Miami Lake Educational Center

Community Service Graduation Requirement

Questions Frequently Asked by Parents about the Community Service Graduation Requirement

1. **When does the community service graduation requirement go into effect?** All students must complete a community service project in order to graduate from Dade County Public Schools beginning with the graduating class of 1996-1997.

2. **What are community service projects?** Community service projects are defined as “well planned, organized, and voluntary efforts designed to address a specific need in the community.” Meaningful community service projects require an on-going commitment on the part of students.

3. **Who is responsible for helping students select projects?** While school personnel should assist students in selecting community service projects, it is ultimately the student’s responsibility to select a meaningful project after consultation with his/her parent(s) or guardian(s).

4. **When may students complete their community service requirement?** Students may complete the community service requirement anytime between ninth and twelfth grade; however, students are strongly encouraged to complete the project prior to their senior year.

5. **May students complete the requirement at a school or must the project be done in the community?** Students may fulfill the community service graduation requirement at a school and/or in the community. If students choose to complete a school-site project, the project must be performed outside the regular school day.

6. **May students work on several small projects or are they required to work on one project exclusively?** Either option is acceptable.

7. **How many hours of service must be completed in order for students to receive credit for the community service requirement?** No prescribed number of service hours is required for the project unless a student is working toward the Florida Academic Scholarship or the Superintendent’s Diploma of Distinction (a minimum of 75 hours of service is required for each).

8. **What documentation does a student need in order to demonstrate that he/she has completed their community service?**
   * In-house community service projects – **Activity Log** (ONLY) - students must obtain printed name and signature of the faculty member/club sponsor.
   ** For off-campus community service projects - students must have **Activity Log** with signature of project supervisor and secure a letter (on letterhead) from the organization stating the number of hours completed.
   *** No essay will be required of any project.***
   
   Upon satisfactory completion of this form, counselors will enter data into the computer indicating that the community service requirement has been met.

9. **Who holds the final authority concerning whether or not a student has successfully completed the community service requirement?** The final authority concerning whether or not a student receives credit for the community service requirement rests with the school’s principal.

10. **If additional information is needed about the community service requirement how can it be obtained?** Call the school and ask to speak to the staff member who has been designated by the principal to be the community service contact person.

Revised 10/05/11
Identifying Meaningful Community Service Projects

To be meaningful, community service projects must address a real need or problem found within the school or community. Students must be given the opportunity to select a project that reflects both the needs of the community and their personal interests and skills. In addition, quality community service projects require ongoing commitment on the part of students. Hastily planned short term projects do little to foster the purpose of community service: to provide service to the community and personal growth opportunities for students. The following criteria should be considered when a student selects a community service project.

- The project addresses a real community need or problem
- The project provides the opportunity to provide meaningful community service
- The project allows the student to gain a greater understanding of the community need on which they are working
- The project reflects the student’s interest, talents and abilities
- The project provides the student with the opportunity to grow personally and academically
- The project provides the opportunity for continuity of service and/or participation during the student’s school experience

The non-profit organizations and agencies listed below typically welcome volunteers. This list should help students generate ideas for community service projects. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure they are non-profit.

- United Way agencies/charities
- City/county governments
- Civic organizations
- Convalescent homes/hospices/hospitals
- Cultural centers/museums
- daycare centers
- school libraries
- Parks and recreation centers
- political organizations
- Religious organizations (not preaching)

Volunteering within a for-profit business or organization does not meet the acceptable community service guidelines and will not be accepted. The following list includes examples of unacceptable places to do community service projects.

- Professional offices/Dental/Doctor
- Retail stores
- Motels/hotels
- Barber/beauty shops
- Industrial firms
- Restaurants
- Realtors
- Gas stations

MEETING THE REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADUATION

To complete the community service requirement for Miami Dade County Public Schools, each student must complete a community service project. The project can be completed at any time while a student is in high school. No prescribed number of service hours is required. However, students working toward the Superintendent’s Diploma of Distinction or for the Florida Academic Scholarship awarded under the Florida Bright Futures Program need a minimum of 75 hours of service. A community service tassel or chord will be issued to students completing over 250 hours at graduation.

Revised 10/05/11
MIAMI LAKES EDUCATIONAL CENTER
HIGH SCHOOL DIVISION
COMMUNITY SERVICE ACTIVITY LOG FORM

Student’s Name____________________________________  ID#____________________

Grade Level____________      Total hours________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Community Service Activities (Description of Activities)</th>
<th>Number of Hours</th>
<th>Signature of person verifying hours</th>
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I have reviewed my son/daughter’s Community Service Project and understand that a community service project will be completed in **order to meet graduation requirements for Miami-Dade Public Schools**.

Parent/guardian’s Signature:____________________________________________________

Student’s Signature:____________________________________________________________

Signature of Community Service Designee:___________________________ Date:____________

Telephone#:_______________________________________________________________

Revised 10/05/11