



Community Building and Extracurriculars

Expert Advisory Panel 2: Support to Address the Whole Child Experience
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School and Community Engagement



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What is Service Learning / Community Engagement?

Teaching and learning strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities.

National Service Learning Clearinghouse

Key Attributes

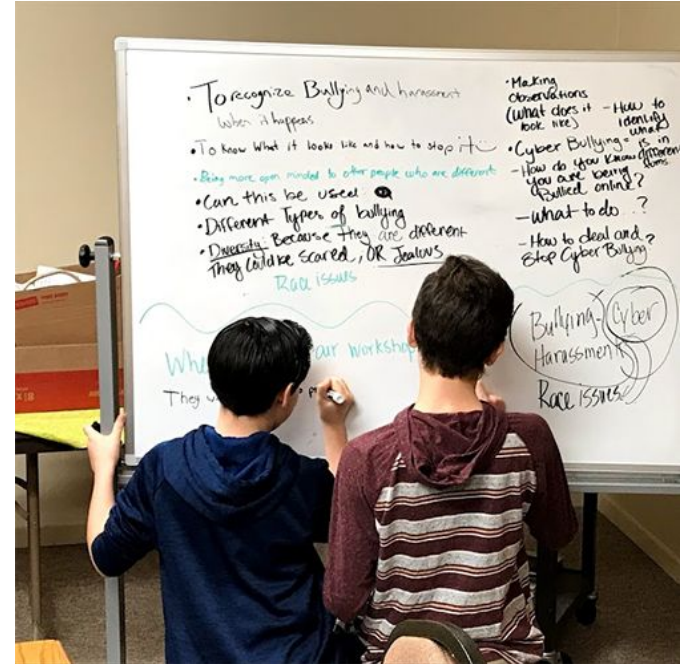
- *Experiential and application based*
- *Students link personal and social development with academic development*
- *Learning occurs in cycles of action and reflection*
- *Student direct their own learning*
- *21st century skills developed: empathy, leadership, collaboration, creative problem-solving*

More references

- [What is Service Learning or Community Engagement?](#) (Vanderbilt University)
- [National Youth Leadership Council](#)

Why Now

- The pandemic has led many children feeling isolated.
- Given personal circumstances, not all children have access to helping relationships, peers, emotional support, and access to referral services that would otherwise enable them to thrive.
- Children learn better with the support of strong families and institutions.
- **While schools are closed, students still want to be helpful and support their communities.**
- Many young people are asking what they can, cannot, should or should not be doing in relation to service learning.
- When children feel supported, they in turn support the individuals and institutions in their surrounding communities.



What Does The Research Tell Us

- Communities can provide schools with a context and environment that can reinforce the **values, culture,** and learning the schools provide for their students (Ada, 1994; Bricker, 1989; Nieto, 1992).
- Communities have the potential to **extend a variety of opportunities to students and to their families** – social, cultural, and vocational (Bell & Sigsworth, 1987; Hull, 1994).
- Diverse middle and high school youth, from those living in affluence to those living in poverty, must be given opportunities to engage in community service and take part in dialogue; walk together in peaceful protests; problem-solve in their local communities; and add their voices to the solutions. We must allow them to be formidable leaders. ([Roots of Action](#)).
 - Parents, educators, and community leaders have a responsibility to help young people **make meaning** about the last few months in order for them to become self aware and drivers of positive action.
 - **Students need to see themselves as not being helpless, but instead, leaders.**
 - **Educators want to their students to be civically and socially engaged.**

What Do We Hear

- Students Report
 -
- Educators
 - Currently remote learning is completion-based and lacks curiosity, purpose, and creativity

What Does The Research Tell Us

- Benefits of service are countless: It **fosters empathy**, ameliorates depression, nurtures a sense of community, and promotes a more just and sustainable society.
- US Board of Education issued a [report](#) urging colleges to make **civic learning a national priority**
- National Commission on Military, National and Public Service released a [report](#) last month urging Congress to **revitalize civic education in K-12 schools.**([link](#))
- Children need a place to **channel and process their anger and frustrations** and community service allows for them to engage in meaningful ways - [Flowers for Floyd Project](#)

Teen launches 'Flowers for Floyd' campaign



The nationwide unrest left the 16-year-old unsettled to the point he felt he had to do something about it. (Source: WNCN, CNN) (GIM)
Published: Jun. 5, 2020 at 6:21 PM EDT

Service learning allows students to strengthen their empathy and build stronger ties to the community.

Approach Considerations

- Health, Safety, Social Distance
- Asynchronous and online learning environments
- Themed topics and challenges that engage students
- Experience helps student with meaning making (relevant)
- Offline engagement (education equity), hands on, engaging
- Prescriptive enough
- Mentorship (HS students), low burden for parents
- Focused projects, clear timelines/deliverables tied to curriculum
- Parent engagement - parent led, supported classes
- Community engagement - speakers, informed empathy
- Costs?? E.g., supplies



**Interviews conducted by Design for Change
USA (30 Students and Teachers)

Possible Ideas

- Family volunteering opportunities offer a great way to practice civic responsibility together.
- Guest speakers from the community
- Students can engage in indirect and advocacy service learning projects
- Examples from #DoGoodFromHome: gardening, planting trees, recycling, delivering food, games/activities, cards for the elderly or essential workers, **servicing school community**
- [Example of K-12 schools response to service learning during COVID](#)



Impact

A sense of community

- Schools enjoy the informed support of families and community members.
- Families experience many opportunities to contribute to their children's education.
- Communities look forward to an educated, responsible workforce.

Mental health

- Boosts in morale
- Heightened engagement in their work
- Feeling that their work will net results





Virtual Extended Day Programs During School Closure

How were we successful ?

Ellen Lench

Overview of Brookline Extended Day Programs

- **Brookline Extended Day Programs have been in existence for over 40 years**
- **All 8 Extended Day Programs are private, non-profit 5013c programs**
- **Each program is overseen by a volunteer parent Board of Directors**
- **All licensed through the state Department of Early Education and Care (EEC)**
- **On average we serve approximately 1,105 children per day (collectively)**
- **Together we employ a total of 140 staff members (almost all are part time with the exception of Directors and Assistant Directors)**
- **During school closure, 6 programs operated remotely, 2 were not**

Switching from In Person to Remote ED's

Extended Day staff planned a variety of age appropriate activities that could be offered remotely including:

- Pre recorded videos of things they could do at home, some examples are:
Indoor obstacle course, nature scavenger hunt, step by step guide to simple art projects, cooking and gardening projects
- Many downloadable activities designed by staff such as games, math and word challenges , draw alongs and puzzles
- Videos of staff read alouds, singing, sharing a nature walk of a collection they have

Zooming with Extended Day Staff

The **most popular** aspect of virtual extended days were the live Zooms that were offered by the teaching staff. Families received an email each day during the week notifying them what the daily activity was and what staff member would be leading it.

Offerings included structured and unstructured meetings with groups of children

Unstructured “hang outs” allowed kids to visit and socialize with one or two adults supervising and moderating the conversations.

Structured zooms were led by staff and had a definite focus to them (see next slide)

Popular Zoom Extracurricular Activities

The list of kids favorites included:

- Minecraft Club
- Dungeons & Dragons Club
- Dance Club
- Fantasy Sports Club
- Learning Sign Language
- Yoga and Stretching
- Music Club
- Exercise Club
- Active Games like Simon Says, Freeze Dance, Mad Libs ,Charades and Show & Tell

Family Feedback

Here is some of the feedback we received from our families regarding what worked well for them with Virtual Extended Day:

- Daily email and videos helped us feel connected
- Email came at the same time daily which helped us plan for the hours after school work was done
- Staff were patient and engaged with the kids from the beginning to the end of virtual extended day
- Small groups with live video worked really well for our children
- Clubs worked well because they were small and focused
- The daily constant helped us feel very connected
- It was so fun for my kids to have something to look forward to each day when there wasn't always much to look forward to!


Extended Days & Social Emotional Learning

Extended Days play a vital role in the social and emotional learning of school age children by:

- Providing ongoing opportunities for structured and unstructured play
- Allowing adults to serve as mentors and role models for young children
- Providing opportunities to strengthen problem solving skills
- Helping strengthen relationships between children and their peers
- Helping to increase children's self esteem, positive behaviors and academic successes.
- Although we all hope for a return to in person learning and after school, the extended day programs are all ready and willing to continue to support children's social and emotional development in any way we are able!

Kids Just Wanna Have Fun!





Panel 2

Extracurricular Activities

During Hybrid & Remote Learning

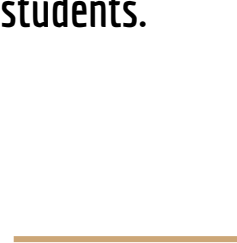
Rebecca Manor





While the pandemic has made pursuing extracurricular activities more difficult, it is by no means impossible!

Empowering high school students to use their creativity and help with extracurricular activities will create opportunities for *all* students.



Brookline High School has over 100 clubs. Many could be run *by* high school students *for* middle school and elementary school students.

<http://bhs.brookline.k12.ma.us/clubs--activities.html>

Some clubs, activities and events can be run at NO cost

- Book Clubs (high school student chooses book, parents order the book for their child)
- Walking Clubs (sign-up required, to limit number of participants)
- Obstacle Courses or Virtual “Races” (can be marked in advance by high school students so younger students to complete individually--with a website for students to share their times)
- Creative Writing Groups
- Virtual Music Lessons
- Tutoring
- Fundraisers

Other clubs and activities can be run with SOME cost

- Art Kits compiled, created, delivered and taught by high school students. Materials paid by parents (see “Summer-in-a-box” by JCC for an example)
- Students work with local businesses to create and deliver activity kits (Clayroom, Makery, Hip Stitch)
- Chess Clubs (played with outdoor chess sets)
- Large Yard Games



Possible Additional Cost

Brookline Public Schools could hire a camp director or Brookline Recreation to help:

- Train high school volunteers
- Guide students through the proposal process and approaching local businesses
- Guide students to work with The Garden Club of Brookline, Brookline Senior Center, and Parks & Recreation
- Ensure each proposed club, event, activity and fundraiser meets CDC guidelines

All we need is a platform/website!

- Parent/volunteer created
- High school students post their club, event or activity
- All offerings free of charge, with the exception of materials to be paid or provided by parents
- Website would require a sign-up sheet and and permission slip for each activity or club