



School Counselor Bulletin

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Student Volunteer Service Hours--Process Changes

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2017-18 Volunteer Service Hours Procedures

The purpose of this bulletin is to provide an overview of the revised SCPS Student Volunteer Service Program (formerly known as “Community Service”). The entire process is explained on SCPS Form 1489 (Revised 8.1.2017), *Student Volunteer Service Program Guidelines & Service Plan*.

Reasons for Change

In 2016, the Florida Legislature adopted changes to the requirements for earning a Florida Academic Scholars Award (s. 1009.534, F.S.), Florida Medallion Scholars Award (s. 1009.535, F.S.), and Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars or Florida Gold Seal CAPE Scholars Award (s. 1009.536). A committee of school counselors and district staff convened on June 5, 2017 to review SCPS community service procedures as well as the updates to Florida law. The committee made several recommendations to significantly change the SCPS process; these recommendations were later reviewed and affirmed by both high school principals and Superintendent’s Cabinet.

Special thanks to members of the committee for their participation: Mary Adessa (Lyman), Frank Casillo (Secondary Education), Mindy Craft (Lake Brantley), Mike Gaudreau (Secondary Education), Vince Geigel (Lake Howell), Winnola Grigley (Lake Mary), Andrea Hormuth (Winter Springs), Marcia Lightsey (Oviedo), Adriana Teague (Crooms AOIT), Kelly Thompson (Assessment & Accountability), Kay Williamson (Seminole), & Jason Wysong (ePathways).

Legal Requirements

The statutes cited above include the following language:

“The student must complete a program of volunteer service work...The student must **identify a social or civic issue** or a professional area that interests him or her, **develop a plan** for his or her personal involvement in addressing the issue or learning about the area, and, through papers or other presentations, **evaluate and reflect** upon his or her experience. Except for credit earned through service-learning courses adopted pursuant to s. 1003.497, the student may not receive remuneration or academic credit for the volunteer service work performed. Such work may include, but is not limited to, a business or governmental internship, work for a nonprofit community service organization, or activities on behalf of a candidate for public office. The **hours of volunteer service must be documented in writing**, and the document must be signed by the student, the student's parent or guardian, and a representative of the organization for which the student performed the volunteer service work”.

Summary of Major Changes

1. The term “community service hours” has been replaced by “volunteer service hours.”
2. Volunteer service hours should be centered on a social or civic issue, or professional area of interest to the student.



3. Service is not limited to community/non-profit organizations. A student's service hours can be earned in an internship (not for academic credit), political campaign, etc. Therefore, SCPS will no longer maintain a pre-approved list of community service organizations. Students may now choose from a variety of organizations, and student service is not limited to the Central Florida area.

4. Many of the prior "local rules", such as a minimum number of hours at each organization and maximum number of hours at the student's school, have been eliminated. Please review the contents of SCPS Form 1489 for more information.

Other Important Notes

1. This new procedure is effective at the start of the 2017-18 school year (August 10). However, students who have already begun accumulating service hours using the prior process should be considered "grandfathered" and allowed to finish the service requirements using the former process and forms.

2. Students continue to earn one-half (0.5) credit for successful completion of seventy-five (75) approved hours of volunteer service.

3. Students should complete a Volunteer Service Plan and get it approved by their school prior to volunteering. This is the only way to guarantee that volunteer service hours will be accepted. As with the previous process, students must submit a written reflection along with a completed service hours log prior to May 1st of the senior year.

4. SCPS Form 1489 contains examples of types of organizations where service hours can be earned as well as examples of circumstances in which service hours would not be approved/accepted.

Communication Plan

The SCPS district website has been updated to reflect this new process, and all forms related to the old procedure have been removed. The website instructs students/families to visit their school website for the new form and to contact their school counselor with questions. The website instructs organizations interested in high school student volunteers to submit information by email to ePathways@scps.us. These requests will be periodically compiled and sent to high school counselors via email as a "For Your Information" resource.

Procedure Questions/Concerns

School counselors are encouraged to bring questions/concerns to their quarterly meetings for discussion. If necessary, a "Frequently Asked Questions" document will be created and disseminated.

Student-specific issues should be referred to the school principal. *The SCPS Student Progression Plan* provides that, "School principals have the final authority to approve student volunteer service".



Seminole County Public Schools, Florida Student Volunteer Service Program Guidelines & Service Plan

Program Purpose & Benefits

The SCPS volunteer service program empowers students to develop a sense of responsibility for others within their community as well as an understanding of the value of volunteerism and helping others.

Participation in the SCPS Volunteer Service Program includes the following additional benefits:

- Meet the volunteer service requirement in the Florida Bright Futures Scholarship program. The current requirement is 100 hours for Florida Academic Scholars (FAS), 75 hours for Florida Medallion Scholars (FMS), 30 hours for Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars (GSV), and 30 hours for Florida Gold Seal CAPE Scholars (GSC). See below for more information.
- Earn one-half (0.5) credit for successful completion of 75 approved hours of volunteer service.
- Demonstrate commitment to colleges, universities, and future employers.

Bright Futures Eligibility

Florida law identifies the requirements for completion of a program of volunteer service work for the purpose of qualifying for Bright Futures scholarships:

“The student must complete a program of volunteer service work...The student must **identify a social or civic issue** or a professional area that interests him or her, **develop a plan** for his or her personal involvement in addressing the issue or learning about the area, and, through papers or other presentations, **evaluate and reflect** upon his or her experience. Except for credit earned through service-learning courses adopted pursuant to s. 1003.497, the student may not receive remuneration or academic credit for the volunteer service work performed. Such work may include, but is not limited to, a business or governmental internship, work for a nonprofit community service organization, or activities on behalf of a candidate for public office. The **hours of volunteer service must be documented in writing**, and the document must be signed by the student, the student's parent or guardian, and a representative of the organization for which the student performed the volunteer service work”.

Important Requirements

These guidelines must be followed to ensure that service hours will be approved:

1. The SCPS Student Volunteer Service Plan should be completed by the student and approved by the student's school prior to volunteering. This is the only way to guarantee that volunteer service hours will be accepted.
2. Volunteer service hours will not be accepted for any of the following circumstances:
 - Service for which a student benefits financially or materially for the volunteer service worked
 - Service completed by the student during school hours
 - Service completed by the student prior to promotion to 9th grade
 - Court-directed community service
 - Service that is a prerequisite for employment
 - Fundraising for a school-sponsored activity
 - Attendance at religious services, retreats, self-improvement courses, conferences or workshops
 - Service for family-related activities or service to family members
 - Unsupervised service
 - Service for which a student receives academic credit (except for credit earned through an approved service learning course)
3. Current seniors must submit the Volunteer Service Work Log prior to May 1 to be considered for the Florida Bright Futures award in the evaluation conducted following graduation.
4. Students may complete volunteer service at their own high school, but hours must be earned outside regular school hours.

Volunteer Service Process

Students must follow these steps to earn service hours:

1. Identify a social or civic issue or a professional area of interest.
2. Contact an organization related to this topic and discuss options for volunteer service. Review the above limitations related to hours that will not be accepted.
3. Complete the SCPS Student Volunteer Service Plan below. Remember to include student, parent and supervising agency signatures.
4. Submit the application to the school's service coordinator for review and approval. Upon approval, the student will receive the SCPS Volunteer Service Work Log. It is the student's responsibility to maintain copies of all documents, including the signed community service application.
5. Begin volunteering and record hours on the SCPS Volunteer Service Work Log. It is the student's responsibility to record service hours.
6. At the conclusion of the required volunteer hours, the student must submit the original Volunteer Service Application, the Volunteer Service Log, and a one page reflective essay that includes why the topic and service site(s) were chosen, the duties performed, and what was learned/gained from the experience. One essay may address experiences at multiple sites.

Volunteer Service Examples

The school district does not recommend or endorse any outside agency/organization/opportunity for volunteer service purposes. It is the responsibility of parents and students to identify, investigate, and select service opportunities. These types of groups have provided opportunities in the past for SCPS students:

Animal shelters
Charities
Community centers
Elder care facilities
Environmental cleanup
Faith-based organizations
Food banks
Hospice
Hospitals
Libraries
Mentoring organizations
Museums
Parks/recreation facilities
Youth sports organizations
Zoos



SEMINOLE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, FLORIDA
SCPS STUDENT VOLUNTEER SERVICE PLAN

Florida Bright Futures Scholarships are based on specific academic requirements and volunteer service work hours earned in grades 9-12. The volunteer service work hours are as follows:

- Florida Academic Scholars Award (FAS) 100 hours
Florida Medallion Scholars Award (FMS) 75 hours
Florida Gold Seal Vocational Scholars Award (GSV) 30 hours
Florida Gold Seal CAPE Scholars Award (GSC) 30 hours

Students must submit this plan, and gain approval, prior to beginning volunteer service work hours. The Volunteer Service Work Log will be given to the student once the plan has been approved. If at any time the volunteer service work changes, a new Plan MUST be submitted for review. The completed Volunteer Service Work Log must match the Plan.

Current seniors who would like to be considered for any of the Florida Bright Futures award levels at the seventh semester eligibility review should submit the Volunteer Service Work Log no later than the end of the 1st semester. Seniors who complete their volunteer service work hours during the eighth semester must submit the Volunteer Service Work Log by May 1 to be considered for the Florida Bright Futures award in the reevaluation conducted following graduation.

Student Name _____ Grade _____ Graduation Year _____

Date of Birth _____ Phone # _____ High School _____

Email Address _____

Student's selected social or civic issue or professional area of interest: _____

Service Organization(s) Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____ Website: _____

Describe the duties the student will perform: _____

Name of Contact Person agreeing to supervise student: _____

Contact Person Email Address: _____

We agree to the program requirements as explained on the SCPS Volunteer Service Program Guidelines & Applications document:

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Organization Contact Signature: _____ Date: _____

Principal or designee signature below indicates that this plan is approved:

Principal's (or Designee) Signature _____ Date _____