

Sayre High School

Senior Graduation Project

Information Packet/Direction Manual

Name

Presentation Date

revised 1/06/09

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Dear Students, Parents, and Guardians,

Beginning with the Class of 2001, all students must complete a graduation project that meets the standards stated by the Pennsylvania State Board of Education and the Sayre Area School District.

This information packet/direction manual will provide you procedures to help you complete the project. Please review the information carefully.

This is a requirement in order to receive a high school diploma. You will be expected to research, present, and reflect upon a topic of interest to you.

Students who are already experts in a field may not research that area. For example, if a student has juvenile diabetes, he/she may not research that because he/she is already an expert in that subject. Topics must be a stretch for students where they learn something new. Eagle Scout projects may not serve as a Graduation Project unless the student is extending what he/she is already doing for the award.

Pictures should always accompany the product portion of Graduation Project. That serves as additional proof that the stated goal was accomplished. A letter from the mentor stating what the student did and number of hours spent with him/her should also be part of product. Those components may be placed in a scrapbook with captions underneath the pictures.

If you give your project your best effort, you may find that it is one of the most rewarding experiences of your high school education.

II) Statement of Necessity

In compliance with Chapter 4 of the Pennsylvania School Code Section 4.2 (A), a culminating project is required for a student to be graduated from any Pennsylvania secondary school. “The purpose of this project is to assure the students are able to apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information and communicate significant knowledge and understanding.”

The purpose of this project is to represent the cumulative exhibition of your skills and knowledge. You will be asked to demonstrate, in a tangible way, that you have attained problem solving, decision making, and independent research skills required by a young adult exiting high school.

The projects will vary depending upon the interests and direction taken by the individual students. Academic and practical or vocational components of the school’s program will be integrated into a learning experience. The intentions of this project are to provide an opportunity to investigate vocational options, explore an area of special interest, extend present knowledge, and create a final product of high quality. The completed project should be an example of your best effort and worthy of recognition.

III) Expected Learner Outcomes

During the preparation and presentation of your graduation project it will be expected that each student will:

- 1) Demonstrate they can plan, organize, complete, and present their graduation project according to the educational guidelines.
- 2) Attain new knowledge and an advancement of oral and written communication skills, concluding with the final presentation to the Assessment Panel.
- 3) Prepare a personal timeline for completing the project, and a plan for the use of economic, personnel, academic and technological resources needed.
- 4) Demonstrate research, composition, and technological skills at a level of proficiency equal to or above the requirements that the project demands for competent completion.

IV) Purpose and Guidelines

Purpose

The graduation project's goal is to prepare each student to use initiative by undertaking and completing an independent project in an area of interest.

Role of Advisors

To assist you in completing your project, you will be assigned a primary faculty advisor. The advisor's role is to monitor the process and progress of your project and to serve as a member of your assessment team. Direct any questions to your/the Senior Project Advisor.

Statement of Responsibility

It is important for you to realize that each student seeking a high school diploma must assume ALL responsibilities related to the graduation project. The associated work of the advisor(s) is restricted to process and progress guidance only.

Selection of a Topic

Selection of a topic is extremely important. It will establish the limits and directions of your research and presentation. You will have the opportunity to explore and investigate a special area of interest to you, and to create a presentation to demonstrate your independent work.

V) Project Categories

Current class projects and requirements will not fulfill the graduation requirement. However, it is possible that some may be expanded to meet the parameters of the graduation project.

The following project categories are only intended to provide you with a starting point to construct your topic. They are not considered an exclusive listing. New ideas may result in the extension of categories.

I. Curriculum Related Projects are an extension of study began in a course.

II. School Improvement Projects are an undertaking that would provide a service to the school or school district.

III. Internships and apprenticeship served within the school or community.

IV. Community Projects are an undertaking that would provide a service to the community.

V. Entrepreneur Projects are an exploration and involvement in a business endeavor.

VI) Project Components

The graduation project has ten main parts, all of which are equally important and must be completed using the approved format and schedule. The components are:

- 1) Proposal
- 2) Letter of Commitment
- 3) Research with Documentation
- 4) Time Log
- 5) Source Summaries (If applicable.)
- 6) Material File (If applicable.)
- 7) Final Product
- 8) Research Paper
- 9) Reflective Paper
- 10) Final Oral Presentation

1) Proposal

The proposal is your initial plan for your graduation project. The proposal form is provided in the appendix of this information packet. Please turn in a proposal form to have your project idea approved.

2) Letter of Commitment

The letter of commitment is your signed, detailed statement of intent for completing this project. It will also follow the form provided in the appendix of this guide/information packet.

3) Research with Documentation

After submitting your letter of commitment, you will begin your research. Gathering information relevant to your project may include using library and technological references, conducting surveys, visiting museums, taking field trips, interviewing knowledgeable persons, experimenting, observing and collecting data, and numerous other possibilities. All useful information will be documented in three of the following listed ways.

4) Time Log

You must keep a log of any time spent working on your project. This includes but is not limited to meetings, research, construction, writing, and rehearsal. Your log is the primary evidence of your progress on your project. A student log form is provided in the appendix of this manual. Additional forms will be provided if needed or you may create your own.

5) Source Summaries (If applicable.)

Whenever you find information relevant to your project, you must record the source, whether printed, electronic media, personal interview, or other. EVERY source of information requires documentation. This is, essentially, the bibliography, but contains resources other than books. The appendix of this information packet/manual details the bibliography style you will use and provides examples.

6) Materials File (If applicable.)

As your research progresses, you may accumulate various articles or other material related to your project, such as forms, surveys, photocopies, brochures, drafts, empirical data, lists, bills, interview notes, and numerous other materials. All of these items are to be collected for review at your final presentation.

7) Product

Your research is complete when you have all the information you need to create your final product. The product is tangible evidence of the research knowledge and new skills you have obtained from the personal study of your topic. Since each product is unique, products will assume different forms. As long as your project meets the requirements and guidelines you are only limited by your imagination. A research paper is NOT the final product. The paper is a separate requirement.

8) Research Paper

The research paper will reflect the ability to research, in depth, a topic directly related to your final product. The paper should be written in proper research paper format (MLA) and be approximately five to seven pages in length. The paper will be expected to reflect Senior level research and writing skills. **All sources must be obtained through Power Library. Use of other sources must be approved.**

9) Reflective Paper

The reflective paper will clearly detail the knowledge and skills – about your topic and yourself as a learner – that you have gained from completing your graduation project. The appendix of this guide/information packet provides more detail for its composition. Should be about 1-2 pages in length.

10) Final Oral Presentation

As the final step in your graduation project you will present an oral presentation to an assessment panel. In this presentation you will orally explain and/or demonstrate your project and the product you created. The presentation should consist of good presentation skills (including visual aids) and be approximately 10 to 15 minutes in length. The assessment panel may then use an additional 10 to 15 minutes for follow-up questions concerning the content or process of the project, which you will be required to answer.

VII) Assessment

The research, documentation, reflective paper, final product, and oral presentation will be evaluated by a minimum three-member Assessment Panel.

Shortly following your presentation you will receive feedback concerning the strengths and weaknesses of your graduation project and its acceptability. In order to meet the requirements established for graduation, the project will be judged as acceptable or unacceptable.

If a project has been judged “unacceptable” in at least ONE area, the project as whole will be deemed unacceptable. Projects, or components of the project, judged in this manner must be redone in order for the student to graduate.

VIII) Appendix – 1) Graduation Project Timelines

1) Submission of project proposal for approval:

Please submit this as soon as possible. Work on a project should not start until a written proposal has been approved.

2) A signed letter of commitment:

As soon as possible after a proposal is approved: Please see the “Accountability” section of this packet.

3) Research Paper (including 'print out' of all the sources & information used- highlight the information used in your research paper) Reflective Paper and Time Log:

At the final presentation: Please provide 1 copy of each item (folders/report covers are not necessary).

You will be reminded of all the presentation requirements a minimum of one week before your presentation.

You should also report to the Senior Project Advisor a minimum of one week before your presentation to receive a pass to attend you presentation.

Appendix – 3) Letter of Commitment Guidelines

The letter of commitment will put in writing your intentions and assumed responsibility of the graduation project and its guidelines and accountability. The letter is to be written in proper business form, and addressed to the Senior Project advisor. The letter will include the following information:

- 1) Your name, name of your project, and final presentation date.
- 2) It will describe your general area of interest selected for your graduation project. Include an explanation for why you chose this project and a statement of commitment to follow through with the project.
- 3) A description or list of potential resources you will be using to complete your project. Be as specific as possible at this early date.
- 4) Describe what responsibilities you will be accepting when you undertake your project. Discuss those tasks that you expect to be important parts of the work needed to complete your project.
- 5) Describe the final document and/or artifact you will create to show evidence of your new knowledge and skills, including your research paper topic.
- 6) Include the following statement, verbatim:

I understand that all work on my graduation project must be my original work. I will properly cite all sources used in accordance with school district guidelines. I am aware that any irregularities will be taken before the graduation project Assessment Panel, and/or my Principal for review. Any plagiarism will invalidate my project and jeopardize my graduation.

- 7) Close the letter and include both your name and signature and the name and signature of a parent(s) and/or guardian(s).

Appendix – 4) Source Summaries Guide

A formal source listing is required for all print, video, audio, interviews, or computer based sources of research used on your graduation project. The source summary should be arranged in alphabetical order by the author's last name, or if there is no author, by the first main word in the title. A, and, and, the, can be ignored in a title. The following guidelines should also be used:

- 1) Use the MLA (Modern Language Association) style of bibliography. If an example is not shown below, use a MLA guide as further reference.
- 2) Double-space all entries, with a triple-space between entries.
- 3) Use hanging indent paragraph styles.
- 4) Author's last names are typed first, with a comma separating it from their first name.
- 5) Use italics or underlines for the title of books and periodical.
- 6) Enclose titles of periodical articles in quotation marks.
- 7) Separate each portion of each bibliography entry with a period followed by two spaces.

Examples

A book with one author:

Josephson, Matthew. (1959). Edison: a Biography. New York: McGraw- Hill Book Company.

A book with two authors:

Cole B. and Great A. (1989). Art of the Western World. New York: Summit Books.

A book with an editor:

Hersch. Jr. E.D. (Ed.) (1991). What a First Grader Needs to Know. New York: Doubleday.

An anonymous book:

The Chicago Manual of Style: Fourteenth Edition. (1993). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

A work in more than one volume:

Magill. F.N. ed. (1961). Masterpieces of World Philosophy in Summary Form (Vols. 1 – 2). New York: Salem Press Incorporated.

A signed article in a monthly magazine:

Moore. M. (1994). "For Whom the Bell Curve Really Tolls." Scientific American. January 1995. Volume 272. Number 1. 14 – 17.

A signed article in a newspaper:

Bearsley, T. (1994, December 27). "Speculation Irks Flores." *Journal American*, Section D, p.1.

An unsigned article:

"What Vietnam did to us." (1981, December 14). *Newsweek*, 46-97.

A film or videotape:

Hand, D. (Supervising Director) and Disney, W. (Producer). (1937) *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, [Videotape]. Burbank, CA: The Walt Disney Company

Microsoft Works for Windows 95 (1995). [Computer Program]. Redmond, WA: Microsoft Corporation.

An online article:

Esterhazy, Jonathon. "Vegetarianism: The Road to Satyagraha." Online. Manitoba Animal Rights Coalition. Internet. 17 December 1997.

www.envirolink.org/arrs/essays/gandhi.html

A published interview:

Morrison, Toni. Interview. *All Things Considered*. National Public Radio. WNYC, New York. 16 March 1986.

A personal interview:

Pei, I. M. Personal interview. 27 July 1998.

Remember: This is not a comprehensive guide. If the example you need is not shown above, consult a MLA manual. Your entries must also be double-spaced. The entries above are single spaced in an effort to conserve space. That is not a consideration for your project.

The text of your research paper must also reflect proper MLA citing {example: (Bierenson, 14)} after referenced information in the body of the paper. Be sure to use this format correctly. If you are unsure of the correct format, again, consult a MLA manual.

Appendix – 5) Plagiarism Details

Baron (p. 19) defines plagiarism as “the improper use of another’s idea or language.” Essentially this consists of two parts:

- 1) Paraphrasing closely without giving credit (including rearranging sentence structure or “mimicking”.)
- 2) Using original phrases or words without quotation marks.

Unless the text of a paper or other writing is not wholly in the writer’s original wording or properly cited, it qualifies as plagiarism. Plagiarism on the graduation project, as mentioned previously in this guide/information packet, will result in an assessment of “unacceptable” and the completion of a new project will be necessary to graduate.

Having someone other than you compose text or writings is also considered an act of plagiarism. If you do choose to use direct quotes or paraphrasing you may cite the source either in the text, as a foot note, or as an end note.

Some general guidelines for avoiding plagiarism are shown below. They can also be found in Write for College – A Student Handbook, by Sebranek, Meyer, and Kemper.

What to do:

Indicate clearly when you use anything from another writer’s work, even if only a phrase or single key word, by using quotation marks.

When summarizing or paraphrasing, distinguish clearly where the ideas of another person ends and your own comments begin.

When using a writer’s idea, credit the author by name and also cite the work in which you found the data.

Provide a new citation when using additional information from a previously cited work. Err on the side of caution by giving credit whenever you suspect you are using information, other than general knowledge, from a source.

Do not use facts, details, or ideas from a source without indicating in some way that you are doing so.

Do not confuse your own ideas with others’ ideas discovered during your research. Even if your idea resembles another writer’s, you must credit that writer and the work in which the idea is shared.