

CODE: IHAKA

SERVICE LEARNING and COMMUNITY SERVICE

Service Learning

The School Committee believes that service learning experiences extend the curriculum and foster civic responsibility. Service learning provides students with an opportunity to explore career possibilities, recognize the relevance of what they are learning in the classroom, and make a positive contribution to the community. Service learning promotes confidence and self-esteem and may contribute to student achievement.

The School Committee believes that service learning programs are most effective when based on the following:

Meets Genuine Community Needs

A meaningful service learning project is one that meets the genuine needs of the community and has real consequences while offering the opportunity to apply new skills and knowledge.

Student Voice and Choice

Service learning projects are student-driven. The projects require thinking, initiative, and problem solving as they demonstrate responsibility and decision-making.

Collaborative Efforts

Students participate in the development of community partnerships and share responsibility with community members, parents, organization and other students in completing the service learning project.

Civic Responsibility

When students have a role in improving society, working for social justice and caring for the environment, they experience and understand the concept of democracy. Students recognize how participation and ability to respond to authentic needs improves the quality of life in the community, which may lead to lifelong ethic of service and civic engagement.

At least once during their high school education, students at Traip Academy will engage in a service learning project.

Community Service

Community service is work performed in service to one's community. Students in grades 9-12 must accrue a minimum of 10 hours of service each year. Community service is part of the Traip Academy Program of Studies and it is a Traip Academy graduation requirement.

The benefits of having a community service component to the Traip Academy graduation requirements are numerous. By requiring students to complete community service, the District is helping students to gain a heightened awareness of the issues in their community. With the frenetic pace of a teenager's life, it is important for Traip Academy students to take a moment from time to time to take the blinders off and become aware of life around them. With social networking, people are sometimes more aware of the global

community than they are of the community in which they live. Engaging in community service can help to cultivate compassion and understanding for others.

Requiring students to complete community service also helps to build people skills. Communicating appropriately and constructively with adults in the community is a skill that is all too often lost on high school students. Along those same lines, engaging in community service also helps students to meet new people with similar and differing interests. There is no better way to meet people than to mobilize around a common interest.

Finally, community service has the potential to help students utilize a special skill like using technology or a special talent like dance. Serving others in a deliberate way can also help students explore potential career options. Many times, community service may lead to potential part-time employment. It is a great way for students to get their foot in the door.

The community service requirement may be completed independently or in small groups. Advisors will regularly monitor student progress toward the community service requirement. The service must be executed while the student is enrolled at Traip Academy (including weekends, school vacations, and summer break). Just about any community service project initiated by a non-profit organization is acceptable, but the final determination will be made by a student’s advisor with consultation by the school administration. Pre-approval of the project is urged since not all proposals will qualify.

In extenuating circumstances, the Superintendent of Schools may authorize the principal to modify or waive the community service requirement.

Cross Reference: IKF – Graduation Requirements

Adopted: July 5, 1994

Revised: November 6, 2012
December 1, 2020