Introduction to Senior Capstone Career Project

Senior Career Capstone Career Project is the concluding phase of The Cherokee County School District’s Career Pathways model initiated to add rigor and relevance to the senior year in preparation for the challenges students will face in their post-secondary endeavors. The learning stretch required for this capstone project is intended to challenge your ability, stretch your limitations, celebrate your individuality, and strengthen your academic and life skills.

Your project will relate to one or both of the following categories: capstone or career. If your project does not relate to one of these categories, please discuss your project idea with your English teacher prior to submitting your proposal to make sure it is appropriate. Question 8 on the proposal form provides direction for designating your project as a capstone career link project.

All Senior Capstone Career Project assignments are long-standing assignments for which you will not be given credit past the due date for each assignment. However, because of the nature of Senior Project, you will nonetheless need to complete each assignment so that you will have it to share with your judges for Senior Boards. However, you will not receive credit for it past the due date for the assignment. Some due dates are the same for all senior English teachers, and some are specific to the teacher. For example, proposals are due on the same date for all senior English classes, but research papers are due on different dates because we cannot all do research in the media center at the same time.

You will be notified of due dates well in advance. Due dates for assignments which are common to all senior English classes are already listed on the Senior Project website. All Senior Capstone Career Project work is a long-standing assignment.

The Four Components

1st Research Paper
For the research paper, each student researches an issue related to his or her product, establishes an argumentative thesis, and supports it with substantive research. Specific guidelines are provided by each classroom teacher. In addition to the research paper, you will also do a career link paper. The career link paper is a separate assignment with different guidelines. The career link paper is shorter than the research paper and is informational rather than argumentative.

2nd Product
- In choosing the product, students should strongly consider an area they are passionate about as well as something that embodies the rewards and challenges of a rigorous learning stretch. Another critical consideration is the project facilitator. Students select this person based on his or her expertise, an expertise they need to create a polished and professional product.
• Each student is required to devote a minimum of fifteen hours to the completion of his or her product. Note: Hours cannot be logged for work completed during the regular school day nor can the product 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. Hours may not be logged for time spent driving or being driven to locations where you will work. You may only log time for actual work time on your PRODUCT, not on your blog, visual aids, etc.

3rd Portfolio
The electronic portfolio, which consists of a blog and supporting documents, provides tangible documentation of the student’s Senior Capstone Career Project journey. It also serves as the initial introduction of the student and his/her project to the judges at Senior Boards in April. The blog must be kept up-to-date. Work on your product should be logged within 48 hours of completing the activity. You will receive two days of blog training in early September with your English class.

4th Presentation – Senior Boards
The culminating component of Senior Capstone CareerProject is the presentation—Senior Boards, a ten-minute presentation before a panel of school and community judges. The dates for Senior Boards are Thursday, January 19, and Thursday, April 13, 2016. You will be scheduled to present between 3:45 p.m. and 9 p.m. Do not schedule work or any other activities for this date so as not to create a conflict with your presentation time. You will create two visual aids to use during your presentation in addition to your blog. You will dress as professionally as you can for this event. Suits and ties are appropriate but not required. Collared shirts, slacks, and knee-length skirts and dresses are appropriate. You should not wear shorts, jeans, flip flops, tennis shoes, short skirts or dresses, or low-cut blouses. If you are male, what you are asked to wear to graduation would also be appropriate for Senior Boards. If you have any difficulty finding appropriate attire, please let your English teacher or counselor know ahead of time, and we will work with you.

The Research Paper (1st component)
The research paper is NOT a chronicle of “What I did for my Senior Capstone Career Project” nor is it a “how to” paper or a “report.” Rather, it is a 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. Specific guidelines and due dates for this paper will be outlined by your English teacher.
THE PRODUCT (2ND COMPONENT)

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 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 CAPSTONE CAREER PROJECT APPROVAL

Once approval of the product proposal is granted, students can begin logging hours for work on their products, but not until then. You will be notified of the status of your proposal by your English teacher. Proposals must be free of errors because they will be shared with your judging panel for Senior Boards. Capstone projects must be approved by your English teacher and your capstone/career pathway teacher.

PRODUCT REQUIREMENTS

In completing the required learning stretch, students will select a project facilitator, 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 to completing their product. Note: Hours cannot be logged for work completed during the regular school day nor can the product be part of a class assignment. Your product may not serve to fulfill any outside requirements, such as those for an Eagle Scout project or probationary community service.

RESEARCH-BASED PRODUCTS are intangible and therefore must be creatively and professionally presented in tangible form to receive credit for your Senior Project journey.

- All research should be presented in a professionally bound notebook.
- Research is to be preceded by an abstract which states intent of research, a summary of information, and evaluation of research as a whole.
- It must also include an interpretation of data in the form of graphs, charts, etc.
- A Works Cited is also required.

FUNDRAISERS AS PRODUCTS are also intangible and therefore must be creatively and professionally presented when the product is due as well as at Senior Boards in January or April. A receipt verifying funds received by the designated charity 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 your portfolio. You must keep the original copy for your records. The name, phone
number, and email address of the contact person at the organization or charity receiving the funds must be included in your proposal.

**Nutrition and Health-related Products must adhere to the following requirements:**

- The student cannot be the subject of his/her product.
- If the student is setting up a program for someone else, he/she must provide quantitative and qualitative analysis (data before and after program).
- The student’s project facilitator must be an expert in the area.
- *Note:* Students might consider taking classes for certification (i.e. CPR, first aid classes, nursing aid, etc.).

**Coaching/training projects** have separate guidelines which you will receive from your English teacher upon your selection of this type of project. Coaching/training falls under the Introduction to Teaching career pathway. You will be asked to meet with Dr. Bragg periodically to insure that you are meeting these guidelines and that you have the opportunity to learn new things through your coaching or training experience. Multiple students may not work with the same team (one Senior Capstone Career Project student per team regardless of which high school the student attends). You should select a team that gives you the opportunity to plan, teach, and coach. Because many highly competitive teams will not allow you to take the lead in coaching, you should seek out a team to work with that will require more of your help and leadership. You will be asked to choose a project facilitator who works professionally in the coaching/training field, and you may be asked to work toward related certifications.

**Ineligible Products**

No purchased or ready-made models or kits will be accepted. 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.

**Other Considerations**

- **Cost:** A student’s grade is NOT based on how much he/she spends on the product.
- **Monetary Gains:** No student can receive any monetary gains from his/her product. (You may not raise funds to benefit your own endeavors, such as sponsorship of traveling, etc.)
- **Cherokee County Employees:** No student can work for any county employee in completing his/her product.
- **Sequoyah High School:** No student product can result in a monetary donation to Sequoyah or its programs.
- **Time:** The product must be completed by the required due date.
- **Transportation:** Accessibility to and from lessons or meetings with your project facilitator must be taken into consideration. You are not allowed to log driving time. You may only log time spent actually working on your product.
- **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.

**IMPORTANT**: No events related to one’s Senior Project can be held at Sequoyah High School.

**Product Verification**

If the student’s project facilitator has not returned the final verification form by the time the product is due, a grade of “O” 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 Project administrator and/or the Senior Capstone Career Project Advisory Council.**

**Plagiarism** - If a student plagiarizes any assignment or component of his/her project, he/she will receive zeros not only for that assignment or component but also for all work completed on the entire Senior Project.

**Project Facilitator**

**Choose Carefully!**

Once students have decided on a product, their next step is to find a project facilitator. The project facilitator 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.

**The role of the Project Facilitator**

This will vary, depending on your product. He/she will either provide sustained instruction or periodic instruction or perhaps a combination of both. You must meet with your project facilitator a minimum of four times. All meetings must be extensively documented on your blog in words and photos. Your photos should show you working directly with the project facilitator on your product. You will have some photos of you working on your product individually, but you must also have photos which include both you and your project facilitator.

- **Sustained Instruction**: The PF 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 PF may only provide periodic instruction with the student. These students will meet on a regular basis with their PF to obtain the expertise (knowledge or skills) necessary to complete each step of his/her product.

**Guidelines for Project Facilitator(s)**. The project facilitator . . .

- cannot be a family member or a relative.
- must be at least 25 years old.
must be someone local and someone that students meet with face to face.
must possess the skills and expertise necessary for the student to create a challenging yet achievable product.
works with student to finalize his or her product proposal.
verifies student’s progress and completion of the product.

**Is it possible to have more than one Project Facilitator?**
Yes, in fact, students may need more than one. For example, they may need one PF for learning how to use a manual camera and to acquire the skills for taking pictures with different subjects and backgrounds. Additionally, they may want to learn how to mat and frame their photos and seek the expertise of another PF.

**IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS:**

- Events must be scheduled for venues within the community. Do not plan to hold an event at Sequoyah High School.
- 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. You must keep the original receipt for your own records in case there are any questions regarding your donation.
- You will utilize technology to document your Senior Project, and you are required to adhere to the Cherokee County Internet Acceptable Use Policy.


- Your Senior Boards presentation on January 19 or on April 13 will count 15% of your grade. You will be assigned a time to present between 3:45 and 9 p.m. Therefore, do not schedule any other activities for that day. You will need to dress professionally for this presentation, and you will receive guidelines concerning appropriate attire from your English teacher. The presentation must be ten minutes long, and it will require tremendous preparation and rehearsal. There are significant penalties for being short on time: 8:30-9 minutes will receive 5 points off of the final grade; 8:00-8:30 minutes will receive 10 points off; 7:00-7:59 minutes will receive 20 points off; 6:00-6:59 minutes will receive 30 points off; 5:00-5:59 minutes will receive 40 points off; 4:00-4:59 minutes will receive 50 points off; 3:00-3:59 minutes will receive 60 points off; 2:00-2:59 minutes will receive 70 points off; 1:00-1:59 minutes will receive 80 points off; and 0-59 seconds will receive 90 points off.
PRODUCT PROPOSAL –
SENIOR CAPSTONE CAREER PROJECT

Student Name (typed) ______________________________________________

SENIOR PROJECT English teacher_____________________________________ Date _______

Designated Timeline Summer Fall Yearlong (Circle)

Focus: Capstone Career (Circle)
(One or both may apply; see question 8 for more information.)

1. What skills will you develop during the course of you Senior Capstone Career Project? (Leave one line of white space between each question and answer. Delete extra white space before saving or submitting your proposal. Also remove italicized directions.)

2. How will you use these skills in the future? You must explain how these skills will serve you in a future career and/or endeavor.

3. What will be the end result of the application of the skills you acquire? 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? How does this project represent your career goals?

4. Why have you chosen this product?

5. What previous experience or prior knowledge do you have that relates to your Senior Career Capstone Project?
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 project facilitator meet with you on a regular basis to help you develop these skills? What activities will you do with your project facilitator, and what activities will you do on your own? When, where, and how often will you meet with your project facilitator?

7. Who is your project facilitator? 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 project facilitator.)

8. Your project should fall into one or both of the following categories: capstone and/or career. If it does not fall into one or both of these categories, discuss your project idea with your teacher prior to pursuing your project to make sure that it is appropriate. Respond to any sections which apply to your project. Your project may apply to one or both categories. Answer in complete sentences. Delete the categories which do not apply to your project.

   A. CAPSTONE
      Your project is a capstone project for one of the career pathways you have pursued at Sequoyah. If you have completed three or more courses in one of the career pathways areas, you may devise a culminating project in this area. You should discuss your idea with a teacher who teaches courses in the pathway you have chosen prior to submitting your proposal.

      List your career pathway and courses you have taken in that pathway during your high school career.

   B. CAREER
      Your project is directly related to the career you plan to pursue or to the college major or technical training required to pursue your career.

      Name the career or education/training you are planning to pursue. Just name your career plans and/or educational plans; you do not have to repeat the same information you included in question 2.
Dear Project Facilitator,

Thank you for volunteering your time to serve as a project facilitator for one of our Senior Project seniors. This project provides students with a real world experience to strengthen not only their academic skills but also their life skills. Throughout the year, they will complete the following four components of the project: a research paper, a product, a portfolio, and a presentation of their project at Senior Boards in April before a panel of community judges.

The role of the project facilitator is to provide the skills and knowledge necessary for each student to complete a product, one that satisfies a rigorous and challenging learning stretch. Before students can begin logging hours for work on their products, their proposals must be approved. Therefore, students meet with their project facilitators to finalize their proposals, which must include the skills they will learn, a biographical sketch of their project facilitator, and a projected budget where applicable.

Students are expected to be motivated, respectful, and responsible for the completion of their products, devoting a minimum of fifteen hours. To verify the student’s progress and commitment to completing a polished and professional product, we will ask you to complete a verification form to assist us in assessing the student’s growth and commitment.

We sincerely appreciate the time and effort you will devote to serving as a project facilitator. If at any time problems or questions arise, please contact your student’s Senior Capstone Career Project teacher at Sequoyah High School at (770) 345-1474 (English Dept.) or via email.

Once again, thank you so much for supporting the Senior Capstone Career Project.

Senior Capstone Career Project Teachers