**Miami-Dade County Public Schools**

**Department of Secondary English Language Arts**

**DISTRICT WRITING PRE-TEST ASSESSMENT**

**7TH GRADE**

**Argumentative PROMPT**

**Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Per: \_\_\_\_**

**SOURCE 1**

**REQUIRED PUBLIC SERVICE: GOOD FOR STUDENTS OR UNFAIR?**

**HELEN O'NEILL; Courant Staff Writer** THE HARTFORD COURANT

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| 1 | Some view it as a modern form of slavery -- a national move to force students to work uncompensated for the public good. |
| 2 | Others say mandatory community service instills in students a noble sense of giving and a proper sense of citizenship that lasts a lifetime. |
| 3 | Julie Kilpatrick falls somewhere in the middle. |
| 4 | The 14-year-old [Enfield](https://www.courant.com/topic/connecticut/enfield-CNT0008-topic.html) High School freshman occasionally volunteers with her church group in a soup kitchen. She does it because she wants to, not because it is required by her parents or her school. She's not sure how committed she would feel if she were forced to perform community service under threat of losing her high school diploma. |
| 5 | "You have to do it for the right reasons, because you want to help people," Julie said. "You can't force someone to volunteer." |
| 6 | Or can you? |
| 7 | A growing number of school districts around the country, including some in Connecticut, are demanding that students clean up rivers, visit nursing homes and help out at shelters for the homeless before they graduate. The hours and conditions vary greatly. In Maryland, for example, the state requires 75 hours of community service over a seven-year period before graduation. In [New Britain](https://www.courant.com/topic/connecticut/new-britain-CNT0014-topic.html) and Meriden, those in future graduating classes will be expected to have clocked 20 hours. |
| 8 | But the penalty for not participating is the same everywhere. Students who don't serve, don't graduate. |
| 9 | And that, opponents argue, sends the wrong message about volunteering and the spirit in which it is supposed to be practiced. |
| 10 | "Forcing people to volunteer is like forcing people to be patriotic," said Scott Bullock, a lawyer with the Washington-based Institute for Justice, a libertarian organization opposed to mandatory community service for students. |
| 11 | "Most people have an intuitive sense that it is good," Bullock said. "But by cramming it down their throats by government edict you are really polluting and corrupting the whole spirit of volunteerism." |
| 12 | Julie Kilpatrick is not sure whether she feels strongly enough to forfeit her diploma on principle if her school starts requiring community service -- an idea being floated by some Enfield school board members. |
| 13 | New challenges are making their way through the courts in New York and North Carolina. Among other things, opponents argue that mandatory community service violates constitutional rights to parental liberty and freedom of expression. |
| 14 | Proponents say there's nothing wrong with squeezing a little goodness out of students and molding better citizens in the process. |
| 15 | Jason Jakubowski, class president of New Britain High School, advocates community service as a way to curb the "me, me, me mentality" of his generation. |
| 16 | "This is a way to stop that, to make sure that people are not so wrapped up in their own little lives, to make them aware that they should be willing to go out and give to the community." |
| 17 | But New Britain school board member Deborah Makowski, who cast the only vote against the mandatory service program, said she thought it raised more questions than it answered. |
| 18 | "It sounds nice, yeah, put kids to work in the community," Makowski said. "But you have to look at the big picture. Some kids already do community service. Does that count? And what about kids who have to work after school and don't have the time?" |
| 19 | Enfield school board member Charles Fuller objects to students being forced to work for free. |
| 20 | "The government is getting free services from this. Kids don't belong to the state," said Fuller, suggesting that the time would be better spent in the classroom. "Let's talk about improving test scores before we talk about community service." |

**SOURCE 2**

**Should students be required to do community service to graduate?**

CHICAGO TRIBUNE

JA Alonzo

Walter Payton

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| 21 | 40 hours can't force-feed the spirit of giving. |
| 22 | Who wouldn't like to believe the benefits of service learning? Potentially, it leads students to build character and social awareness. In return, communities get volunteers. |
| 23 | Everyone wins ...right? |
| 24 | Not exactly. |
| 25 | Sign up. Drop in. Later, whine a bit while writing a post-service reflection. From teens with 400 service hours to those who just meet the required 40 hours, we're all familiar with the process. |
| 26 | However, service learning promotes short-term, drop-in volunteerism more than genuine involvement in social issues. Sure, we can get our hours at the nearby retirement home or animal shelter-- but we can just as easily get one or two hours at a band concert, a soup kitchen, a library, a park ... |
| 27 | Part of the problem lies in integrating actual learning into service learning. Few of our programs seem to care about the relationship between service and the classroom. Until then, the relevance is null -- it becomes another assignment, compulsory and at risk of being completed half-heartedly. The focus is on the hours spent serving, not the service itself. |
| 28 | As attractive as it may seem, service learning isn't the most effective way of prompting students to become civic-minded. When volunteering becomes mandatory, students can lose the motivation that sparks pure voluntary service. |
| 29 | Having students volunteer their time is hardly a new idea. If given the time to freely pursue our own interests, surely, many of us would still volunteer. Still, doing good can't be force-fed. |

**SOURCE 3**

# Should ‘Volunteering’ Be Mandatory Activity?

**By**[**Tyrone Beason**](http://search.nwsource.com/search?sort=date&from=ST&byline=Tyrone%20Beason)

*Seattle Times Staff Reporter*

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| 30 | Annie Han needs to perform only 60 hours of community service to meet graduation requirements at Shorecrest High School in Shoreline. |
| 31 | But as of last week, Han, still a sophomore, had racked up more than 290 hours, much of it working as a volunteer guide at the Pacific Science Center. |
| 32 | "It's like I don't want to leave," she beamed. |
| 33 | Han's story is an example of what is supposed to happen when schools require their students to volunteer: It then becomes a lasting part of their lives. |
| 34 | Mary Ann Anderson, community-service coordinator for the Shoreline School District, said Shorecrest may have been the first public school in the Seattle area to add community service to its graduation criteria two years ago. |
| 35 | But at least two school districts, Bellevue and Federal Way, are grappling with the idea of nudging their students into community service. |
| 36 | In Federal Way the debate over compulsory service was pushed back until later this year after a committee on graduation requirements proposed further study of the issue. |
| 37 | The committee surveyed 4,668 people in March and found that 92 percent of businesses, 66 percent of parents and 30 percent of 11th-graders surveyed favored a service requirement. |
| 38 | A student representative on the committee, Federal Way High School senior Ken Reyhner, said he instead favored a senior project that encouraged some form of community involvement, something many colleges and universities use to distinguish good applicants from great ones. |
| 39 | “Community service is supposed to be something you want to do," Reyhner said. |
| 40 | About two-thirds of high-school students in the Bellevue School District already do community work by choice, said Jan Stout, coordinator of the district's Community Connections office. |
| 41 | Students' volunteer work is recorded on their transcripts, but volunteering remains strictly optional. Stout has been reluctant to propose changes in that policy. |
| 42 | "I find it very difficult to require students to do something that we want to become a commitment from the heart," she said. |
| 43 | But at many private schools, where mandatory service is an old idea, the issue cuts to the core of their concept of education, says Jean Orvis, director of the Seattle Academy of Arts and Sciences on Capitol Hill. |
| 44 | "We can't just have our students living in ivory towers anymore," Orvis said. |
| 45 | Seattle Academy requires 40 hours of community service from its graduates, and Orvis contends, "It's a wonderful way to broaden the world around them." |
| 46 | A similar line of reasoning led to the decision last year at Rainier Beach High School in Seattle to require community service - 20 hours as of this semester - through a required business course called Human Relationships in the Workplace. |
| 47 | Although some parents and faculty raised concerns about the program early, Joey Collins, the service learning coordinator at Rainier Beach, says the school has a "dual responsibility" to teach academics and good citizenship. |
| 48 | Anderson, the administrator from Shoreline, believes forced community service results in far more positives than negatives. |
| 49 | "We have students who say they wouldn't have done it if it weren't required," she said, "but they valued the experience." |

**SOURCE 4**

What are the best reasons to volunteer?

***BY***[***SARAH SIDDONS***](https://www.howstuffworks.com/hsw-contact.htm)

***HOWSTUFFWORKS.com***

***There are many reasons to be a volunteer -- but probably the best of all is simply to help others.***

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| 50 | With so many people volunteering in so many different ways, the individual reasons for volunteering are almost endless. Probably the best reason of all -- and it's likely why most people volunteer -- is to help others by making a difference and giving back to their community. This is truly a noble reason. But what are some of the other best reasons to volunteer? |
| 51 | One of the best reasons to volunteer is that it is tied to something you're passionate about. Maybe you lost a loved one to a disease and want to keep others from suffering the same fate. Maybe you've always loved animals, but your small apartment isn't an ideal home for a large dog, much less two or three. Maybe art has allowed you to express yourself, and you want to share that with others. Volunteering through different programs lets you be devoted to a cause that's close to your heart while spreading that passion to others. |
| 52 | Another great reason to volunteer is that volunteerism can benefit a professional resume. Many employers and schools look favorably upon volunteer experience. Also, while you're volunteering, you can learn new skills and sharpen old ones, honing your communication, leadership, teamwork and time management talents. You'll also have the chance to network with others and possibly vet out a new career avenue. You might even earn credit toward your schooling. |
| 53 | Meeting people and having fun are also good reasons to volunteer. Perhaps you're retired with plenty of free time on your hands, maybe you have the summer off, or you just have some extra time in the afternoons or on weekends. No matter what your circumstance, volunteering can keep you busy. You'll be able to meet new people and have exciting experiences, instead of sitting around being bored with little or nothing to do. |
| 54 | Whether you want to do your part or make your mark, there are many great reasons to volunteer. And those that benefit from your help will just be happy you did, no matter the reason. |

**Writing Prompt**

Your school district is considering requiring students to earn community service hours in order to graduate. Write an editorial for your school’s newspaper arguing whether a school should require students to earn volunteer hours in order to earn their diploma. Your essay must be based on ideas and information that can be found in the passage set.

Manage your time carefully so that you can

• read the passages;

• plan your response;

• write your response; and

• revise and edit your response.

Be sure to

• include a claim;

• address counterclaims;

• use evidence from multiple sources; and

• avoid overly relying on one source.

Your response should be in the form of a multi-paragraph essay. Write your response in the space provided.