

Capstone Project

The following proposal for the design of the Capstone Project is presented for discussion purposes. Feedback received will be used to refine the design of the final version and to develop the final guidelines on Capstone for use by students and teachers.

A capstone project, also known as a culminating project or experience, or senior exhibition, among other terms, is a project that allows students to demonstrate their learning using an area(s) of interest as the basis for the project. Ideally, this would be in an area that they are passionate about and anticipate they will be pursuing after graduation. In Career Life Connections, students will design, assemble, and present a capstone project to an audience to demonstrate personal learning and achievement (in and out-of-school), growth in the core competencies, and a reflection on the post-graduation plan.

Capstone projects include components such as the following:

Proposal:	The proposal outlines the project and includes disciplinary and core competency connections, timelines, and product.
Mentor:	The mentor is ideally a shared role that includes teachers and/or community members that provide guidance throughout the culminating project.
Research:	The research is an essential component that informs each student's culminating project.
Product:	The product is the end result of the project (e.g., video, document, performance, something constructed).
Presentation:	The presentation can have a variety of forms and happens with an audience composed of teachers, community members and/or others connected to the student and/or their culminating project.

School districts and schools can collaborate with teachers, mentors, and students to determine how culminating projects can best be situated within local contexts.

Research has shown that students' capstones or culminating projects that are well supported—at school, in the community, and at home—and those that are developed through a 'review-plan-do' model with student reflection and revision, can benefit students in the following ways:

- Increase academic rigor for students final year
- Increase student motivation and engagement
- Increase education and career aspirations
- Improve student confidence and self-perceptions
- Provide an opportunity for a student to demonstrate learning and proficiency

(Hanover Research, 2013; McGill, 2012; Schwering, 2015)

Capstone projects are best supported in school districts and schools where both the process for developing the project and the product guidelines and expectations are clearly set. The process for developing a culminating project should be clearly articulated, supported well with clear guidelines, inclusive of teachers/mentors support and scheduled time to devote to the project.

When the 10–12 Career Education curricula are revised, based on feedback, and finalized, it is intended that instructional samples created by teachers will be added to highlight the personalized opportunities present within these courses and the choice and flexibility for course delivery within local contexts. The final capstone guidelines will also be developed through the review and feedback process.