Students (grades 9-12) may receive 1 unit of academic career focus credit for completing 75 hours of certified CSL during a student’s 9-12th grade years. Evidence of preparation, action and reflection must be documented in order to receive the CSL academic credit. Completed plans must be submitted through the Course Approval System (CAS) with the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE).

Community Service Learning (CSL) is an approach to teaching and learning in which students use academic knowledge and skills to address genuine community needs. It is more than just volunteering. Act 648 of 1993 was written to develop a spirit of civic engagement and volunteerism. It allows students in grades nine (9) through twelve (12) who have completed 75 hours of Community Service Learning (CSL) to earn one (1) academic career focus credit toward graduation with appropriate documentation. The course code to be used will be 496010. This is a credit, not a graded course, and the course WILL NOT be calculated in the students GPA or used for Class Rank in the Total Points System. No ½ units of career focus academic credit will be award for CSL, as only one full credit will be awarded for students documenting 75 hours of approved CSL. The GCT School District may certify CSL projects if staff personnel is in attendance while students are completing the CSL activity. If the school does not provide a staff person to be in attendance, then the CSL sponsoring organization must be approved by the State Board of Education and local school board to certify and verify hours for CSL credit.

1. Service Learning is more than completing the hours, but connecting the service to a learning experience based on preparation and reflection. Describe the school’s plan for implementing a CSL program including the following components of preparation, action and reflection.

   The Greene County Tech School district believes that Community Service Learning can be defined as: **Service-Learning** is a teaching and learning strategy in which students learn and develop through active participation in high quality service that:
   • Meets the needs of a community
   • Integrates into and enhances the rigorous academic curriculum
   • Is aligned with the state standards
   • Fosters civic responsibility
   • Provides time for student reflection

**PREPARATION**

The Greene County Tech School District wants to encourage students to find and engage in activities designed to help better the community. It is important that students learn the value of being involved in their community and helping with various community activities participating in community activities through volunteering their time to worthy causes allows students to be involved in various facets of the community that not only provide help the community, but also encourages a commitment to become a more integral part of the community. Students learn the value of giving their time to a beneficial cause.

The GCT School District will launch a plan of Community Service Learning (CSL) information on the District’s web page if the CSL plan is approved by the ADE.
Students will be allowed to earn 1 unit of career focus academic credit for completing 75 hours of community service learning (CSL) while in grades 9-12. Students will complete a Service Learning Planning form that outlines the community service activity that will be completed. The community service learning activity will require pre-approval by the building administrators or the CSL Coordinator. The CSL learning activity may be supervised by a GCT Faculty member or with an agency that has an approved contract with the district to certify CSL hours of service. High School Administrators or the CSL Coordinator serving as the appointed designee may pre-approve and then certify the time sheets of CSL projects.

State Board and GCT School Board Approved Community Service Learning Organizations, Agencies, or Sites will be listed on the GCT Web Page under the CSL (Community Services Link). Records of the approvals will be kept on file at the GCT Central Office in a CSL File/Notebook and copies will be provided to the district CSL Coordinator.

If an organization, agency, or site would like to be considered to participate and host students in Community Services Learning Activities, then they should fill out the request provided on the GCT School District Web Site under the CSL link and submit to the GCT Central Office for Board approval at:

GCT Central Office
Community Service Learning Agency Application
5413 West Kingshighway
Paragould, AR 72450
Phone: 870-236-2762
Fax 870-236-7333

Once the GCT School Board Approves the Agency/Organization Application Request, it will be sent into the ADE for approval.

Community Service Learning (CSL) includes the fundamental skills essential for success in employment, college, family, and community life. The Greene County Tech School District has adopted CSL standards which provide an expectation of the skills and learning outcomes that students should develop by participating in the program. (See Attached Document). The CSL standards will be most meaningful when demonstrated through integrated, interdisciplinary approaches and hands-on activities such as accomplishing a task or discovering a solution to a problem in the classroom or career-related experiences.

**ACTION**

The action phase is the culmination of all that the students have learned so far. This phase intertwines with planning, as students take steps to complete their projects while continuing to monitor programs and make necessary revision and adjustments to plans.

This phase will be used to guide students to plan out tasks, collect evidence, analyzing progress, make adjustments and develop critical skills in problem solving and decision-making. Depending on the type of CSL activity to be completed, this phase could include a training period facilitated by a faculty member or by a community organization.

Students who participate in CSL learning activities will fill out a Community Service Pre-Planning form, approved by the CSL Coordinator and/or building administrators which will require a short description of the activity and parental consent to participate in the CSL activity. Students will also document their service hours on the Student Time Log Sheet and return to the CSL Coordinator and or Building Administrators for verification of completing service. (See attached forms). The forms will be
available in paper format and may be loaded on the district web page and through google docs when the appropriate systems are in place.

Students who wish to participate in the CSL program will fill out a Community Services Learning (CSL) Planning form that will be available on the district’s web page or in the counselor’s office. Both the student, parent, CSL Coordinator, and partnering agency must agree for the student to participate in the CSL Learning. CSL Student Planning Forms may be returned to the:

GCT CSL Coordinator, Ray Stricker (Ray.Stricker@gctsd.k12.ar.us)
GCT High School
4601 Linwood Drive
Paragould, AR 72450
Phone 870-215-4460
Please no faxed forms

During the action phase, after securing CSL course approval from the ADE, the public will be made aware of the CSL program with a handout and various press releases. Partnerships between the schools and community organizations will be highlighted on the district’s web page and in print format. The district will maintain a list of the partnership contracts with community service learning organizations that have secured both state and local permission to offer volunteer service activities to students.

When a student is placed with an organization, agency, or site to participate in CSL activities, a Community Service Letter of agreement must be signed by the student, parent/guardian, local school and the volunteer site. See the district’s web page for a copy of the CSL Service Letter Agreement and the forms will also be available in the counselor’s office.

Once placed in a Community Learning Service organization, agency, or site, each student will fill out a Student Volunteer Informational sheet that will be on file in the CSL Coordinator’s office and will be sent to the partner organization, agency, site, or certified faculty member who is supervising the volunteer activity. See a copy of the Volunteer Student Informational form below.

Students who participate in Community Service Learning (CSL) will be required to document time on the CSL Time Log Sheet that will require signatures and contact information along with a description of the activity or task performed. See link below for a copy of the form. Students must document a total of 75 hours between the 9th and 12th grades in order to receive the one (1) academic career focus credit toward graduation.

REFLECTION
Reflection is the process that guides students in making connections between their service experiences and learning. Reflection should be done throughout all phases of service-learning. Reflection is a conscious examination of what was learned or experienced and involves observation, asking questions, and adding new meaning to the experience. This makes it an expansion of what was learned, not simply a review of what was accomplished.

Once the Community Service Learning (CSL) activity is completed, each individual student will have completed a set of six (6) reflection questions that outline the CSL activity in which the student participated. (See attached form) The form will be available in paper format and may be loaded on the district’s web page and through google docs when the appropriate systems are in place. Students will also complete a written reflection on the back of the CSL Reflection Question page. The following six reflection questions will be answered by students which should provide guidance in the construction of a written summary of the CSL student experience.

- How did this experience help you to better understand your responsibilities and roles as a citizen?
• What skills and knowledge did you acquire through this experience?
• How did your service impact your school or community? How do you know?
• How did this experience help you better understand ideas or subjects you have been studying?
• Give an example of how participating in the Service Learning Activity changed you. Comment on at least two character traits you have future developed during this CSL experience.
• How will you use what you have learned in other situations that occur?

High-quality reflection moves away from simple summaries of the service activity and how participants feel about the experience toward activities that encourage analysis, problem solving, comprehension, evaluation, and inference. Reflection is a process that allows students’ to develop critical thinking skills, and provides an opportunity to discuss, explore and find a resolution to difficult or challenging circumstances. Reflection also provides for additional learning experiences to be gained by students, as they learn to work collaboratively to solve problems, and build a sense of community.

Careful evaluation of the continuing success of the Community Service Learning (CSL) program is a goal of the Greene County Tech School District. There is an evaluation form for students to fill out at the end of a CSL volunteer activity and there is also a form for the approved organization, agency, site, or faculty member to fill out on the CSL experience with students. A copy of the Student CSL Evaluation form and the Community, Agency, Site, Faculty Member Evaluation form is listed below. The goal of continuous improvement will foster the continued success of the Community Service Learning (CSL) program in the Greene County Tech School District.

2. Describe how participation in CSL will benefit students at the school (academic, personal competencies, career focused, etc.).

Students who participate in CSL activities will benefit by being involved and developing personal and social skills. Students will learn to gain self-confidence, self-efficacy and resilience. Hopefully, by participating in CSL activities, students will cultivate a sense of service and leadership skills in serving the community. The goal is to increase students’ political knowledge, and increase the ability for them to be motivated to accomplish tasks. Through completing CSL activities students will benefit in the following:

**Academics:** Students will benefit academically by participating in the following CSL activities:

**Linking the Curriculum:** Service-learning is intentionally used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or content standards.

**Indicators:**
- Service-learning has clearly articulated learning goals.
- Service-learning is aligned with the academic and/or programmatic curriculum.
- Service-learning helps participants learn how to transfer knowledge and skills from one setting to another.
- Service-learning that takes place in schools is formally recognized in school board policies and student records.
- Service learning should encourage students to gain confidence in public speaking by participating in a variety of activities.
- Service learning should motivate students to achieve higher attendance rates.
Progress Monitoring: Service-learning engages participants in an ongoing process to assess the quality of implementation and progress toward meeting specified goals and uses results for improvement and sustainability.

Indicators:
- Service-learning participants collect evidence of progress toward meeting specific service goals and learning outcomes from multiple sources throughout the service-learning experience.
- Service-learning participants collect evidence of the quality of service-learning implementation from multiple sources throughout the service-learning experience.
- Service-learning participants use evidence to improve service learning experiences.
- Service-learning participants communicate evidence of progress toward goals and outcomes with the broader community, including policy makers and education leaders, to deepen service-learning understanding and ensure that high quality practices are sustained.

Reflection: Service-learning incorporates multiple challenging reflection activities that are ongoing and that prompt deep thinking and analysis about oneself and one’s relationship to society.

Indicators:
- Service-learning reflection includes a variety of verbal, written, artistic, and nonverbal activities to demonstrate understanding and changes in participants’ knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes.
- Service-learning reflection occurs before, during, and after the service experience.
- Service-learning reflection prompts participants to think deeply about complex community problems and alternative solutions.
- Service-learning reflection encourages participants to examine their preconceptions and assumptions in order to explore and understand their roles and responsibilities as citizens.
- Service-learning reflection encourages participants to examine a variety of social and civic issues related to their Service-learning experience so that participants understand connections to public policy and civic life.

Personal Competencies: Students will benefit in the area of developing personal competencies by participating in the following CSL activities:

Meaningful Service: Service-learning actively engages participants in meaningful and personally relevant service activities.

Indicators:
- Service-learning experiences are appropriate to participant ages and developmental abilities.
- Service-learning addresses issues that are personally relevant to the participants.
- Service-learning provides participants with interesting and engaging service activities.
- Service-learning encourages participants to understand their service experiences in the context of the underlying societal issues being addressed.
- Service-learning leads to attainable and visible outcomes that are valued by those being served.

Youth Voice: Service-learning provides youth with a strong voice in planning, implementing, and evaluating service-learning experiences with guidance from adults.

Indicators:
- Service-learning engages youth in generating ideas during the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes.
- Service-learning involves youth in the decision-making process throughout the service-learning experience.
- Service-learning involves youth and adults in creating an environment that supports trust and open expression of ideas.
Service-learning promotes acquisition of knowledge and skills to enhance youth leadership and decision-making.

Service-learning involves youth in evaluating the quality and effectiveness of the service-learning experience.

**Career Focused** Students will benefit in areas that are career focused by participating in the following activities:

**Partnerships:** Service-learning partnerships are collaborative, mutually beneficial, and address community needs.

*Indicators:*
- Service-learning involves a variety of partners, including youth, educators, families, community members, community-based organizations, and/or businesses.
- Service-learning partnerships are characterized by frequent and regular communication to keep all partners well-informed about activities and progress.
- Service-learning partners collaborate to establish a shared vision and set common goals to address community needs.
- Service-learning partners collaboratively develop and implement action plans to meet specific goals.
- Service-learning partners share knowledge and understanding of school and community assets and needs and view each other as valued resources.

**Diversity:** Service-learning promotes understanding of diversity and mutual respect among all participants.

*Indicators:*
- Service-learning helps participants identify and analyze different points of view to gain understanding of multiple perspectives.
- Service-learning helps participants develop interpersonal skills in conflict resolution and group decision-making.
- Service-learning helps participants actively seek to understand and value the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of those offering and receiving service.
- Service-learning encourages participants to recognize and overcome stereotypes.

**Duration and Intensity:** Service-learning has sufficient duration and intensity to address community needs and meet specified outcomes.

*Indicators:*
- Service-learning experiences include the processes of investigating community needs, preparing for service, action, reflection, demonstration of learning and impacts, and celebration.
- Service-learning is conducted during concentrated blocks of time across a period of several weeks or months.
- Service-learning experiences provide enough time to address identified community needs and achieve learning outcomes.

The Goal of Community Service Learning opportunities is for students to benefit by being involved and developing personal and social skills. Students will learn to gain self-confidence, self-efficacy and resilience. Hopefully, by participating in CSL activities, students will cultivate a sense of service and leadership skills in serving the community. The goal is for students to gain a confidence in public speaking, improve attendance rates, increase political knowledge, and increase the ability to be motivated to accomplish tasks.

3. Explain the school’s plan for managing CSL activities (coordinator, certifying programs, direct supervising, monitoring and tracking participation in CSL, awarding credit).
The Greene County Tech School District will name a CSL Coordinator that will be located at GCT High School that serves students in grades (10-12). Information for the Greene County Tech Community Service Learning Program (CSLP) will be placed on the district’s website. The website will provide an informational program overview page and will link the state plan (when approved by the ADE) along with all of the necessary forms and documentation and the CSL Coordinator for the district.

GCT CSL Coordinator, Ray Stricker (Ray.Stricker@gctsd.k12.ar.us)
GCT High School
4601 Linwood Drive
Paragould, AR 72450
Phone 870-215-4460
Please no faxed forms

Greene County Tech Certified Faculty members may elect to supervise students in CSL activities, however, that must be pre-approved by the CSL Coordinator and or building administrators prior to CSL hours being logged. The CSL Planning form outlines the process for pre-approval and requires several steps in parental consent, and student explanation of the volunteer activity.

Outside agencies, organizations, or sites that wish to offer Community Service Learning experiences with students will have to fill out a form that will be submitted to the GCT School Board for approval and then will be sent to the Arkansas Department of Education for approval as well.

Once an agency, organization, or site is GCT Board and ADE Board approved and agrees to provide a CSL activity for students, there will be a Community Service Letter of Agreement that is signed by the student, parent/guardian, local school (CSL coordinator/building administrator) and the volunteer site that outlines certain policies and procedures of the volunteer activity, including the documentation of hours.

Students who participate in CSL activities will be required to keep a time log that outlines a description of the volunteer activity and records the amount of volunteer time that is verified by a representative of the agency, organization or volunteer site.

Students will also fill out a Student Informational sheet that will be retained by the CSL Coordinator and copies provided to the approved agency, organization, or volunteer site. If a certified faculty member is the supervisor, then they will also receive a copy of this form. It is the responsibility of the student to document the hours and provide the 75 hour requirement to the CSL coordinator in order to receive one (1) hour of academic credit.

One (1) hour of academic career focus credit toward graduation with appropriate documentation listed above will be awarded to students in grades nine (9) through twelve (12) who have completed 75 hours of approved Community Service Learning (CSL). The course code used will be 496010. This is a credit, not a graded course, and the course WILL NOT be calculated in the students GPA or used for Class Rank in the Total Points System. No ½ units of career focus academic credit will be awarded for CSL, as only one full credit will be awarded for students documenting 75 hours of approved CSL. The GCT School District may certify CSL projects if staff personnel is in attendance while students are completing the CSL activity. If the school does not provide a staff person to be in attendance, then the CSL sponsoring organization must be approved by the State Board of Education and local school board to certify and verify hours for CSL credit.

4. What additional partner organizations does the district plan to assist in obtaining local and State Board approval to certify CSL?
To date, the Greene County Tech School District does not have any agency, organization, or site partnerships approved by the local school board or the ADE. The goal of CSL activities includes the development of positive work skills and attitudes along with students learning strong job and community skills including how to plan activities, interview skills, and the skills required in working with others to complete a task.

The partner organizations on the ADE Web site for Greene County that will be asked to provide CSL learning opportunities for students include:

- Crowley’s Ridge Chapter of the American Red Cross,
- 4-H University of Arkansas, Cooperative Extension Service NE7
- Arkansas Methodist Hospital
- Greene County Department of Human Services
- School of the 21st Century
- Senior Bees of Greene County

Community-school partnerships are an essential element of service-learning experiences in which students, teachers and community partners design projects to address community needs as part of their academic studies. Community-school partnerships can help students to increase their understanding and commitment to civic responsibility, and can help community organizations meet their goals. These partnerships may include community or faith-based organizations, grassroots or advocacy organizations, other schools, colleges or businesses, or government agencies. The Greene County Tech School District is open to additional partnership opportunities based on local and state board approval with a signed letter of agreement from the following possible agencies, organizations, and volunteer sites:

- Pay It Forward Paragould
- Lions Club
- Kiwanis Club
- Rotary Club
- Greene County Library
- Reading on the Ridge
- Paragould/Greene County
- Paragould Parks/Recreation
- Crowley’s Ridge State Park
- Belle Meade Nursing Home
- Greene Acres Nursing Home
- Local 4-H Clubs
- Mission Outreach
- Paragould Housing Authority
- more TBA as discovered in the community

Students may also engage in service-learning through extracurricular clubs and groups which can be supervised by a certified Greene County Tech Faculty Member. Some sample volunteer activities that occur in clubs include Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA), National Honor Society (NHS), Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), Beta Club, Future Farmers of America (FFA), ROTC, Tech TV Channel 26, East Lab, GCT Thespian Troupe, GCT Choir, Rotary Interact, Key Club, Lions Club, and Student Council.

The goal of CSL activities includes the development of positive work skills and attitudes along with students learning strong job and community skills including how to plan activities, interview skills, and the skills required in working with others to complete a task. This is just a beginning program list as volunteer opportunities for students will prove to be endless, as the district will have a plan in place to provide for approval, and participation in the community service opportunities.
5. What safety policies and procedures does the school have in place to certify CSL for outside organizations?

The Greene County Tech School District is committed to providing safe opportunities for students to participate in Community Service Learning Activities. In order to meet this goal, several guidelines follow which will also be provided to Community Service Learning Sites:

Community Service Students Security Guidelines:
Transportation WILL NOT be provided for students to participate in CSL activities, as it will be the responsibility of the student, and or parent/guardian. If the CSL volunteer activity is supervised by a GCT faculty member, then transportation may be arranged for the activity but will be up to the certified faculty member who will follow all GCT Transportation and Field Trip guidelines and procedures. Permission forms and a contract of agreement will be signed by the student, parent/guardian, local school CSL Coordinator, and the volunteer site. There is also a waiver of liability found of the CSL student planning form that parents/guardians must sign. At any time that a student feels unsafe in a volunteer activity, they need to exit the activity and make contact with a parent/guardian and/or school representative. Express all concerns to those involved in the development of the letter of service agreement. Specific safety considerations for students to consider when working at an approved CSL volunteer site include:

- Participate in orientation if provided
- Make sure you know whom to contact at the approved volunteer CSL site and in case of emergency.
- Make sure you know how to exit the approved CSL volunteer site in case of an emergency.
- Ask for help from your supervisor or another staff member at your CSL site when in doubt.
- Be punctual and responsible in completing your commitment to the service site.
- Call your site supervisor if you know you will be late or not able to come in at all.
- Keep all information about clients you work with confidential.
- Show respect for your CSL site, its staff, and its clients.
- Be aware that you are representing yourself and the Greene County Tech School District in all activities.
- Know that if you are having trouble or feel unsafe at your CSL site, you can talk with the CSL coordinator or a GCT faculty member. In some instances an alternative placement or opportunity will be afforded to you.
- Sign-in at your CSL site every time you are there, and record your service hours on your student service time log. This will ensure you receive credit for the hours you have served.
- Don’t report to your CSL site under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
- Don’t give or loan a client money or other personal belongings.
- Don’t make promises or commitments to a client that you cannot keep.
- Don’t give a client or community-based organization representative a ride in a personal vehicle.
- Verbal exchanges of a sexual nature are not to be tolerated and don’t engage in behavior that might be perceived as sexual with a client or community-based organization representative.
- Don’t tolerate verbal exchanges or engage in behavior that might be perceived as discriminating against an individual on the basis of his/her age, race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, or ethnicity.
- Don’t engage in any type of business with clients during the term of your service.
- Don’t enter into personal relationships with a client or community-based organization representative during the term of your service.

Community Service Learning Sites Security Guidelines:
- Thoroughly review the Service-Learning Agreement to understand the roles and responsibilities of all parties. (See Service-Learning Agreement/Contract and maintain a copy).
- Ensure that service learners comply with any legal requirements for background checks, if required for the activity.
- Assign a supervisor for service learners at your site if the student is not supervised by a GCT Faculty member.
- Orient all community service learners (CSL) to the organization and its safety policies, procedures,
clientele profile, and emergency procedures. This will ensure that service learners act in safe, positive, and productive ways during their placements at volunteer sites.

- Require that service learners complete a sign-in/out sheet each time they serve, so that the CSL Site is aware of who is at the organization at all times. (See Student Service Time Logs)
- Communicate with school building administrators if the CSL organization is experiencing a difficult time with a service learner.
- Ensure that you have contact information for a representative at the school district/faculty sponsor in case problems arise, or accidents happen.
- Ensure that each volunteer site has a copy of the student volunteer form that contains emergency contact information for community service learners and a simple medical release form.

**Community Service Learning Sites School Security Guidelines:**

- Review each student’s Learning Plan to ensure that you can help the students meet their service-learning objectives. (See CSL Student Planning Form).
- Don’t share the results of any background check with university representatives.
- Don’t assume that any final products produced by students are the sole property of the community-based organization. The final products are the property of the student, but more often than not, the student can grant rights to use the product to the community based organization.
- Don’t request that service learners do tasks that are beyond their capabilities, or beyond their scope.
- Understand that faculty members can be individually named in lawsuits and should play an active role in ensuring safe and positive community service-learning experiences for their students.
- Know that faculty members will be indemnified and protected by the school district in the case of a lawsuit, so long as the faculty member was acting within the scope of his or her work/duties.
- Offer alternative placements and/or opportunities for students in service-learning courses when the learning site/location is not approved via the risk assessment to avoid potential risks.
- Meet the special safety needs of any student should they be identified and listed on a safety plan or noted in the student’s permanent record.
- Be aware that there are state and federal regulations regarding background checks for those students whose service-learning placements are at learning sites that work with children, the elderly, or persons with disabilities. The cost of the background checks will be incurred by the student wishing to participate in the CSL approved activity.
- Keep a record of each Student Information Fact sheet which will contain emergency contact information for students and what the procedures would be should an emergency occur.