and develop individual talents
- ❖ Provides a vehicle for students to reflect by thinking, discussing and writing about their experiences

According to the National Commission on Service-Learning, community service learning should:

- ❖ Be positive, meaningful and real to students
- ❖ Promote teamwork and citizenship
- ❖ Engage students to use problem solving and critical thinking skills in real life situations
- ❖ Promote self-discovery and a deeper learning
- ❖ Link to academic content and standards
- ❖ Be reciprocal in nature, benefiting the community and the student

National studies suggest that students in effective service-learning programs:

- ❖ Improve academic grades
- ❖ Increase attendance in school
- ❖ Develop personal and social responsibility

### **Expectations**

Students must satisfactorily complete a total of forty hours of non-paid community service learning by the end of their senior year. It is recommended that each student commit to at least ten hours per year and complete the appropriate documentation in a timely manner.

Students who exceed 40 hours and reach a benchmarks of 100 hours or greater will be recognized at the Senior Awards Night.

Students are currently required to pass twenty-two units of study and pass five state exams as a minimum requirement. In addition, students are now required to complete forty hours of community service learning as part of the requirements for a Putnam Valley High School diploma. (See the PVHS Student Handbook for specific graduation requirements).

Being an \*active member in a school club or sports teams benefits our school community and gives many opportunities to enhance the overall quality and atmosphere of the school. This participation also enriches the individual by allowing the student to act as a positive role model (ambassador), learn team management skills, demonstrate responsibility and commitment, work cooperatively with others, develop communication skills, and provide a service or safe entertainment/recreation for our community citizens.

The students in our school community contribute to the quality of life at Putnam Valley High School. Therefore, students will receive 1 hour of service learning credit towards their service-learning requirement upon completion of all documentation for each club or sport they belong to. No more than half of the total service learning hours (20 hours) can be acquired through clubs and sport participation. Remaining hours may be satisfied within the school community by serving/working during free periods, tutoring, mentoring, etc. or by seeking service opportunities in the greater community.

\*An active participant is one who participates in at least 75% of all club/team meetings, practices and events. Additional service learning hours can be earned if your club or team schedules activities or events above and beyond the regularly schedule meetings to benefit a third party. Determination of what is considered above and beyond is left to the discretion of the coach/advisor.

### **Procedure**

**All required forms and the Approved Organization/Agency List are available on the PVCSD website.**

Students should review and select community service learning experiences from the **Approved Organization/Agency List** available on the District Website. If a student chooses an alternative location or format for his/her community service other than those listed, the student should complete a Community Service Learning Proposal Form (attached). This should be submitted (electronically preferred) to the Community Service Learning Coordinator (Mr. Oliverio) for approval prior to doing the community service, in order to obtain HS credit for the hours.

Students are responsible for :

- contacting the site supervisor, arranging and completing the community service learning activity
- completing the Community Service Learning Declaration and Reflection Form
- obtaining all necessary signatures
- submitting a hardcopy to the Coordinator