

## Florida State Law

Updated 2021

1003.497 Service learning.—

(1) The Department of Education shall encourage school districts to initiate, adopt, expand, and institutionalize service-learning programs, activities, and policies in kindergarten through grade 12. Service learning refers to a student-centered, research-based teaching and learning strategy that engages students in meaningful service activities in their schools or communities. Service-learning activities are directly tied to academic curricula, standards, and course, district, or state assessments. Service-learning activities foster academic achievement, character development, civic engagement, and career exploration and enable students to apply curriculum content, skills, and behaviors taught in the classroom.

(2) Upon request of any school district that chooses to implement service-learning programs, activities, or policies, the department shall provide assistance in locating, leveraging, and utilizing available or alternative financial resources that will assist school districts or teachers desiring to receive training and other resources to develop and administer service-learning programs or activities. School districts are encouraged to include kindergarten through grade 12 service-learning programs and activities in proposals they submit to the department under federal entitlement grants and competitive state and federal grants administered through the department.

(3)(a) The department shall develop and adopt elective service-learning courses for inclusion in middle and high school course code directories, which will allow additional opportunities for students to engage in service learning. School districts are encouraged to provide support for the use of service learning at any grade level as an instructional strategy to address appropriate areas of state education standards for student knowledge and performance.

(b) The hours that high school students devote to course-based service-learning activities may be counted toward meeting community service requirements for high school graduation and community service requirements for participation in the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship Program. School districts are encouraged to include service learning as part of any course or activity required for high school graduation and to include and accept service-learning activities and hours in requirements for academic awards, especially those awards that currently include community service as a criterion or selection factor.

History.—s. 2, ch. 2009-222.