

Student Service-Learning Planner

Primary Subject: US History

Grade Level: 8

Additional Subject Area Connections: ELA

Project Title: Constitutional Rights: A Bill of Rights Issue

Type(s) of Service: Advocacy

School/Teacher(s): Leonardtown Middle School /
Drew Willard and Tammy Payne

Maryland State Curriculum Indicators

Content Title:
Examine the impact of government decisions on individual rights and responsibilities in the United States. (1.C.1.a)

- Examine the Principles of due process (1.C.3.a.b)
- Use formal writing to persuade (6.A.3.a.f)
- Identify an issue that requires further study (6.C.2.a.f)
- Use current events to answer questions (6.G.3.a.e)

Maryland College and Career Readiness Standards

Content Title:
Write arguments focused on *discipline-specific content* in which they

1. Analyzing the development of central assertions in texts, including their relationship to supporting ideas (RI/RI.8.2).
2. Evaluating the relationship between the overall argument in a text and the particular claims advanced — including evaluating the claims and reasoning for their validity, relevance, and sufficiency (RI/RI.8.8).

Project Description:

Students will research an issue involving the interpretation of one of the 10 Amendments in the Bill of Rights. They will then advocate for or against the current interpretation of the Amendment and its application to a current issue. Students will write a persuasive essay for or against the issue. Issues may include any hot button topic from the Bill of Rights or the “Rights of Students” Debate, including: Death Penalty, gun control, locker searches, school prayer, or eminent domain. Letters may be sent to the appropriate local/state government official upon review of the teacher.

Potential Service-Learning Action Experiences:

- Writing a letter to government officials (Active participation in local/state government)

**Alignment with Maryland's
Best Practices of Service-Learning:
Constitutional Rights**

1. Meet a recognized community need

Building informed citizens who are able to think critically about political and social issues is very important to the future of our nation.

Students will be researching a current controversial issue and developing their own personal platforms for their political futures, and will be sharing those thoughts with others.

2. Achieve curricular objectives through service-learning

Students will receive mastery of writing skill objectives and Social Studies objectives regarding the US Bill of Rights and Constitution/Participating in Government.

Students will master the indicator 6.A.3.a.f, using formal writing to persuade. All portions of the project will be done in Social Studies class, Social Studies teachers have already consulted ELA teachers for any input/advice.

3. Reflect throughout the service-learning experience

Students will reflect on their feelings about their “hot button” issue by completing the writing assignment, examples may include Prezi, iMovie, or Storyboard, and will also have to comment on the opinions of several other students as well.

Students will present their ideas through formal presentations, where after the presentations others will ask questions and they will defend their stance.

4. Develop student responsibility

- Each student will find a topic that is relevant to them
- They will find 2-4 reliable sources concerning their right and annotate each article
- They will develop an outline of their argument to use to present their information to their respective classes
- They will present a 2 minute presentation to the class explaining and supporting their findings
- Each student will compose a letter to their appropriate local government entity expressing their concern.

5. Establish community partnerships

Through their letters/speeches, students will make contact with local government and school officials regarding questions they may have about the constitutionality of certain issue they have in question. All letters will be reviewed with school administration prior to sending out to the various officials.

We are collaborating with the Media Specialist at our school as students gather, analyze and evaluate sources to help improve their digital literacy.

6. Plan ahead for service-learning

Our plan was developed during our common planning time, and materials were developed and shared through/during that time as well.

Students will contribute to the planning of the project by:

- Each student will find a topic that is relevant to them
- They will find 2-4 reliable sources concerning their right and annotate each article
- They will develop an outline of their argument to use to present their information to their respective classes
- They will present a 2 minute presentation to the class explaining and supporting their findings
- Each student will compose a letter to their appropriate local government entity expressing their concern.

7. Equip students with knowledge and skills needed for service

Students were versed in the skills of participating in forum discussions, researching, outlining, speechmaking and letter writing. They will also be able to identify the meaning and interpretation of the Constitution as well as the Bill of Rights.