A Teacher's Guide to Service Learning

"We can choose to use our lives for others to bring about a better and more just world for our children. People who make that choice will know hardship and sacrifice ... In giving of yourself you will discover a whole new life full of meaning and love." **César E. Chávez**

Background:
On August 18, 2000, Governor Gray Davis signed into law Senate Bill 984 establishing César Chávez Day. Authored by Senator Richard Polanco the bill established a state holiday to celebrate the life and work of César E. Chávez. The legislation authorizes public schools to incorporate activities that commemorate and draw attention to the life work and values of César E. Chávez. This legislation is unique because it also created the César Chávez Day of Service and Learning program to promote service and volunteerism amongst K-12 youth throughout the State of California to promote the life and work of César E. Chávez. Provisions of the law are contained in the California Education Code, Section 37220-37223.

Common Facts about Service Learning
The National Center for Education Statistics of the U.S. Department of Education conducted a National Student Service-Learning and Community Service Survey. The results show:

- 64% of all public schools, including 83% of all high schools, had students participating in community service activities recognized by/arranged through the school.
- 57% of all public schools organized community service activities for their students.
- 32% of all public schools organized service learning as part of their curriculum, including nearly half of all high schools.
- 83% of schools with service learning offered some type of support to teachers interested in integrating service learning into the curriculum.

Most schools with service learning cited strengthening relationships among students, the school, and the community as key reasons for practicing service learning.

Purpose:
The purpose of this guide is to assist teachers in:
- Understanding high quality service learning
- Conceptualizing service-learning projects
- Connecting California curricular content standards with service-learning activities
- Developing service-learning projects with students, including academic curriculum reinforced by engaging in high quality community service
- Establishing agency/school partnerships
- Implementing service-learning projects with students
- Teaching students about the life, work and values of César E. Chávez

- Giving contemporary application to César E. Chávez's universal values and principles

Understanding High Quality Service-Learning:

Service learning, as defined by the *National and Community Service Trust Act* (1993) is "an innovative instructional strategy that actively involves youth in the curriculum through service to their community." The distinguishing feature of service learning involves the purposeful and seamless integration of academic content, skills and civic values with service to one's community. In other words, teachers work with students to apply in-class instruction to real life experiences, outside the classroom, by helping their students identify real community needs and provide service that addresses the identified need. Teachers enhance student learning further when they provide their students with time and opportunities to reflect on their classroom and service experiences.

Service learning as an instructional strategy can be incorporated into all disciplines and used to integrate curriculum across the content areas. Based upon the five elements of the federal definition for service learning, the CalServe Initiative has identified what students should know and be able to do for each of these elements in a service-learning activity or project. All five elements should be addressed in every service-learning activity and work in concert to create a powerful teaching and learning experience.

Student Demonstrations of the Key Elements of Service-Learning

Element 1
Meeting a Real Community Need
Students will explore the different means of how to identify real community needs (e.g., reading a local newspaper, conducting a community survey, talking to local service providers, watching the local news). Students will then actively participate in thoughtfully organized service that addresses the needs of the community they have identified.

For example, a small group of eighth grade students brought to the attention of Mrs. Lassen that they were uncomfortable walking past an apparently homeless man on their way to school. Mrs. Lassen asked the entire class if there were other similar concerns and received several statements from students about a couple of men sitting at a freeway off-ramp with signs that read "Lost my job and must feed my family, please help." During the class discussion several other students made jokes about "bums and bag people." Mrs. Lassen assigned students a homework assignment to survey two adults with these two questions: If someone approached you on the street and asked you for money for food, would you give them some pocket change? Where do you think people who are homeless eat?

Before leaving school, Mrs. Lassen also reported the student's concern to the principal. The principal said he knew of the situation and thought that homeless man was harmless. He said he would ask the police to look into the matter.

The following day students returned with a variety of responses to the first question. Almost universally students noted that very few respondents would give the person any money at all. The reasons varied but most people said something about "being worried that the person was going to buy drugs or alcohol", that "they really weren't homeless, just lazy" and "if they want to eat, let them go out and find a job!" To the second question most people thought that people who beg for money, "usually get enough money to buy something from a fast-food restaurant" or "they eat out of trash cans" or "they go to a local facility or church where they are fed."

During the next several weeks, Mrs. Lassen asks students to read the newspaper and look for articles that somehow relate to the homeless such as crime reports, ads requesting donations to feed the homeless, city council minutes that discuss zoning laws or laws against loitering.

After identifying hunger and homelessness as community problems, Mrs. Lassen and her students decide that they want to create in a service project that locates and assists a local food bank and shelter in their neighborhood.

Element 2
Integrated to and Enhances the Curriculum
Students will demonstrate their mastery of curricular content standards through participation in a service-learning activity that supports and enhances in-class instruction, integrated into the curriculum.

For example, after students identify hunger and homelessness as a significant community problem, Mrs. Lassen begins to prepare lessons linking her student's experiences and concerns about hunger and homelessness and the problems of urban poor and immigrants during her unit on the Industrialization of United States. She introduces her students to History-Social Science Standard 8.12 that states that students analyze the transformation of the American economy and the changing social and political conditions in the United States in response to the Industrial Revolution. She helps students see that hunger and homelessness are sometimes by-products of industrialization. Her students learn how city governments and individuals in the late nineteenth century tried to provide social, political, and economic services that addressed the issues caused by urbanization and industrialization.

The service project that Mrs. Lassen and her students selected, which was to assist a local food bank and shelter in their neighborhood, enhanced the lessons taught in class by empowering students to further analyze community/world problems and their relationship to historical events. In fact, her students' level of academic achievement improved as a result of the entire class having a shared experience through service that was localized and easy to relate to when discussing global ideas, events and occurrences like the Industrial Revolution.

Element 3
Coordinated with a Community Agency, Another School, or the Community at-Large
Students and teachers will collaborate with individuals and organizations in the
community to develop and implement meaningful service activities that meet the needs of
the community. All stakeholders (including administrators, social service agencies,
businesses, community members, parents, students and teachers) are involved in
planning, and implementing the service-learning project.

For example, Mrs. Lassen and her students knew that they would need help organizing
and preparing for their service project of assisting a local food bank and shelter. Before
Mrs. Lassen continued she requested an appointment with her principal to explain her
students' intentions to conduct a service project, to ask for support, and to make sure she
followed school policy and procedure. She also explained to her principal where and
how she thought the service project augmented her classroom instruction. She sent home
a letter explaining to her students' parents that they were going to conduct a service
project and asked for volunteers to help with the project. Mrs. Lassen then divided her
students into small groups and assigned them to research and interview local agencies
that feed and provide services to the homeless. Each small group was then required to
make a class presentation on the agency they researched. At the end of the presentations
students were asked to vote on the agency they thought would make the best partner in
helping them complete their service project. A student contacted the local agency and
asked if they could send a representative to speak to the class and answer questions.

Over the course of a week, students prepared for the guest speaker from the local agency
by brainstorming and recording questions that they thought were important to ask.
Mr. Ruíz, the guest speaker, came to Mrs. Lassen's class and made a short presentation,
answered the students questions and the questions of a couple of parent volunteers.
Mr. Ruíz , students, volunteer parents, Mrs. Lassen, and the principal met several times
over the next few weeks to discuss specific job responsibilities and the coordination of
the service project.

In preparation for César Chávez Day, Mrs. Lassen taught her students about the life,
work and core values of César E. Chávez. She emphasized César's core values of service
to others, a preference to help the most needy, and respect for life. She also told stories
about the work of César E. Chávez especially the story about how César's mother, Juana
Estrada Chávez, would tell César, his sister Rita, and his brother Richard to go out and
find homeless people so that she could cook and feed them a hot meal. Students were
asked to write a reflection on how their service project will exemplify the values of
César E. Chávez.

The pre-service project included a collection of non-perishable foods to be donated to the
local food bank by students and local businesses. Students were responsible for
recruiting local businesses to set-up a food collection center or to bring food directly to
the school for the service project. On the various days of the service, Mr. Ruíz would
coordinate the work of students, parents, Mrs. Lassen, and the school principal. Students
stocked the shelves of local food banks and helped prepare and serve a luncheon meal to

families utilizing the local shelter. At the end of the day, Mr. Ruíz held a debriefing session with the students inquiring what they had learned during their day of service. Before they left, Mr. Ruíz, with the help of Mrs. Lassen, provided each student a Certificate of Service for their participation in the service project.

Element 4
Helps Foster Civic Responsibility, Civic Pride and Connection to Community
Students will understand and demonstrate civic responsibility, civic pride and connection to their community through participation in a service-learning activity that meets a real community need (as defined by the community), is appropriate to the student's age or development, is well organized and improves the quality of life in the community.

For example, throughout the entire process of planning and implementing the service project, Mrs. Lassen noticed an attitude change in her students' towards the homeless. The students began to question why city government and city leaders did not address the hunger and homeless issue more aggressively. She noticed that students were less "mean spirited" and the frequency of jokes diminished. She also noticed a sense of pride in her students that they were able to make a small difference in the lives people living in their community.

Element 5
Provides Structured Time for Reflection
Students will understand and reflect upon the significance of their service-learning experience, and how applying skills and knowledge affects them as individuals, their own learning, and the community at large. Reflection should take place before (to prepare), during (to troubleshoot), and after (to process) service activities.

For example, as part of her daily classroom structure, Mrs. Lassen had her students conduct five-minute journal writings. Over the course of the service project, Mrs. Lassen would incorporate writing prompts that had students reflect on what they were learning, what they were feeling, how their service was impacting their community, and whether or not they now felt as if they had the skills to make change as a result of their service project. Upon conclusion of the service learning project, students had a choice to construct an exhibit, write a report, or make a presentation that connected something that they had studied or learned in class to their service project.

Conceptualizing A Service-Learning Project
The starting point for any service learning project is conceptualizing a set of goals the project will accomplish or address. In a general sense, the identification of goals begins to provide a rationale for developing and conducting a service-learning project. A well thought out set of goals will help build a foundation of support you will need from administrators, teacher colleagues, students, parents, and community members. Teachers may focus their project around these six goals:

- To promote student personal and social growth.
- To foster and enhance the civic participation and citizenship skills of students.
- To help students to see the relationship between academic in-class instruction and its application to the real world circumstances.
- To aid students in understanding their own short and long-term relationship between the school and the community and the value of school-community partnerships.
- To develop an authentic context for standards-based instruction and student learning.
- To empower students to make change.

Connecting California Curricular Content Standards with Service Learning Activities

César E. Chávez was an extremely complex human being with very diverse and profound interests. The broad range of topics, concepts and learning opportunities provided to California's students over the course of twelve years of education facilitate frequent and ample opportunities to make connections to the life, work and values of César E. Chávez. Each subject taught in schools has unique opportunities to integrate service learning as a strategy to enhance the classroom experiences of students. Below are various examples:

California Curriculum: In grade seven students in study frescos and analyze how and why various societies use art to record history.

> **Standard 3.2 Diversity of the Visual Arts:** Compare and contrast works of art from various periods, styles and cultures and explain how those works reflect the society in which they were made.

> **Art**: Students identify the problem of urban decay and decided to create murals depicting the contributions of diverse, multicultural communities in an effort to promote tolerance and understanding.

"We need to help students and parents cherish and preserve the ethnic and cultural diversity that nourishes and strengthens ... this nation." (Acceptance of all people and Celebrating Community)

California State Standard:

> **English and Journalism**: Students identify illiteracy as a detriment to the public good and join with local organizations to kick off a yearlong César Chávez literacy project that consists of a book drive and weekly tutoring for youth and adults at a local high school. Students in another project could help community service organizations assist the unemployed construct resumes that could lead to future employment.

"Students must have initiative; they should not be mere imitators. They must learn to think and act for themselves and be free." (Knowledge)

California Curriculum: Students learn to listen, speak, read and write in a foreign language using meaningful real life situations.

> **Foreign Language**: Students identify a lack of translation services for non-English speaking members of the community. A foreign language class uses their language skills to help local community service organizations assist recent immigrants with the understanding and completing of paperwork needed to utilize public services such as enrolling children in school, applying for a driver's license, or identifying other local service providers.

"We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about the progress and prosperity for our community. ... Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own." (Service to others)

California Curriculum: In a health class students learn about the relationship between nutrition, human development and overall wellness.

> **Health:** Students identify an increase in illness and disease amongst people living in densely populated areas. Students, together with state employees at the county health department and local service providers organize a health fair for the residents of a local public housing project, providing education on nutrition and information on preventive healthcare services. High school students participating in the project will develop an informational story booklet for local families and their younger children to read about the importance of health and nutrition in leading a successful life.

"However important the struggle is and however much misery and poverty and degradation exists we know that it cannot be more important than one human life." (A preference to help the most needy and Sacrifice)

California State Standard:

> **History**: Students visit senior citizens and interview them for an oral history project that documents the struggles and achievements of prior generations. While conducting the interviews students could begin to identify specific challenges that the elderly confront such as a limited ability to obtain access to basic necessities because of transportation problems or physical challenges. Students could then assist the elderly in securing access to some of these basic necessities.

"It is possible to become discouraged about the injustice we see everywhere. But God did not promise us that the world would be humane and just. He gives us the gift of life and allows us to choose the way we will use our limited time on earth. It is an awesome opportunity." (Determination)

California State Standard:

> **Mathematics**: Students identify homelessness and hunger as a significant problem in the community. Students could help local food banks, food cooperatives, and other agencies estimate future demand for supplies and services. Students might also record and analyze statistical information that would help local agencies better address root causes of problems such as unemployment, homelessness, and hunger.

"Once social change begins it cannot be reversed. You cannot uneducated the person who has learned to read. You cannot humiliate the person who feels pride. You cannot oppress the people who are not afraid anymore." (A preference to help the most needy and Innovation)

California State Standard:

> **Political Science**: Students use government class to investigate the root causes of voter apathy in local elections. Students work with local agencies to identify areas that will enhance voter participation such as the development of educational materials on the voting process and voter eligibility, the development of non-partisan materials on current ballot initiatives/candidates, and the organization of a non-partisan voter registration drive.

"From the depth of need and despair, people can work together, can organize themselves to solve their own problems and fill their own needs with dignity and strength." (Service to others and Nonviolence)

California State Standard:

> **Science**: Students learn about the importance of natural resources in our daily lives, their limited/depleting supply, and ways in which we can help minimize the rate at which they deplete. As a way of teaching youth about energy conservation, students along with their parents, weatherize a local senior housing facility.

"It is not enough to teach our young people to be successful … so they can realize their ambitions, so they can earn good livings, so they can accumulate the material things that this society bestows. Those are worthwhile goals. But it is not enough to progress as individuals while our friends and neighbors are left behind." (Respect for life)

California State Standard:

> **Biology**: Students join with an organization concerned with protecting the environment and the natural resources found in and near their community. By removing trash and debris from a local beach, river, park, community center, or wetlands students will learn to respect their community and the environment. Students could then conduct a study on ways in which human actions have affected the local habitat.

"You can't fool Mother Nature. ... The contamination of our ground water. The loss of our reverence for the soil. The raping of the land ... destroy[s] what produces jobs, livelihoods and economic health."(Respect for life)

California State Standard:

> **Earth Science**: Students notice a lack of trees in and around their community. Together with local PTA and community members school children and teens plant trees to reestablish a connection with the soil and their local environment.

"People forget that the soil is our sustenance. It is a sacred trust. It is what has worked for us for centuries." (Respect for life)

Developing Service Learning Projects

Successful, high-quality service-learning projects place students at the center of the learning process. In the best scenarios, students initiate, plan, implement, and evaluate the service-learning project and receive recognition for their accomplishments. The goal of active engagement and the incorporation of student voices are threaded throughout the following nine suggested steps. Please note that teachers play an important role in the service learning process by setting up pre-service, service, and post-service activities as necessary steps in the development of a high quality project.

Step 1: Students explore the different means of how to identify real community needs (e.g., reading a local newspaper, conducting a community survey, talking to local service providers, watching the local news).

Step 2: Students conduct a community needs assessment in the classroom setting, possibly in small groups or as a whole class. The community needs assessment will help students make an informed decision about potential service projects in their community.

Step 3: Teachers share with students the goals of the course and curricular connections in effort to link to potential service projects to standards-based instruction and student learning.

Step 4: Teachers and students should decide which of the potential service projects provide the best fit between the curriculum and the community needs identified.

Step 5: Students and teachers research, identify and recruit potential partners to address the identified community need.

Step 6: Students and teachers set up the context of the service project with organized pre-service classroom activities and instruction.

Step 7: Students, teachers and community members are engaged in a meaningful service activity that meets a real community need as identified in Step 2.

Step 8: Students and teachers engage in post-service activities that demonstrate an understanding of the content, skill and knowledge learned through the service experience. Post-service activities may be selected by either the teacher or the students.

Step 9: All service-learning projects should include various means of reflection and assessment (e.g., portfolios, journals, paper and pencil tests and essay writing). Both teachers and students may come up with the assessment tools to be utilized.

Establishing Agency/School Partnership Options

Successful, high quality service-learning projects extend learning beyond the classroom and into the community in which the student lives, works, and plays. An important component of high quality service learning involves establishing partnerships with community agencies, another school, or the community at large currently providing service in and around your community. A strong partnership between schools and community agencies draws upon the academic subject matter expertise of teachers and the experience and skill-set of the outside organizations.

Community Partner Institution Responsibilities

Partner Institutions:
- Provide resources, human and material to assist students with the development and execution of the service-learning project
- Make presentations and instructs students about appropriate procedures and behaviors needed to complete the service-learning project
- Register and record all students and service-learning placements
- Monitors the implementation of the service-learning project and solving logistical problems as they arise
- Conduct small group reflection sessions
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the service provides in addressing the community need.

Teacher/School
Teaching/Instructional Tasks

Teacher/Schools:
- Initiate or accept responsibility for a service-learning project.
- Plan how the service-learning project will fit within the curriculum and which instructional units might be used to facilitate a service project.
- Facilitate and guide students through the 8 steps in Developing a Service-Learning Project
- Communicate with the school administration, parents, teachers and the community the goals of the service-learning project.
- Secure and monitors the return of liability releases, transportation permits, emergency medical forms and other documentation required for such activities established by school district policies.
- Set service-learning objectives.
- Introduce service-learning idea to students.
- Provide academic instruction and establishes a knowledge base for students to conduct service.
- Guide/foster in-class reflection.
- Review final reflective journals.
- Incorporate service learning into the final letter grade students earn in the class.

Community Partner Institution and Teacher/School
Advisement, Scope of Service, Follow-up, Reflection

Teacher and Community Partners meet to:
- Discuss service learning opportunities
- Identify a service-learning project
- Assign specific work responsibilities and expectations
- Approve volunteer site selections and volunteer duties.
- Protect and care for the physical, emotional and educational well being of the students and other participants in the service-learning project.
- Get involved- attend reflection sessions, go out and volunteer with your students, facilitate in-class discussions, read journals, and so forth.
- Celebrate the accomplishments of the students and the service-learning project

Another way of looking at and enhancing the relationships between institutional partners can be found in the work of Sharon Kagan. Kagan constructs a framework that charts a progression of each partner's involvement in her work, *United We Stand: Collaboration for Child Care and Early Education Services*. A school/agency partnership can be simple or complex, depending on your own comfort level, readiness, needs, and resources. This chart shows a progression of involvement that often characterizes the relationships of institutional partners. Differences between stages are based on levels of risk, amount of time needed, and commitment. While one level clearly progresses from the other, each is

valuable in itself. As the partnership becomes more complex, the potential impact on the community, the students and the organization increases. Use the following chart to consider your possibilities.

Type	Description	Core Elements	Example
Cooperation	The agency and school (or teacher) share information that is useful to the other.	- Information openly shared. - Involves low commitment, - risk and interaction. - Roles are distinct and separate. - Service may be centered in the school or the agency with support from the other.	An agency adds the teacher to a mailing list and calls about new service opportunities. Teacher calls to tell about needs for project to see if any are available that fit. Projects may take place at school with input and ideas from the agency.
Coordination	The partners work together in planning a specific effort or program.	- Agency and school meet to plan specific activities. - Regular contact is needed between agency and school. - Projects may be part of existing efforts or new initiatives. - More planning and communication are essential.	The agency's coordinator of volunteers, the school's service-learning coordinator, and youth meet to share needs and design appropriate service activities for classes.
Collaboration	The organization and school (and others) form a new structure to share an ongoing commitment to leadership in, and ownership of a formal service-learning partnership.	- A steering committee or coordinating board has leadership responsibility. - Requires comprehensive planning and communication. - Formal agreements are reached on roles, responsibilities, and commitments. - Partners seek funding together.	Multiple agencies and schools form a communitywide collaborative to involve youth in service learning. Agencies and schools commit resources (staff, financial) to supporting the partnership. The partnership often will submit proposals for support from government or foundations.

Implementing Service-Learning Projects with Students
The keys to service learning implementation are project organization issues such as providing adequate transportation, liability protection, field trip forms, project site selection (safety issues), organization of the specific service activity and constant student reflection from project inception through project completion.

The actual implementation of service-learning projects requires everyone involved being especially knowledgeable about what, where, when, and how the service project is

expected to be implemented. In high-quality service-learning projects, the logistical matters pertaining to the project are well thought out and documented. To ensure that students have a successful service experience in the implementation phase, it is absolutely essential to plan, organize, monitor, and adapt.

- Plan carefully, thoroughly and for the unexpected.
- Organize human, fiscal and physical resources for efficiency and productivity.
- Monitor student behaviors', work and attitudes; the environment and working conditions; and the progress of the project.
- Adapt to changing conditions and solve problems as they arise.

An essential element of high-quality service learning implementation is the reflection in which students engage throughout the entire service-learning project. In high-quality projects, teachers facilitate frequent and strategically planned opportunities for students to engage in reflective practices. Teachers should provide time and structured activities that cause students to focus on the relationship between what they have learned during classroom instruction and their service-learning project. Second, students should reflect on their emotions and the attitudes that they are experiencing as a result of participating in the service. A third set of activities would provide students the opportunity to reflect on how decisions are made, how change occurs, and how both lead to self-empowerment.

Teaching About the Life, Work, and Values of César E. Chávez

César E. Chávez was an ordinary man who accomplished extraordinary things. The model lessons and biographies developed for the César E. Chávez Curriculum provides numerous opportunities to teach about the life, work and values of César E. Chávez, yet they only provide a small representation of the powerful and relevant lessons from which students can learn. The model lessons provide teachers with examples that can be used throughout the year as the topics appear in the curriculum. The model lessons primarily focus on issues, topics, and concepts found in the California History-Social Science Framework and Academic Content Standards. Teachers in other disciplines are also encouraged to develop new lessons using the materials and resources provided in the research section of the Web site. To guide the development of new lessons, we suggest that teachers make strong connections between the academic content they teach and the ten universal values that guided César E. Chávez as a family man, a labor leader, civil rights leader, spiritualist, social entrepreneur, environmentalist, and community servant. The core values embodied in the work of César E. Chávez include:

- **Service to Others** – Service that is predicated on empowering others; engendering self-help, self-determination, and self-sufficiency versus charity.

- **Sacrifice** – Sacrifice that is spiritual; that is courageous and steadfast in its willingness to endure great hardship for others.

- **A Preference to Help the Most Needy** – A concerted effort to support programs that reach the most needy, the most dispossessed, the most forgotten people in society no matter how difficult the challenge that choice may bring.

- **Determination** – Determination that is characterized by an attitude that with faith, steadfast commitment, patience, and optimism, human beings can prevail against all odds.

- **Nonviolence** – Invoking nonviolence as the most powerful tool for achieving social/economic justice and equality; action that requires boldness and courage versus meekness and passivity.

- **Acceptance of all People** – An essential ingredient for success in organizing diverse forces to achieve social change, create community, and actualize democracy is the acceptance of all people; an absolutely indispensable necessity to the well-being of this country.

- **Respect for Life** – Respect that holds as sacred the land, the people, and all other forms of life.

- **Celebrating Community** - Sharing the joyous and respectful expression of cultural diversity through the reinforcement of the values of equity and responsibility to and for one another.

- **Knowledge** - The pursuit of self-directed learning and the development of critical thinking and constructive problem solving skills; overcoming ignorance through education.

- **Innovation** – A creative capacity to find pragmatic strategies and tactics to resolve problems and situations that often seen insurmountable to others.

Giving Contemporary Application To César E. Chávez's Universal Values And Principles

César E. Chávez's legacy and values transcend time and place. Service learning projects give students authentic and meaningful opportunities to learn about the life, work, and values of César E. Chávez. More importantly service-learning projects give students the opportunity to apply César's core values in ways that improve the quality of life in their respective communities, while promoting and enhancing their own personal and social growth.