Community service is often seen as a way for people to help improve their communities. Though some people take part in community service through clubs or faith groups, some schools are now requiring their students to engage in a set number of hours of community service each year.

Is community service an effective way of helping to improve a community? Should community service be a required part of a school’s curriculum? Does community service enhance school curriculum or does it move the focus away from the main purpose of school?

_In thinking about this issue, please address the following aspects fully and in-depth. Your responses will be rated on your ability to think and respond critically and creatively. Responses will be judged against others of the same age and grade and are not expected to be competitive with students of older groups._

Sometimes applicants have questions about what outside help is allowed when working on an SEP application prompt. Part of adequately responding to this prompt does require talking with people, listening to their ideas and input, and discussing your own ideas with other people. (It is also a good idea to have someone proofread your response before you submit it!) Responding to this prompt also requires you to spend a substantial amount of time thinking, researching, and writing on your own. The final product that you submit to us should be the result of your own work to synthesize the information and ideas you have researched and discussed with other people.

Consider multiple perspectives or points of view on community service (for example, from students, families, and teachers to administrators, community members, and researchers). In a format of your choice that you feel best suits your information, represent and describe what you consider to be the key or most important perspectives on this issue. Who thinks that community service is important? Not important? Are some types of activities more important than others? Why? _These are some of the questions you can begin to ask. Feel free to consider other relevant questions as well._ Please include a list of where you got your information (interviews you conducted, research articles you read, etc.)

Thinking about all of these perspectives, construct what you believe is the most effective school policy regarding community service. Be sure your policy is described in detail so that the students, parents, principal, and district administrators will really understand what you mean. Please describe your reasoning. How did you design this policy? What were your reasons for including what you did? What makes this policy effective?

Should schools even have a community service policy? Perhaps your policy describes why community service is not required by your school. Remember, policies can serve several purposes; some possible purposes of policies are to require something, to tell how something will function, or to prohibit something from taking place.

Please note that this year, the SEP online application system will only accept ONE uploaded file, so please consider this when responding to the prompt. If your response is not in a format that you can upload online, you should call us at 434-924-3182 for assistance.