

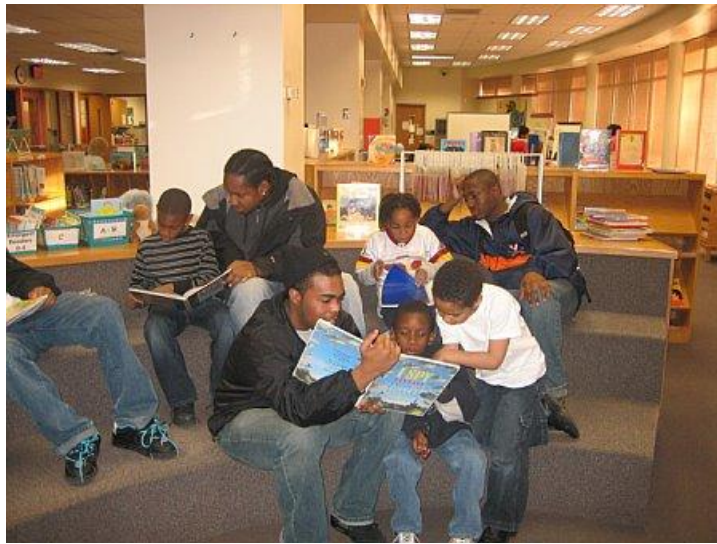
## **Government Class Senior Year Service Project**

A Character Education Partnership (CEP) Promising Practice

West Potomac High School  
Alexandria, Virginia

Focus on Principles 3, 5, 6, 7, 9 and 10 of CEP's 11 Principles where projects are to connect student understanding of citizenship and service through the opportunity for moral action, which creates highly engaged students who develop intrinsic motivation, student leadership and a greater connection to their community.

Grade level: 12



Personal discovery about the community is at the heart of West Potomac's comprehensive service-learning program that engages seniors in real-world problems. Through senior government classes, students identify a social issue or problem in which they have a vested interest, research and write about the issue, and devote at least 30 hours to a relevant organization. This year-long project is divided into four parts: 1st quarter to research and write a paper to report on their chosen issue; 2nd quarter to contact a local organization to arrange service hours; 3rd quarter to

complete service hours and write journal entries; 4th quarter to assemble portfolios and prepare presentations. With the support of government teachers, social workers, and the administrative team, in the 2007-08 school year more than 500 students participated through either political action and service organizations or a number of mentoring and tutoring programs. The benefits to the school and community were significant, including moving the school climate to a more focused and professional learning environment and helping the community interact with and learn to appreciate the good character and multitude of talents West Potomac students demonstrated.

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