



## **Service Learning and the Constitution**

### **Suggestions for the Study of Civics and United States Government and Citizenship**

#### Essential Ideas:

1. Popular Sovereignty
  - a. Develop a campaign for students to set up and participate in a school, class or local/national mock election.  
(<http://www.nationalmockelection.org/> )
  - b. Identify procedures and appropriate areas for student involvement in decision making in the school or classroom. Provide governmental models for them and record the results of the decisions.
  - c. Provide avenues for student participation in clubs and organizations.
  - d. Initiate or assist in a campaign to register voters.
2. Limited Government
  - a. Identify state agencies and their functions. Construct an awareness project to bring attention to these agencies and their functions for disenfranchised populations.
  - b. Gather data about an issue of eminent domain in your community. Analyze your findings and prepare a public report. Determine an appropriate audience (letter to the editor, report to an organization, etc.) and share the information.
3. Functions of the three branches
  - a. Executive
    - i. Identify federal programs existent in your school or district and make efforts to publicize them to appropriate populations and organizations. What issues do they address?
    - ii. Help coordinate a community event with the local law enforcement organization, such as a bicycle rodeo with the objective of promoting the use of bike helmets.
  - b. Legislative
    - i. Investigate a community problem and draft a proposal for legislation to solve it (Project Citizen  
<http://www.civiced.org/index.php?page=introduction> )
  - c. Judicial
    - i. Gather information about the different court systems in your community. Look at court records to survey issues of concern to the community. Provide a report of current court issues that can be addressed through Service Learning projects. Provide the report to student volunteer organizations in your school.

- ii. Participate in a mock trial. Explain the process to other students. Evaluate the effectiveness of the campaign by tracking instances of crime in the school or community.
- 4. Checks and Balances
  - a. Investigate administrative policies at your school or district. What other groups or organizations review efforts to carry them out? Provide a report or document to help students understand the review process and its outcomes and consequences.
  - b. Review public records of events at your school. Prepare a brief power point presentation on the value and purpose of good record keeping procedures. If there are no records available, create a journal account of the meetings and proceedings of an organization in your school.
- 5. Guaranteed Rights
  - a. Interview Immigrants and write their stories in a journal (<http://www.schools.utah.gov/curr/lifeskills/servicelearning/pdf/DocumentingImmigrationStories.pdf> )
  - b. Human Rights and Service Learning ([http://www.hrea.org/erc/Library/display\\_doc.php?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.hrea.org%2Fpubs%2FAIUSA-HREA-ServiceLearning.pdf&external=N](http://www.hrea.org/erc/Library/display_doc.php?url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.hrea.org%2Fpubs%2FAIUSA-HREA-ServiceLearning.pdf&external=N) )
- 6. The Function of the Courts
  - a. Organize a peer court in your school. Track disciplinary referrals after the court is implemented. (<http://education.occourts.org/GuiltyorNotGuilty.pdf> )
- 7. Federal, State, & Local relationships
  - a. Prepare a survey of tax services to determine the most appropriate providers for economically disadvantaged citizens.
  - b. Land, water, national parks, federal reserve
- 8. Compromise
  - a. Reflect both sides of a community issue. Identify the process steps for bringing the issue before an appropriate organization or institution (community council, student government, county commission, etc.). Inform the organizations and individuals on both sides of the issue about the steps needed to bring the issue to a forum for resolution.
- 9. Obligations of citizenship
  - a. Write a letter to a media organization expressing your opinion about the coverage of a particular news event.
  - b. Organize a campaign in support of an issue of public concern,
- 10. Respecting Differences
  - a. Devise a confidential method for students to report bullying or harassment ([http://www.tolerance.org/101\\_tools/school.html](http://www.tolerance.org/101_tools/school.html) )
  - b. Organize an event in which cultural differences are highlighted and celebrated to promote understanding in the school and community.
- 11. Economics and the Free Market

- a. Identify a struggling business in the community. Find resources to provide assistance for them. Work with them over a reasonable time period to increase their profits and likelihood of success.
12. Influence on the world
- a. Prepare support packages or materials for families of deployed soldiers.
  - b. Participate in an international relief effort.

#### Resources/Links

Constitutional Rights Foundation – School-Based Service Learning - [http://www.crf-usa.org/network/School-basedServiceLearning\\_CRF\\_CRFC\\_2006.pdf](http://www.crf-usa.org/network/School-basedServiceLearning_CRF_CRFC_2006.pdf)

National Constitution Center – Service Learning - <http://www.constitutioncenter.org/education/ForEducators/ServiceLearning/index.shtml>

Constitution Day Service Learning Project Ideas – The California Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools - [http://cms-ca.org/ConstitutionDay\\_servicelearning.pdf](http://cms-ca.org/ConstitutionDay_servicelearning.pdf)

Civic Engagement and Service Learning - American Psychological Association - <http://www.apa.org/ed/slce/home.html>

*This document was prepared by Alan Griffin ([alan.griffin@schools.utah.gov](mailto:alan.griffin@schools.utah.gov)) for the Utah State Office of Education*