



Massachusetts State Scholars Work-Based and Service Learning

To support the State Scholars Initiative's goal of preparing students for postsecondary success, students in Massachusetts are required to demonstrate work-based or service learning experience that has helped them acquire the skills they will need in college and career. These are "applied" skills that complement the academic knowledge students gain in their classroom studies and help them understand the relevance of these competencies in the workplace and community. State Scholars schools designate a guidance counselor, teacher, and/or administrator who will connect students with available resources, approve a student's plan, and certify that it has been completed and meets the standards expected of a State Scholar.

Work-Based Learning experiences are activities at the high school level that involve structured worksite experiences utilizing the Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan.

Work-Based Learning experiences may include:

- Internships (paid or unpaid)
- Cooperative education placements
- Rotations within specific industry sectors
- Other career exploration activities at the workplace (including part time jobs) where progress can be benchmarked through the implementation of the Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan available at:
<http://www.skillslibrary.com/wbl.htm>

Service Learning is a teaching method that engages young people in solving problems within their schools and communities as part of their academic studies or other type of intentional learning activity. Service-learning helps students master important curriculum content by making meaningful connections between what they are studying and its many applications. Service-learning also helps young people develop a range of service skills, from acts of kindness and caring, to community stewardship, to civic action. Additional information is available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/csl/>.

The Massachusetts Department of Education, one of the three State Scholars partners in Massachusetts, will provide advisory support to State Scholars schools implementing this component of the State Scholars Core Course of Study. For assistance, contact:

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WORK-BASED LEARNING MODELS:

While there are variety of Work and Learning Models connected to career and academic development at different levels of intensity, the common denominator for all internships, cooperative education placements and other quality work-based learning experiences is the Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan (WBLP). The WBLP is a diagnostic, goal setting and performance-based tool designed to drive employability skill development and productivity on the job. The WBLP can stand alone to organize any worksite placement or be connected to career and academic development. For examples of Work and Learning Models or to see more details about Connecting Activities Work and Learning definitions, please visit: <http://skillslibrary.org/mstc/qualityworkandlearning.pdf>

Work and Learning Model: Diversified Learning Experience Program

Grade: 12

Content-Area(s): Career Exploration, Workplace Skills

Brief Description:

Southwick High School's Diversified Learning Experience (DLE) Program provides students with valuable work experience and the opportunity to gain competencies essential to success in the workplace. Once admitted to the program, students are matched with placement opportunities. A wide variety of local businesses and service organizations provide placements in career areas including animal care, computer services, photography, business, childcare and more. The program coordinator meets with students, parents, and worksite supervisors to explain the program and the expectations for students. The Massachusetts Work-Based Learning Plan is used to communicate the job description and skills to be learned, and to drive student productivity and learning at the worksite, assess level of student skill and knowledge, and measure job performance. Students have release time from school in order to participate in their placements. Students also spend a part of this release time in related classroom instruction that helps to develop an understanding of the essential personal and interpersonal skills necessary for job success.

Work and Learning Model: Classroom at the Workplace

Grades: 11-12

Content-Area(s): English Language Arts, Mathematics

Brief Description:

Classroom at the Workplace, coordinated by the Boston Private Industry Council, is designed to improve students' literacy and math skills while providing them valuable work experience through structured (paid) internships. Content in English Language Arts and mathematics is taught through the context of student internship placements. During the school year, students work between two to four days per week after school while participating in academic instruction during the school day. During the summer, students receive 90 minutes a day of intensive academic instruction in ELA and/or mathematics for seven weeks at the workplace while employers provide full-time paid employment and implement the MA Work-Based Learning Plan. Students work for major Boston employers in health care, financial services and other key industries that support their chosen career pathways.

Outcomes/Key Findings:

With more flexibility and individual attention, teachers develop methods and strategies to help reach more students. Some key findings from past summer programs include:

- 94% retention rate
- 88% attendance rate
- 93% of math students increased their scores from pre to post-test results
- On average, ELA students increased 1.4 reading grade levels
- 98% of students rated their classroom experience as either "excellent" or "good"

Through this project, students clearly see a relevant connection between education and their career aspirations while simultaneously acquiring academic, technical/technological and workplace skills.

SERVICE LEARNING EXAMPLES:

Service-learning can be embedded in an existing course as a strategy for teaching the curriculum, or it can be a stand-alone course where individual students or small groups of students work on various projects. These projects involve researching relevant community issues and possible solutions, designing a service project, implementing the project and assessing the impact of their service on the community.

For examples, or to see more details about the projects listed below, please visit the Department of Education's website for **Service Learning Best Practices** at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/csl/practices.asp>

Project Title: Free Box Project

Content-Area(s): English, Language Arts

Grades: 9-12

Community Need: Human Needs (hunger)

Brief Description of CSL Project:

Students developed the Free Box Project in which they built large, sturdy boxes for non-perishable food donations, and spent many hours promoting the boxes as a sustainable, low-maintenance program for delivering surplus food from people who have more than enough to those in need. The program benefited patrons of the Northampton Survival Center, mostly homeless families and individuals, who are in need of food and other items.

Students learned how to design, implement, and analyze a community needs assessment. They also learned how to write a grant proposal and a press release. They gained experience public speaking as they promoted the project in the media and at various meetings and events.

The Community Need the Project is Meeting:

As part of the students' community needs assessment, they surveyed a variety of community leaders and residents. Their analysis of survey results showed that many people in Northampton do not have enough food to eat. As a result, students felt hunger was the most critical and highest priority of all needs that were considered and decided to design a project to address this community need.

Service Component:

Students constructed and placed sturdy, large boxes at highly visible locations around town. They promoted the Free Box Program, encouraging community residents to place food in the boxes for pick-up by the Northampton Survival Center. The Center distributes the food to needy families and individuals. Over time, thousands of individuals and families could potentially benefit from these food donations.

Project Title: Bog Ecosystem

Grades: 11-12

Content-Area(s): Mathematics, Science and Technology

Community Need: Environment

Brief Description of CSL Project:

Over the course of the year, students researched, planned, and constructed a bog ecosystem on the school's nature trail. This unusual ecosystem complements other habitats that students can study. Students also wrote a field guide and described several bog plants. This information will be shared with schools on the campus which use the nature trail.

How Youth Voice Helps Shape Project:

Students leadership and planning of this project allowed for the creation of future projects along the school's nature trail, which the students at the school value as a school resource. During the project, students were active participants in their projects, designing, implementing, and reflecting upon their experience.

Connections with Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks:

Bog plants, such as the carnivorous pitcher plant, have many unusual adaptations that enable them to catch and digest insects. Animals are a source of protein and therefore nitrogen which is often deficient in a bog. These plants will be featured in the bog and described in field guides generated by these students. Themes such as matter cycling, energy transfer, and food webs were studied.