Cesar Chavez Advocacy Project
Primary Content Area: Algebra I

Introduction
March is Cesar Chavez month in many parts of the United States. Cesar Chavez (1927-1993) fought for farm workers better working conditions. By examining the working conditions of farm workers whom Chavez led, students will be able to learn and utilize math skills to gain a deeper understanding of historical and contemporary social issues. Using graphs students will be able to calculate and compare the changes in wages for farm workers and laborers during the last 40 years. Students will also gain an understanding of Chavez's advocacy for an unrepresented sector and be able to identify a cause for advocacy.

Project Goals
- Students will be able to compare and calculate wages.
- Students will be able to calculate rate of change of past and present wages.
- Students will be able to construct, read, and interpret graphs.
- Students will develop an understanding of Cesar Chavez and his contributions.
- Students will gain an understanding of the working conditions of farm workers both historically and today.
- Students will reflect upon their service-learning experience.

Procedure/Project Sequence
1. Conduct a pre-assessment of student knowledge of both farm workers and laborers. This should include questions regarding which types of jobs are considered farm workers and which are considered manual labor. Introduce wages for various positions, length of work year, and the conditions of work places. You can use the U.S. Department of Labor website to gather statistics on wages at www.bls.gov/bls/blswage.htm.
3. Calculate rate of change for farm workers and labor workers using past and present wages. Class discussion of findings comparing the results and how do these changes affect the quality of living for each group.
4. Using the rate of change results, students will be able to decide what graphical representation will be used.
5. The graphical representation can be useful information for students in Social Studies classes. Students can present findings to these students in short presentations.
6. Guide a class discussion of Cesar Chavez and his advocacy work. For a biography, timeline, and outline of his core values, go to the Cesar Chavez foundation website at www.chavezfoundation.org. You can also find five lesson plans on the life and work of Cesar Chavez at www.servicelearning.cps.k12.il.us/Curriculum.html.
7. For a service project, you can choose from one of the four following options:
   - Give students the opportunity to select a current boycott issue involving the farm workers and join in the boycott effort. Current boycotts are posted on the Cesar Chavez foundation website at www.chavezfoundation.org.
Contact the Greater Chicago Food Depository and sign up for a morning, afternoon, or evening working at the Depository. Students love to serve at the Food Depository and the connection to Cesar Chavez and his work with the men and women who handle food in the fields is direct. Contact Volunteer Services at 773/247-3663, Food Depository.

In March, sign-up for a Cesar Chavez Day of Service through the CPS Service-Learning Initiative. Contact Jessica Marshall at 773/553-6391 or at jmmarshall2@cps.edu.

Students may also present graphs, stories, and information on Cesar Chavez to neighborhood elementary schools as a reflection on the service-learning project.

8. Guide your students in a reflection activity or discussion to culminate this project. Have your students, for example, choose one value of Cesar Chavez and write about how Chavez lived that value and how the value was encountered during the service-project. Have your students evaluate how they did/worked together during their service experience. What is the relevancy for the life and values of Cesar Chavez today?

Community Partners/Resources
Cesar Chavez Foundation - www.chavezfoundation.org
Department of Labor - www.dol.gov/esa/regs/compliance/whd/whdcomp.htm
United Farm Workers - www.ufw.org
The Fight in the Fields: Cesar Chavez and Farmworkers Movement, Susan Ferriss, Ricardo Sandoval, and Diana Hembree

Addendum
This project addresses the following Common Core State Standards:
CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.HSA.CED.A.2
Create equations in two or more variables to represent relationships between quantities; graph equations on coordinate axes with labels and scales.
CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.HSA.CED.A.3
Represent constraints by equations or inequalities, and by systems of equations and/or inequalities, and interpret solutions as viable or nonviable options in a modeling context. For example, represent inequalities describing nutritional and cost constraints on combinations of different foods.
CCSS.MATH.CONTENT.HSA.REI.D.10
Understand that the graph of an equation in two variables is the set of all its solutions plotted in the coordinate plane, often forming a curve (which could be a line).

Duration
Students should spend 5-12 hours on the project depending on the project you and your students select and how much time is spent on the action component of the project.
Preparation: Learning about wage disparities, rate of change, and graphing along with background information on Cesar Chavez – 5 hours
Action: Project on boycott/visit to Food Depository/Participation in Chavez Days of Service – 5 hours
Reflection: Writing/Presentation/Discussion – 1-2 hours

Cross-Curricular Connections: Connections with a Social Studies class studying the civil rights or Chicano movement or a Spanish language class could be made during this project.