

# **REPORT ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMMUNITY SERVICE PILOT PROGRAM**

## **Summary Recommendations**

**January 14, 2009**

### **Background**

P.L. 2005, Chapter 220, was enacted to implement a Community Service Pilot Program for high school juniors. The purpose of this program, overseen by the Department of Education, was to evaluate the possible establishment of a community service requirement by implementing a three-year pilot program with 30 participating high schools representing all regions of the state. This report provides recommendations on the advisability of the pilot program's continuation and expansion to all high schools within the state.

The Community Service Pilot Program (September 2005-December 2008) yielded important quantitative and qualitative data regarding feasible structures that make implementation of a community service requirement for New Jersey public school students a promising one.

A significant finding was that the provisions of P.L. 2005, Chapter 220, did not require schools participating in the pilot to provide the data necessary to answer the key question posed by the central intent of the law: *Would the establishment of a service requirement for high school students provide young people with an opportunity to help them mature into responsible citizens with strong social and moral values?* (S-1598, 1.e.)

In addition, data reveal that only 10 of the original 29 pilot high schools/districts remained in the pilot over the course of the three years, despite technical assistance from the NJDOE. Restrictions on grade level participation to high school juniors, and the requirement stipulated in the statute that all service activities take place off campus and outside of school hours, made the program difficult to administer for most participating schools. Further, challenges in adhering to child labor laws, and increased costs in administering the pilot program may have accounted for the high attrition rate. It is suggested that each of these concerns be addressed before expanding the service requirement to all New Jersey high schools in order to ensure successful implementation.

### **Positive Outcomes of the Pilot**

Despite implementation difficulties, the experiences of individual pilot schools participating in the three-year pilot program resulted in significant positive outcomes that mirror national research on community service-learning. Community service-learning:

- Has a positive effect on the development of students' interpersonal skills and the ability to relate to culturally diverse groups;

- Assists in developing students' sense of civic and social responsibility and citizenship skills;
- Enhances student acquisition of academic knowledge and skills;
- Reduces student engagement in "risk" behaviors; and
- Promotes student motivation and engagement in learning as well as school attendance.

### **Recommendations**

Based on these findings, the NJDOE recommends that the original pilot program specifications/structures be revisited and a Phase Two Pilot Enhancement Program be implemented before expanding the service requirement to all high schools in the state. The Phase Two Pilot Enhancement Program would be specifically geared to reflect suggested modifications as well as lessons learned from the data collected in the initial pilot, the strongest of which is to allow *flexibility* in implementation of community service activities. As such, it is advisable that if legislation is enacted to extend the pilot, such legislation include the following provisions:

1. Expand the term "Community Service" to include "Service-Learning." Over ten years of educational research clearly indicate that the most significant student learning and educator commitment to sustained service programs is the result of aligning service to core curriculum content and instruction. The proposed regulations for high school redesign define service-learning as an alternative strategy for personalizing the educational experience. Service learning thereby serves as a means of support for the personalization process.
2. Begin service activities with high school freshman and extend activities throughout the high school experience. Allowing for flexibility over an extended period of time will support a variety of approaches to student involvement and program design. In addition, the time requirement should be increased from 15 hours to at least 20 hours over the four years of high school. Recent research has shown that projects must be of sufficient duration to have an impact on student social, civic, and character development.
3. Link student service meaningfully to the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards to allow for some service activities to be conducted in school and on school time. This also enables community agencies and schools to develop school/community partnerships.
4. Involve a smaller number of high schools in the Phase Two Pilot Enhancement Program in various regions of the state, ideally, three schools in each of the three regions, committed to an evaluation process that provides substantive information to inform the implementation of a state-wide service requirement.

5. Require the Phase Two Pilot to be a joint responsibility of the NJDOE and the New Jersey Department of State (NJDOS), which houses New Jersey's Learn and Serve America Program.
6. Link the Phase Two Pilot with the 2009 Institute for Service-Learning Leadership to provide access to rich technical assistance. The NJDOS intends to conduct the Institute for Service-Learning Leadership in conjunction with its partner, the Center for Social and Character Development at Rutgers University, under grant provisions of the Federal Corporation for National and Community Service.
7. Include the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Wage and Hours as a partner to ensure that the pilot is in compliance with all relevant federal and state child labor laws and regulations.

### **Report Summary**

The ten high schools that remained in the pilot for three years as well as the other nineteen schools that had participated earlier, all acknowledged the positive outcomes of including a community service/service learning requirement for high school students. However, lack of funding and logistical barriers prevented the schools from successfully implementing the pilot program. Recommendations include implementing a two-year Phase Two Pilot Enhancement Program with nine participating high schools and a required data collection component to determine strategies that are most effective for implementing a statewide pilot.

The following appendices include specific information on the participating schools and the types of community service students engaged in as part of the Community Service Pilot Program.

- Appendix A includes a summary of the school projects reported by the participating schools in the 2006-2007 school year (2005 - 2006 school year was utilized as a planning period for districts to develop a community service plan for approval by local districts).
- Appendix B includes a summary of the school projects reported by the participating schools in the 2007-2008 school year.
- Appendix C includes the list of schools that initially committed to participate in the Community Service Pilot Program (2005).

<b>Appendix A</b>			
<b>Reported Community Service Programs 2006-2007 School Year</b>			
<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>EXAMPLES OF SERVICE</b>	<b>CONTENT AREA CONNECTION</b>	<b>% JUNIORS INVOLVED (15 HOURS)</b>
Bridgeton High School	Community Improvement Projects *Adopt a Road *Soup Kitchen Volunteers	Social Studies	80%
Burlington City High School	Senior Citizen Projects *Holiday Dinner  Special Olympics  Cancer Society Volunteers	Career, Consumer and Family Life Skills  Health  Health	52%
Charter Tech-Performing Arts school	Senior Citizen Project *Perform at nursing homes  Mentoring Program *Storytelling for elementary students  Families in Grief Project *Outreach Club	Performing Arts  Language arts  Health	Not Reported
Delran	Cancer Prevention *Relay for Life Fundraiser  Care for Oversea Soldiers *Operation Cookie *Letter Writing Campaign *Gift cards and DVD's for soldiers	Health  U.S. History II	98%
Glassboro High School	Senior citizen Project *Senior Citizen Prom Animal Welfare *Animal shelter volunteer Mentoring Program *Stranger Danger Program for elementary students	Social Studies  Science  Health	35%

<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>EXAMPLES OF SERVICE</b>	<b>CONTENT AREA CONNECTION</b>	<b>% JUNIORS INVOLVED (15 HOURS)</b>
High Point Regional High School	Senior Citizen Project *Volunteer nursing home Hunger Prevention Project *Donate food to needy	Social Studies	99%
Hudson Career Center and Vo-Tech School	Refurbishing of Computers	Technology	45 students at risk of failing
Hunterdon Poly Tech	Senior Citizen Project (Day of Renewal) *Culinary students (lunches) *Beauty School students (hair styling, hair cuts) *Graphic Arts students (brochures)	Career Education	66%
Randolph High School	Senior Citizen Prom *Organize Fund Raising (\$10,000) *Provided Transportation *Facilitate Event	Career, Consumer, and Family Life Skills	50%
West Orange	Diversity Project *Community Jazz Festival Breast Cancer Awareness *Soccer Fund Raiser Healthy Heart Awareness *Heart Walk Recreation Program *Special needs students Tutor Program *Elementary School	Civics/Arts  Health  Physical Education  Physical Education  Language Arts	Not Reported

<b>Appendix B</b> <b>Reported Community Service Programs</b> <b>2007-2008 School Year</b>			
<b>SCHOOL</b>	<b>EXAMPLES OF SERVICE</b>	<b>CONTENT AREA CONNECTION</b>	<b>% JUNIORS INVOLVED (15 HOURS)</b>
Abraham Clark High school	Helping children in Need: *Mentoring Program (Middle School students) *Autism Awareness (Walk-A-Thon) (Autism Foundation) *Cultural Awareness (Intergenerational Day)  Help Hungry Program *Work at food bank  Advocate Blood Donations *Work with Red Cross	Social Studies  Health  Social Studies  Culinary Arts	10%
Bridgeton High School	Building a Better Bridgeton *Adopt a Road  Mentoring Program *Elementary students *Big Brothers	Social Studies  Health	80%
Burlington City High School	Worked with specific populations in need: *Senior Citizens *Rehabilitation of Patients *Special Needs children *Cancer Patients	Social Studies Science Health Health	60%
Delran	Cancer Prevention *Relay for Life Fundraiser (Raised \$160,000)  Care for Overseas Soldiers *Operation Cookie *Letter Writing Campaign *Gift cards and DVD's for soldiers	Health  Social Studies	98%

SCHOOL	EXAMPLES OF SERVICE	CONTENT AREA CONNECTION	% JUNIORS INVOLVED (15 HOURS)
Delsea Regional High School	<p>Helping Children in need *Work with Robins Nest, Key Club and Boys and Girls Club</p> <p>Cancer Awareness *Work with Emmanuel Cancer Foundation *Fund Raising</p> <p>Environmental Club *Beach Clean up Project</p>	<p>Health</p> <p>Health</p> <p>Science</p>	95%
Glassboro High School	<p>Help Children in Need: *Work with Boys and Girls Club, Robin's Nest Fundraisers *Walk-A-Thons</p>	<p>Health</p> <p>Social Studies</p>	50%
High Point Regional High School	<p>Community Projects: Animal Welfare *Animal Shelters Senior Citizens *Nursing Homes *Elderly neighbor project Hunger Prevention Project *Food bank volunteers Fundraisers *Walk-A-Thons Housing *Habitat for Humanity</p>	All content areas	20 hours required by the district for all students
Hudson County School of Technology	<p>Projects Concerning Poverty: *Homeless shelters *Food Banks *Habitat for Humanity *Holiday Charity Senior Citizen Projects *Nursing home visitation Animal Welfare *Donate time at Animal Shelters</p>	<p>Social Studies</p> <p>Career Education Performing Arts</p> <p>Science</p>	20 hours required by the district for all students



SCHOOL	EXAMPLES OF SERVICE	CONTENT AREA CONNECTION	% JUNIORS INVOLVED (15 HOURS)
Manasquan	Environmental Project *Clean Ocean Action  Hunger Prevention Project *Monmouth Food Bank  Cancer Awareness *Relay for Life  Children with Disabilities *Camp Fatima	Science  Health  Health  Health	20%
Randolph High School	Senior Citizen Program *Read to seniors  Environmental Program *Produced Clean Air DVD *Monitor erosion/pollution	Language Arts  Health Science	69%
West Orange	Cancer Prevention *Relay for Life *Pink Tie Ball  Food for Needy *Food Pantry *Food/Soup Kitchen  Provide Gowns for Senior Prom *Underprivileged girls *Catherine's Closet	Health  Social Studies Career, Consumer and Family Life Skills  Career, Consumer and Family Life Skills	20%



<b>Appendix C</b>	
<b>Community Service Pilot Program</b>	
<b>Schools Initially Participating in the Pilot Program – 10/6/05</b>	
<b>COUNTY</b>	<b>SCHOOL/DISTRICT</b>
<b>Atlantic</b>	<b>ChARTer Tech for Performing Arts</b>
<b>Bergen</b>	<b>Hasbrouck Heights (FG)</b>
	<b>Bogota (DE)</b>
	<b>Memorial/Elmwood Park (CD)</b>
<b>Burlington</b>	<b>Burlington City (B)</b>
	<b>Delran (FG)</b>
<b>Camden</b>	<b>Sterling (DE)</b>
	<b>Lindenwold (B)</b>
<b>Cape May</b>	<b>Cape May County HS/Special Services</b>
<b>Cumberland</b>	<b>Vineland HS South (A)</b>
<b>Essex</b>	<b>Verona (I)</b>
<b>Gloucester</b>	<b>Glassboro (B)</b>
<b>Hudson</b>	<b>Create Charter/Jersey City (B)</b>
	<b>Hudson Co. Tech Career/Jersey City</b>
<b>Hunterdon</b>	<b>South Hunterdon (GH)</b>
<b>Mercer</b>	<b>West Windsor-Plainsboro South (J)</b>
<b>Middlesex</b>	<b>Sayreville War Memorial (DE)</b>
	<b>Highland Park (GH)</b>
<b>Monmouth</b>	<b>Manasquan (GH)</b>
<b>Morris</b>	<b>Roxbury (GH)</b>
<b>Ocean</b>	<b>Barnegat (CD)</b>

COUNTY	SCHOOL/DISTRICT
Passaic	Passaic (A)
Salem	Salem County Alt. HS
Somerset	North Plainfield (DE)
Sussex	High Point (DE)
Union	Abraham Clark/Roselle (B)
	Union County Magnet HS
	Scotch Plains/Fanwood (I)
Warren	North Warren (FG)