Due to the increased number of students participating in the Service Learning for Educational Distinction (SLED) program, it has become necessary to document the policies and procedures that involve students. Currently, there is one SLED director and approximately 150-200 students per semester. To ensure that all processes go smoothly, policy and procedures are described here.

In general, policies are created in response to past situations that have not gone well. Policy manuals, therefore, are typically full of rules and penalties for breaking rules. This manual is no exception. The philosophy behind service learning is one of dedication to changing the world, one interaction at a time. Policy manuals are, by nature, full of “no’s” and “don’t” and listings of consequences. We provide this manual to all SLED students, with the understanding that the vast number of students who participate in service learning in the College of Education are committed, professional, and eager to gain experiences that reflect the professional work the student wants to do after graduation. This policy manual is only meant to serve as a guide to the rules and processes that have been created to ensure that everyone who participates starts with the full knowledge of what is to be expected from a College of Education SLED student.

To understand what you have been asked to do, the definition of service learning that guides the SLED office is that it is an instructional method that integrates service to the community into academic instruction through reflective thinking about both academic learning and civic responsibility.

Service learning is a teaching and learning method that connects meaningful community service with academic learning through guided reflection. Areas of focus include:

- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Values Clarification
- Career Exploration
- Social and Personal Development
- Civic and Community Responsibility

The SLED office was developed to provide opportunities for students to learn the course material by working with a diverse population within agencies who commit to providing our students with mentoring opportunities to build leadership and critical thinking skills.

The College of Education prepares students to enter the workforce as professionals. As such, students who agree to participate in service learning and are assigned to work at a community agency or school are representing the college as well as positioning themselves for future employment with the school system or community agency. Student conduct that would not be tolerated in a work environment will similarly not be tolerated in the SLED program. When in doubt about what is acceptable, ask yourself if you would act or speak similarly to the principal or a director of a community agency who may have hired you. As an example, dropping the “f-bomb” is never a good idea.
The SLED office’s purpose is to be a service center to support instructors, students, and the staff of service learning agency partners. The office works to provide access to and confirmation of completion of service learning activities that instructors have included in their syllabus. The SLED director has no involvement in the creation of course content, course assignments, or the grading of students’ work. These are academic decisions made by each instructor. The SLED director is only responsible for placing students with agencies or schools that have agreed to partner with the College of Education as long as placements are available and students have adhered to all requirements. To this end, student conduct at these agencies is also under the purview of the SLED director as negative conduct can hurt the relationship that has been established with an agency. Thus, if student conduct either in response to the SLED director’s decisions or in regards to the student’s work at the agency is deemed to be disrespectful or irresponsible, the SLED director has the right to remove a student from the service learning program. If participation in service learning is a requirement of the course, a student who is removed from the program should contact his or her instructor to inquire about what, if any, alternative assignments exist. The service learning director will also contact the instructor to inform him or her of the removal.

Specific and Detailed Policies

1. Arranging the Agency Placement
   The SLED director will be invited by the class instructor to present to the class in the first weeks of the semester. The steps each student needs to take in order to be given a place at a school or agency will be explained. The SLED director is not the person who mandates your involvement; she, in essence, serves as the liaison between the school/agency, the instructor, and the student. Anger at or frustration with the service learning assignment should not be taken out on the SLED Director.

   After the Director comes to your class, you may then call the SLED office to make an appointment for your placement consultation. The consultations are scheduled for 45 – 60 minutes to allow the Director to find out about your interests and answer questions you may have. Delaying meeting with the Director often results in service learning slots at particular schools or agencies being taken by others. The later you call, the fewer service learning sites will be available to you. Agencies have communicated to the Director the number of service learning students they can accept each semester. The Director is not responsible if an agency or school site becomes unavailable because all slots at that agency/school have been taken by others.

   Because the ratio of students each semester to the SLED director 150-200 to 1, the policies regarding the placement meetings are specific and non-negotiable. Students must call the SLED office to make an appointment. If the Director is out of the office presenting to other classes, leave her a message so that she can return your call and schedule the appointment. Meeting times occur over a five week period. Meetings will be scheduled between 8:30 am and 4 pm (last meeting ends at 5 pm) Monday through Friday for five weeks. No meetings will be schedule before 8:30 or after 4 pm, and no meetings will be scheduled during week-ends. There are more than enough meeting times for all students. However, toward the end of the five weeks, if a
student misses a meeting or needs to cancel and reschedule, or waits until the last week to call for an appointment, there is the possibility that no additional meeting slots will be available as they have already been filled previously by other students. The policy here is clear; no placement meeting, no service learning participation for that semester. It isn’t personal, it is just policy.

Next, there are three requirements for the meeting.

(1) Students must be on time. Students who are five or more minutes late will be scheduled into the next available slot. Six minutes late, and the policy has been violated. If there are no more slots left, then the student can’t participate in service learning that semester.

(2) Students must print out and bring with them the last two sheets of the student packet that was attached to your meeting confirmation email, and can also be found on the SLED website at http://emd.education.nmsu.edu/grant-programs/service/. The last dot is a period, and not part of the address.

The SLED office does not have printed copies available nor can the Director print them for students. If you do not have the printed sheets with you when you come to your meeting and the meeting is automatically rescheduled. This applies to sheets that were left in your car or dorm room that you want to just run back and get.

(3) For those who will be placed in Las Cruces Public Schools, you must bring your blue background check card with you to the meeting. No blue card and the meeting is automatically rescheduled.

After the required placement consultation, if you need to meet with SLED Director, you must make the request through email. She will then call you and you both can schedule a meeting time. If a person is already in the office talking with the Director, please take a seat and wait for the meeting to end. Do not interrupt the meeting with a “quick question.” You deserve this respect when you are meeting with her, and thus providing that same respect for others is essential.

At the end of the semester, one last requirement remains. The SLED Director will need you to hand to her your completed pink-colored service hours time sheet. At the end of semester, the Director will be available during an announced and specified time-span so that you can turn in the sheet directly to her. If you hand it to someone else, or slide it under the door or send it to her through mail, etc. and she does not receive the sheet, then she will not be able to let your instructor know that you completed your service learning hours and thus completed this part of the course assignment. Without the pink time sheet, no verification can be given to your instructor.

**General Policies Regarding Conduct**

Students who use bad language directed at the SLED Director or the staff in the Educational Leadership and Administration department in which SLED is housed will result in the termination of the meeting or phone call; the instructor will be informed of the incident, and the student will be removed from the SLED program. Based on the severity of the verbal assault, the SLED Director reserves the right to refuse to admit the student into the program in future
semesters. Language that is “bad” will be determined by the recipient of the remark. If you use specific language and the person perceives this as “bad,” then it is treated as “bad.”

Students who are absent at the agency during the agreed-upon service learning time without contacting the SL director and the site supervisor and without a documented excuse (see below) will be removed from the service learning program for that semester. Two absences and you’re out of the program.

If you are going to be late to your service learning agency, or if you are going to be absent, it is absolutely required that you contact both the SLED Director AND your supervisor at your service learning site. If you know in advance that you will be absent, you must make these calls before the time that you were to arrive. For an absence to be excused, you must show the Director documented proof explaining your absence. An unexcused absence or an absence that was not communicated to both the SLED Director AND site supervisor may be grounds for immediate dismissal from the program for that semester.

Finally, if you are permanently dismissed from a SLED agency by an administrator, supervisor, and/or teacher this will result in immediate dismissal from the Service Learning Program.

**Specific Policy Requirements for LCPS Placements**

For those who want to be placed within the Las Cruces Public School district, the agreement between SLED and LCPS specifies that access to classrooms is restricted to service learning students who can provide a minimum of six hours of mentoring and tutoring to LCPS students during class time. Observations of classrooms do not count toward this requirement, nor does teaching the class for practice to fulfill a course requirement. Students benefit from the experience gained in the classroom and the schools benefit from the extra support SLED participants provide to LCPS students, exemplifying the spirit of service learning that there are benefits for all involved. Students who need to fulfill specific course requirements hours involving the public schools in addition to the minimum of six hours of service learning-related mentoring and tutoring should contact the instructor for details regarding that academic assignment.