



Service-Learning

Studies show that Oklahoma currently faces a large work skills gap. In 2016, approximately half (46 percent) of the Oklahoma workforce had either attained only a high school diploma or dropped out of high school altogether. However, by 2025, 77 percent of Oklahoma jobs will require some form of education beyond high school. This is why it is important more than ever to provide students with high-quality work-based experiences. (Oklahoma works)

WBL takes many forms and often includes experiences such as: internships, job shadowing, and service-learning. “High-quality work-based learning experiences pair young people with mentors who show them how to solve real-world problems, cultivate professional skills, shoulder adult responsibilities, build workplace relationships, identify interests and aptitudes, and make good decisions about careers and college.” (The Southern Regional Education Board)

WHAT IS SERVICE-LEARNING?

Service-Learning allows students to learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet actual community needs and that are coordinated in collaboration with the school and community (National and Community Service Act of 1990). This type of experience can be applied to a student’s academic and personal life. Benefits from service-learning include:

- Advocacy service-learning experiences allow students to create, educate, or increase public awareness on a topic that impacts the community at large.
- Direct service-learning experiences allow students to have face-to-face involvement with service projects that directly impact individuals that receive the service.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

When creating service-learning projects it is important to make sure that this opportunity supports a student’s Individual Career Academic Plan (ICAP). A service-learning project is successful when it is flexible and provides all students the opportunity to participate in workforce, mentorship, and leadership activities. Consider using a [planning document](#) to ensure that you create an equitable program that is able to yield successful outcomes, remain on schedule, and create equitable opportunities. A few steps creating a successful service-learning project include:

- Consider creating a bank of community partners to eliminate the need to identify new partners every year. Partners should represent diverse industries that allow for multiple projects over time.

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- Similar to a student's ICAP, this process should be student-led. Consider creating opportunities for students to break into groups and divide roles.
- Allow students to choose a project from your “project bank” that connects to their passions and interests. Students can be separated into groups according to their career survey results, personal interests, or other attributes.

IMPLEMENTATION EXAMPLES

Classroom Integration

When designing a service-learning project remember it is best practice to connect to students' career interests. If you decide to integrate your projects into core instruction, design experiences to address Oklahoma Academic Standards for Reading, Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. Additionally, projects can involve elements of fine arts and physical education, and health. Other project considerations include:

- Critical thinking skills develop as content is learned
- Application of knowledge and skills to the real-world problem makes learning relevant and fun

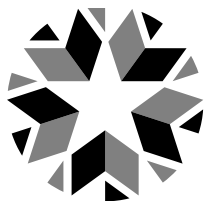
Afterschool / Out - of School Time Integration

Making service-learning a part of out-of-school time gives youth new opportunities to become leaders, thinkers, and problem-solvers. Through projects, students get more engaged in their communities and add their voice to discussions about local issues.

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RECOMMENDED ACTION STEPS

- Districts should consider sending business partnership [letters](#) and [agreements](#) to their local businesses or chambers of commerce.
- K-12 school districts can initiate or continue relationships with their local tribal nations by contacting appropriate tribal leaders. This [helpful guide](#) shows appropriate leaders to contact at each Oklahoma Tribal Educational Agency.
- Consider using a resource for students to reflect upon their work-based learning (WBL) experiences to show how WBL can help achieve their career goals. Each ICAP online tool will have a section to provide this information, encourage students to add as much detail as possible.
- Consider [increasing access](#) to effective college and career advisors or counselors.
- Consider using service-learning as a [bridge](#) between the classroom and local civic barriers.



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