INTRODUCTION TO SENIOR CAREER CAPSTONE PROJECT

Senior Career Capstone Project is the concluding phase of The Cherokee County School District’s Career Pathway model initiated to better prepare you, the student, to meet the needs of employers, technical schools, colleges, or universities in your post-secondary endeavors. This initiative provides you with a Capstone Project to showcase the skills you have acquired over the past twelve years of public school. It combines both academic as well as career requirements intended to challenge your ability, stretch your limitations, and celebrate your individuality.

REQUIRED FORMS

Product Proposal (page 8-9), due by August 26, 2016
Master Agreement Form (pages 10-11), due by September 23, 2016
Product Verification Form (page 12), due by April 11, 2017

THE PRODUCT PROPOSAL

The proposal is the initial step in the Senior Career Capstone Project process as approval is needed in order to continue on with the proposed Senior Career Capstone Project. All student proposals are due to the student’s English teacher on or before August 26, 2016. The proposals are reviewed by the English teachers and a committee of faculty members. This Senior Career Capstone Project Committee not only reviews initial proposals, but also reviews all appeals. Once a proposal has been approved, the student is free to begin work on his or her Senior Career Capstone Project. A blank proposal form along with an explanation can be found on pages 8-9

SENIOR CAREER CAPSTONE PROJECT COMMITTEE

The Senior Career Capstone Project Committee is a committee of River Ridge High School faculty members who have been trained on the Senior Career Capstone Project. This committee is tasked with evaluating initial proposals in the Senior Career Capstone Project process as well as any appeals and changes throughout the year. If a proposal is not approved, the students may choose to go through an appeal process, in which he or she will compose a narrative and make an oral presentation to the committee seeking further approval. Additionally, any changes made to the initial, approved proposal throughout the course of the year must be approved by the committee. More information on the appeal can be found on page 13.
OVERVIEW OF THE FOUR COMPONENTS

1 – THE PAPER
For the research paper, students research an issue related to their product, establish an argumentative thesis, and support it with substantive research. Specific guidelines are provided by each classroom teacher.

*Example*: A persuasive paper on the importance of reading to children early in life to promote childhood literacy

2 – THE PRODUCT
In choosing the product, students should strongly consider something they are passionate about as well as something that embodies the rewards and challenges of a rigorous learning stretch. This learning stretch is attained through the acquisition of a skill that the student has not already mastered. For example, a student may be very well-versed in home plumbing, but to stretch that skill, he may propose to learn how to install an in-ground sprinkler system. The context of plumbing is still there, but the skill is completely different. Another critical consideration is the Facilitator/Mentor. Students select this person based on his or her expertise and the facilitator’s ability to guide the senior through the project. More about Facilitator/Mentor requirements can be found on page 7.

Each student is required to devote a *minimum* of fifteen hours in the completion of his or her product. *NOTE*: Hours cannot be logged for work completed during the regular school day, nor can they be logged at River Ridge High School. Additionally, the product cannot be part of a class assignment. Also, work on the product cannot begin and cannot be logged until the proposal has been submitted and approved.

*Example*: Collecting used books and establishing a library for children who may be underprivileged

3 – THE PORTFOLIO
The portfolio provides tangible documentation of the student’s Senior Career Capstone Project journey. It also serves as the initial introduction of the student and his or her project to the judges at Senior Boards in April. In addition to all forms and documents, two additional artifacts to substantiate your product are required as evidence. The portfolio will be put together in the students’ English class in during the spring semester.

4 – THE PRESENTATION
The culminating component of Senior Career Capstone Project is the presentation – Senior Boards, an eight- to ten-minute presentation before a panel of school and community judges. River Ridge Senior Boards will be held on April 25 & 26, 2017. Students must create a Prezi for their visual aid.
THE PAPER

The research paper is NOT a chronicle of “What I did for my Senior Career Capstone Project,” nor is it a “how-to” paper or a “report.” Rather, it is a persuasive paper that takes a stand on an issue related to the product or to a current issue in the field chosen for the career link. The paper is written using APA Style. Specific guidelines and due dates for this paper will be outlined by the student’s English teacher. A clean copy of the paper must be placed in the portfolio for Senior Board Presentations as well.

THE PRODUCT

HOW DO I CHOOSE A PRODUCT?
Think about all of the things you are passionate about or interested in. Don't limit yourself initially; in fact, brainstorm ideas as they come to you, and then narrow and prioritize. The most rewarding Senior Career Capstone Projects are those with a rigorous learning stretch – those where students truly challenge themselves and step out of their comfort zone to benefit not only themselves, but also their school and community.

SENIOR CAREER CAPSTONE PROJECT APPROVAL
Once approval of the proposal is granted, students can begin logging hours for work on their products, but NOT UNTIL THEN. The proposal will be due in the student’s English class on August 26, 2016.

PRODUCT REQUIREMENTS
In completing the required learning stretch, students will select a Facilitator/Mentor: a person who has the expertise they need to acquire in producing a polished and professional product. Students are required to devote a minimum of fifteen hours in completing their project. Hours will be logged in a specific format and within a specific time frame in order to fulfill the requirements of Senior Career Capstone Project and confirm authenticity. NOTE: Hours cannot be logged for work completed during the regular school day, nor can the product be a part of the class assignment. Your product may not serve to fulfill any outside requirements such as those for an Eagle Scout project.

FUNDRAISERS AS PRODUCTS
Because of the strict career link aspect of the Senior Career Capstone Project, general fundraisers are rarely approved. If funds are raised as a part of a business-related project, however, a receipt verifying funds received by the designated charity along with the Donation Accountability Form must be submitted to the English teacher before the student will receive a grade for the product. A copy of the receipt must be included in the portfolio. The student must keep the original copy for his or her records. The name, phone number, and email address of the contact person at the organization or charity receiving funds must be included in the student’s proposal.
PHYSICAL TRAINING-RELATED PRODUCTS
The student cannot be the subject of his/her product. If the student is setting up a program, he/she must provide quantitative and qualitative analysis (data before and after program) for at least five participants. The plan, NOT THE PARTICIPANTS, will be the product, but the data from the training will be used to support the product. The student’s Facilitator/Mentor must be an expert in the area.

HEALTHCARE-RELATED PRODUCTS
Students might consider taking classes for certification (i.e. CPR, first aid classes, nursing aid, etc.).

SPORTS-RELATED PRODUCTS
Neither coaching a team nor running a skills camp is an acceptable Senior Career Capstone Project. Instead, those interested in a coaching career will complete a project related to teaching since all coaches start as teachers, most in content areas.

INELIGIBLE PRODUCTS
No purchased or ready-made models or kits will be accepted! You cannot build a computer for your Senior Career Capstone Project. No animals or people can be used as products. Neither you nor any other student can be a product. For example, you cannot “train” an animal or teach another student or perform a makeover on yourself or someone else. Product must be directly related to the chosen career. For example selling bracelets to benefit breast cancer research is NOT a suitable product for the career of Oncology. Students may incorporate this kind of event as an element of their experience; however, this event will not be acceptable as the product. Shadowing is not a product and does not count toward the 15 hours required to produce your product. You must be actively involved in the creation of a finished body of work in order to enter the hours into your Time Log. Products which incur an unusual personal safety risk will not be approved. No product will be approved for two or more students to complete together. Each product is individual.

CONSIDERATIONS
- **Cost:** Your grade is NOT based on how much you spend on your Product.
- **Time:** Your Product must be completed by the due date.
- **Monetary Gain:** No student can receive any monetary gains from his/her product.
- **Cherokee County Employees:** No student can work for any county employee, and no county employee may benefit from your product.
- **River Ridge High School:** No student product can result in a monetary donation to River Ridge or its programs. No events related to a student’s Senior Career Capstone Project may be held at River Ridge High School.**
- **Product:** Tangible evidence of the skills you acquired in satisfying your learning stretch must be presented in class when the Product is due, for Stand and Deliver, as well as for Senior Boards. Think carefully and creatively about how you will present your Product.
- **Transportation:** Accessibility to and from lessons or meetings with your Facilitator/Mentor must be taken into consideration.
- **Equipment:** If the Product requires special equipment (sewing machine, saw, computer), consider whether or not it is available and working.
- **Special Permission:** Remember that visiting or observing at many sites requires special permission. Call ahead to make arrangements.

**In the event that there is a crisis in the River Ridge community, the “off-campus” requirement may be waived at the discretion of the Principal. This is the only exception to the rule.
PRODUCT VERIFICATION
The Product Verification Form must be hand-written and completed BY THE FACILITATOR/MENTOR. If the student’s Facilitator/Mentor has not returned the final verification form by the time the product is due, a grade of “0” will be assigned. IMPORTANT: If the product verification form is not received before Senior Boards, a final decision about the grade will be made by the Senior Career Capstone Project Administrator and/or the Senior Career Capstone Project Committee.

PLAGIARISM
If a student plagiarizes or forges any assignment, component or form for his/her project, he/she will receive zeros for not only that assignment, component or form, but also for all work completed on the entire Senior Career Capstone Project.

THE PORTFOLIO
Your portfolio provides the tangible evidence that the judges need to see regarding your Senior Career Capstone Project. Remember that this will be their first impression of you, so work hard to make your portfolio look professional. This is your opportunity to really impress the community members and teachers that will be evaluating you. Consider your presentation to be like an interview, making this the type of portfolio you would bring to showcase your skills. The portfolio will include a Letter to the Judges (reference page 14), a Cover Letter and Resume, your Senior Career Capstone Project Product Proposal, Facilitator/Mentor Interview, Artifacts, a News Article, your Research Paper, the Master Agreement Form and the Product Verification Form (reference pages 8-12 for required forms). This proves to the judges that your work has been extensive and that you have put forth both time and effort in completing the Senior Career Capstone Project. The portfolio will be assembled in your English class during the spring semester.

THE PRESENTATION
Along with your portfolio, your presentation provides you with the opportunity to share your Senior Career Capstone Project with the community members and teachers. This will be an 8-10 minute presentation that you will spend time practicing in your English class before the Senior Boards. You will need to present yourself in a professional manner (both in dress and speech) as you would present yourself for a job interview. The “Professional Dress” requirement is not industry-specific, which means that you will dress in standard business attire even if you are not planning on pursuing a standard business career. This is your time to shine and celebrate your accomplishments and discoveries. As a visual aid for your presentation, you must use Prezi.
**FACILITATOR/MENTOR**

**CHOOSE CAREFULLY!**

Once students have decided on a product, their next step is to find a Facilitator/Mentor. The Facilitator/Mentor is an extremely important person in the success of one’s product. Select someone who has the expertise necessary for you to create a product that is not only challenging and rewarding, but also polished and professional. Choose someone who is reliable and who can truly offer you experience and insight into your career of choice.

**THE ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR/MENTOR**

This will vary, depending on your product. He/she will either provide sustained instruction or periodic instruction or, perhaps, a combination of both.

- **Sustained Instruction:** The F/M may be an instructor of a course that teaches specific intangible skills such as learning sign language or becoming certified in SCUBA diving.
- **Periodic Instruction:** The F/M may only provide basic periodic instruction with the student. These students will meet on a regular basis with their F/M to obtain the expertise (knowledge or skills) necessary to complete each step of his/her product.

**GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATOR/MENTOR**

- Cannot be a family member or a relative
- Must be at least 25 years old
- Must be someone local and someone that the student meets with face-to-face
- Must possess the skills and expertise necessary for the student to create a challenging yet achievable product
- Must work with student to finalize his or her product
PRODUCT PROPOSAL

Student Name (Type name here & delete italicized words)

Address (Type address here & delete italicized words)

E-mail (Type email here & delete italicized words)

Teacher (Type teacher’s name here & delete italicized words) Date (Type here & delete italicized words)

THE PRODUCT

Of the four components that comprise the Senior Career Capstone Project, the product is the most essential. Without it, the research paper has little relevance, and the portfolio and the presentation are nonexistent. Choose well! Decide on a product that you’re passionate about, but one that will give you a rigorous and challenging learning stretch (see page 3 for an explanation of the learning stretch) – one that makes “great demands upon your ability while gaining knowledge, comprehension, or mastery through experience and/or study.” After making this decision, the second most crucial part is to choose the person who will enable you to accomplish this goal, your Facilitator/Mentor!

THE PROPOSAL

Directions: In order to gain approval for your product and overall Senior Career Capstone Project, you will need to complete the following proposal. Your TYPED proposal is due to your English teacher on or before August 26, 2016. The Master Agreement Form must be turned in by September 23, 2016. If the agreement form is not turned in on or before September 23, 2016, all work will be void until its completion.

The following questions will appear on the proposal form. The form is available online for you to download and type directly into the document. You will answer these questions in detailed, complete sentences. You should plan your answers before completing the form. Your goal is to have your proposal accepted. If you do not complete the proposal form properly, you will have to revise it, perhaps repeatedly. It is best to give it a great deal of thought and to complete it accurately and thoroughly before submitting it for approval.

1. **Explain in detail your product.** Will you produce a tangible product, such as a piece of furniture or a set of blueprints? Will you use your skills to produce an intangible product, such as an event, a performance, a certification, a donation (include the name of the charity), service to the community, or a combination of these?

2. Why have you chosen this product?
3. What previous experience or prior knowledge do you have that relates to your Senior Career Capstone Project? How will your product require a *learning stretch*?

4. What skills will you develop during the course of your Senior Career Capstone Project?

5. How will you use these skills in the future? You must explain how these skills will serve you in your future career.

6. How will you acquire the skills necessary to produce your product?
   Choose one of the following prompts.
   A. Will you take classes or lessons to develop these skills? If so, include when and where you will take the classes or lessons along with the cost of the classes and lessons and how you will pay for them. How often will you need to study or practice outside of the classes or lessons?
   B. Will your Facilitator/Mentor meet with you on a regular basis to help you develop these skills? What activities will you do with your Facilitator/Mentor, and what activities will you do on your own? When, where, and how often will you meet with your Facilitator/Mentor?

7. Who is your Facilitator/Mentor? What education and/or experience does he or she have that will help you acquire the skills you intend to develop through your Senior Career Capstone Project? (If you are taking classes or lessons, the instructor will be your Facilitator/Mentor.)

I hereby agree to complete the proposed Product in partial fulfillment of my Senior Career Capstone Project requirement. I understand I will not be allowed to change my product without completing a Senior Career Capstone Project appeal, and in the event that I do change my product, any time devoted to the previous product will be null and void. Additionally, I must log 15 hours on a new product and complete each of the status checks for that product as well. I understand that I must obtain my parent/guardian’s permission as well as the permission of my Facilitator/Mentor on the Master Agreement Form.

Student Signature ___________________________________________________________
Facilitator/Mentor Agreement

Thank you for volunteering your time to serve as a Facilitator/Mentor for Senior Career Capstone Project at River Ridge High School. This endeavor offers seniors a real world experience as they journey into a topic of their choice, one that they are passionate about and one that they link to a career. Throughout the year, they pursue this “learning stretch” as they complete each of the four components of the Senior Career Capstone Project: a Research Paper, a Product, a Portfolio, and a culminating Presentation in April – Senior Boards.

Sustained Instruction: The F/M’s role may be to give sustained instruction in the form of a progression of lessons where the student might learn how to scuba dive or how to communicate through the use of Sign Language. In this case, the student will meet with his/her F/M on a regular basis in completing most of the fifteen required hours. To satisfy the remaining hours required for the “learning stretch,” the student will then decide how to reveal his/her new skill(s) as a tangible Product: giving a creative demonstration, creating a portfolio/scrapbook/cookbook, making a video and/or a portfolio, etc.

Periodic Instruction: On the other hand, the F/M’s role may be to provide periodic instruction with the student. The student meets with F/M for step-by-step instruction, but the student completes each task on his/her own without the F/M present. Most of the required fifteen hours is completed away from the F/M, yet the F/M still provides the student with the expertise necessary to create a challenging yet achievable Product. Once again, to satisfy the remaining hours required for the “learning stretch,” the student will then decide how to reveal his/her new skill(s) as a tangible Product: giving a creative demonstration, creating a portfolio/scrapbook/cookbook, making a video and a portfolio, etc. (This portfolio is separate from your Senior Career Capstone Project Portfolio.)

Fundamentally the role of the F/M is to enable the student to create a challenging yet achievable tangible Product; guide, encourage, and oversee the student’s progress; and verify the time student spends on his/her fieldwork (minimum of 15 hours).

Student Agreement: Facilitator/Mentor’s Role

I understand that it is my responsibility to present my Facilitator/Mentor with my Senior Career Capstone Project Proposal Form, which outlines the projected steps, costs, and timeframe projected for completion of my Product.

I understand that my Facilitator/Mentor’s role is to enable me to create a challenging yet achievable Product. Depending on the nature of my Product, I may meet with him/her on a sustained basis or a periodic basis. If it is a sustained period of time in the form of a series of lessons, I will complete the majority of my fifteen hours in the presence of my F/M. If it is on a periodic basis, I will meet with my F/M at specified intervals to acquire the knowledge necessary to complete the Product on my own.

I understand that my Facilitator/Mentor will be asked to verify the time I spend on my fieldwork (minimum of fifteen hours) by signing the Product Verification Form upon completion of my Product confirming it is my work. I also understand that I will be responsible for keeping track of my hours on my Time Log. I understand that no late status updates will be accepted and that the status updates must be completed in order, so although no points will be awarded for late updates, they must be completed in order to continue in the Senior Career Capstone Project process. I understand that without a picture with my Facilitator/Mentor, my initial status update will not be graded (a grade of 0 will be given) and without a picture, my final status update will not be graded (a grade of 0 will be given). I understand that all components of the project must be completed in order and that no student may move on to “the next step” without completing the step preceding it. I also understand that failure to complete the Senior Career Capstone Project will result in failure of the English course during the second semester.

I understand that I cannot ask a River Ridge High School teacher to be my Facilitator/Mentor. I also understand that my parent/guardian or relative cannot serve as my Facilitator/Mentor and that my F/M must be someone over the age of 25 who resides locally.
Parent/Guardian Consent

As the parent/guardian of a 2016-17 senior at River Ridge High School in Cherokee County School District, I am aware that my son/daughter is required to successfully complete the Senior Career Capstone Project as an integral part of his or her senior year English curriculum. I understand that all components of the project must be completed in order and that no student may move on to “the next step” without completing the step preceding it. I also understand that failure to complete the Senior Career Capstone Project will result in failure of the English course during the second semester.

I understand that no hours may be logged on my student’s project until his or her proposal is approved. I understand that any and all changes to the Product Proposal must be submitted to the Senior Career Capstone Project Committee and no proposals or changes may be submitted after March 31, 2017.

I know that all written components must be submitted to turnitin.com and that failure to submit results in a grade of “0” for that portion of the project. I know that if my son/daughter plagiarizes or forges any of the three components - prior to Senior Boards - that he/she will have to complete an entirely new Senior Career Capstone Project and submit a Portfolio of the new Project by April 21, 2017. In doing so, he/she will become eligible for completion of the fourth component, the Presentation.

I assume all responsibility for costs and risks inherent in his/her chosen Senior Career Capstone Project. Therefore, I understand that it is my responsibility as the parent/guardian to review the qualification and/or licensing of the Facilitator/Mentor prior to giving my consent/endorsement as well as to provide all supervision of my child while working with this individual on his/her Product.

I understand that the Cherokee County School District has not undertaken any background checks on the Facilitator/Mentor. It is my responsibility to ensure the suitability of the Facilitator/Mentor that my student and I select.

Parent/Guardian Name (please print): ________________________________
Address: __________________________________________________________
Email Address: ____________________________________________ Phone: ___________________
Parent Signature: ___________________________________________ Date: ________________

Facilitator/Mentor’s Name: __________________________________________
Address: __________________________________________________________
Email Address: ____________________________________________ Phone: ___________________
Facilitator/Mentor’s Signature: ___________________________________ Date: ________________

Student Name: ______________________________________________________
Address: __________________________________________________________
Email Address: ____________________________________________ Phone: ___________________
Student Signature: ___________________________________________ Date: ________________
To the Facilitator/Mentor: Since most of the time spent on the Product phase of Senior Career Capstone Project has been out of class, verification of the student's effort in the creation of his/her Product is necessary. This verification will enable the student to complete the final component of the Project, Senior Boards and assist the teacher in evaluation of the Product. Thank you for your time.

1. Can you verify that he/she spent at least 15 hours working on this Product?
   Yes _____ No_____
   Comments ____________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________

2. Have you seen this Product at different stages of completion, not just the final phase?
   Yes _____ No_____
   Comments ____________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________
   ___________________________________________________________________

3. What specific problems did this student encounter and overcome?
   ________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________
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   __________________________________________________________________

4. What successes have you seen this student achieve?
   ________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________

Facilitator/Mentor’s signature ______________________________ Date __________
SENIOR CAREER CAPSTONE PROJECT APPEAL

If you disagree with the committee’s decision not to accept your proposed product or if you change an accepted product or need to propose a new product all together, you may begin the appeal process. This process consists of a 150-word narrative about your proposal as well as a presentation to the Senior Career Capstone Project Committee. This appeal form must be fully completed and submitted to Mrs. Farist in 1113.

In the space provided, please compose a narrative fully explaining your product and learning stretch. If you are changing an approved product or submitting a new proposal, you must detail your reasons for changing or re-proposing. You may choose to download and type directly into this form.

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Please indicate any morning responsibilities such as sports and/or clubs. The committee presentation will be scheduled before school during a Senior Career Capstone Project Committee meeting.
Dear Judges:

Paragraph 1:
Briefly introduce yourself, your goals – your choice for Senior Career Capstone Project (Minimum 5 sentences).

Paragraph 2:
Introduce your paper topic, the issue you researched, and briefly explain what you learned by researching this issue. (Minimum 5 sentences).

Paragraph 3:
Describe your Product and how it relates to your Research Paper. Also, explain the obstacles you overcame and success you achieved in process of completing your Product (Minimum - 5 sentences).

Paragraph 4:
Explain how your topic and research relate to a career and what you learned about yourself and your desire to pursue this career in your postsecondary endeavors. (Minimum- 5 sentences).

Paragraph 5:
In this paragraph sum up your thoughts about Senior Career Capstone Project and thank the judges for their time (Minimum – 2/3 sentences).

Sincerely,

Your signature (delete this and actually sign your name in blue or black ink)

Your Name - typed
IMPORTANT:

Remember that no events can be held at River Ridge High School**. This is a community project; therefore, all events must be scheduled for venues within the community.

Fundraising projects require the name, phone number, and email address of your contact at the organization/charity that will receive the funds you raise. This must be included on your proposal. You must raise and donate the funds in time to provide a receipt of the funds from the organization/charity by the due date for your product. You will need to make two copies of the receipt: one to turn in to your English teacher and one to place in your portfolio in addition to the Donation Accountability Form. You must keep the original receipt for your own records in case there are any questions regarding your donation.

**In the event that there is a crisis in the River Ridge community, the “off-campus” requirement may be waived at the discretion of the Principal. This is the only exception to the rule.