



Integrated Approaches of Student Leadership Services

The vision of Student Leadership Services (SLS) is healthy youth - youth that are physically, socially, emotionally, psychologically and intellectually at their best. To that end, SLS programming addresses the needs of the whole child.

The youth-led programs of the SLS network are structured as school-based organizations. They are: High School Chapters named Students Leading Students; Middle School Chapters named Students Taking A New Direction (STAND); Elementary Go BIG! (Belonging, Involving and Growing); Advisor conferences; Alumni Volunteers. Leadership conferences, trainings, youth-led events, website, social media, and materials support each program of SLS.

To contribute to the process of healthy youth development, SLS integrates youth and asset development, substance abuse prevention principles and effective learning strategies to accomplish our mission. As the child integrates all senses, past experiences, attitudes and information into each moment, SLS integrates multiple strategies into experiences designed for our youth. Imagine the Department of Education, Substance Abuse/Prevention agencies and Youth Development correlating strategies. The best practices emerge. This is the comprehensive approach of SLS.

To begin, SLS addresses youth development theories. We design programs, trainings and events that consider Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. In fact, we use Maslow's chart to help students themselves strengthen their groups. We consider Erikson's Stages of Development, especially "Industry versus Inferiority" and "Identity versus Role Confusion." Programs and trainings provide and facilitate opportunities to explore, reinforce or internalize personal, interpersonal and social skills and ease the struggle during these stages of development for youth. Student-led chapters create solidarity with adolescent group ideals and purpose.

SLS structures the environment during trainings, events and experiences to provide a stimulus for learning. SLS uses multiple intelligences, ways of learning and knowing. Students are actively engaged with all senses by reading, hearing, seeing, speaking and discussing using these effective methods to offer maximum retention by incorporating the five basic senses.

Bronfenbrenner believes the intervention and interconnection of all spheres of influence need to be addressed to provide better delivery of services to children. SLS links adult advisors in schools, mentors in the community and peers to peers through organizations in and related to the SLS network. SLS strives to shape these interventions to be positive and successful. Cooperation skills are developed through peer to peer and cooperative learning strategies. In addition, the inclusive philosophy of SLS groups provide for non-judgmental attitudes and multi-cultural and non-sexist activities.

Some or all of these approaches may be utilized in SLS training for youth. The environment and experiences are dynamic, creative, interactive and fun. Youth respond when it is apparent that



they are respected, trusted and needed, and given developmentally appropriate experiences to learn and practice.

Skill development in SLS includes the steps to developing a skill: Explain, demonstrate, practice, feedback about the skill, praise and behavioral homework assignments. These techniques are incorporated into all skill development training, curriculum and experiences in SLS. Students also use process and outcome evaluations of their efforts.

In summary, SLS utilizes the best practices in developmental theory, education and learning and prevention in an integrated, comprehensive approach. Programs, led by peers, deliver information, shape or change attitudes, create belonging, a sense of value and purpose by involving youth in the process.

Youth engagement is a result of creating a sense of ownership and opportunities for involvement. When students feel at home in a group, they become engaged. A very special attitude of acceptance and support with clear limits and high expectations produce optimal results.

How does SLS work? We engage youth (passion), lead students (vision), train students (skills) allow practice (real and interactive), provide feedback (affirmation), and offer consistent, dependable and ongoing support (love). We value youth, create a sense of belonging and significance. This is a dynamic youth development process. Prevention is the outcome of this process. Competent, committed and skilled leaders is the ultimate outcome.

SLS Vision

Every student can be a positive leader in changing thoughts and challenging behaviors.

SLS Mission

Student Leadership Services is a Michigan-based nonprofit dedicated to ensuring our youth remain safe, healthy, and alcohol and drug free. SLS accomplishes this through innovative and evidence-based prevention programs within student-led, adult-supported school chapters.

SLS Values

SLS protects youth. Every child is important. Youth are the future.
One person can make a difference. Youth can influence youth. Youth input is critical.