Career-Related Capstone Project

2014 Regional Counselor Workshops

What is the High School Career-Related Capstone Project?

The project provides students with the opportunity to explore a career of personal or professional interest and to address the latest trends or issues through focused study and applied research. The project allows students to demonstrate their ability to synthesize and apply the knowledge and skills acquired in their academic program to real-world issues and problems. These final projects should affirm students' ability to think critically and creatively, to solve practical problems, to make reasoned and ethical decisions, and to communicate effectively.

What is the suggested timeline for students to complete the project?

Students typically participate in this career-related capstone project after a pathway has been completed and this usually occurs before or during the students' senior year. The timeline may vary based on the school's type of grading schedule, i.e. semester, year-long, or block. The project may be carried out over an entire year or be completed in a specified amount of time, such as a nine-week period or a semester. The recommendation is to carry the project out a minimum of one semester.

Will the Capstone Project be graded?

The components that may be graded are the research paper, presentation, and the portfolio. A sample scoring rubric will be provided for each of the components. The local schools will determine weighting for the grades given (if applicable) to the research paper and portfolio. Local systems will also determine the class for which the grade will be associated should the decision be made to assign a grade.

What are the Components of the Capstone Project?

Research Paper

The first component is a research paper documenting information on a subject of the student's choice -- a subject demonstrating the student's career interest, but not necessarily one for which they are an expert. The research must be a worthwhile stretch beyond what is already known.

reasons for selecting the occupation in the specific career cluster/pathway

career goals, relevant career-related information that provides the reader some information about a specific occupation or current topics related to that occupation

research on job outlook and education and training needed

any current trends or changes in the future of the career field

Additionally, to enhance the research and expand learning, systems may require students to explore an aspect of the career in-depth that may be a "hot topic" in the field, i.e. latest research on a particular medicine used in treating certain diseases, genetic research or food insecurity in the area of Agriculture, or natural gas pipeline safety in the area of energy.

What are the Components of the Capstone Project?

Portfolio

The second component of the project should be a portfolio. This portfolio may be in a notebook form or kept electronically. The items listed in the checklist are a minimum of what is required but may also contain any other information or documentation relative to the career area of interest. The portfolio provides physical documentation of the career-related capstone project journey.

Mentor

As part of the project, students must obtain a mentor to assist in learning more about the career area. The mentor must be someone who is knowledgeable in the chosen area of interest or someone working in the field. The students have the responsibility to obtain a mentor (with assistance from school personnel) and then submit a signed agreement between the school, the mentor, the student, and the parent. Virtual mentoring may be a consideration. Students should maintain a log of hours spent with the mentor and are required to spend a minimum of eight (8) hours with their mentor to complete the project. Schools and systems will or develop a procedure for the selection and approval of mentors to ensure protection of the student and the school.

What are the Components of the Capstone Project?

Student Presentation

The fourth and final component of the project will be a presentation. This presentation could be a formal presentation before a panel of community judges where the students present their research information and findings or a presentation before a group of interested students at another grade level such as middle school or elementary school students. A student may share any tangible evidence/application of the skills and knowledge acquired from the project. Presentations would consist of the student's purpose and reasons for choosing the career area, new information gained about the career, and plans for pursuing additional information about the education and training needed for entering the chosen career area. Schools will have the flexibility of scheduling these presentations.

Contact Information

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