



Old Saybrook High School

Capstone Handbook

2026-2027

The mission of the Old Saybrook Public Schools is to educate and prepare students to achieve their highest aspirations, care for others and the environment, and contribute to a global society by working in partnership with families and the community, and by engaging each learner in a rigorous, personalized, and meaningful educational program.

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Preface

The purpose of this handbook is to provide valuable information to assist Old Saybrook High School students in the successful completion of the Capstone Project. This reference has a variety of materials, including important timelines that will be used by students, parents, and mentors to help students demonstrate the skills they need beyond OSHS.

Capstone enables students to demonstrate the many skills they have obtained while in Old Saybrook Public Schools. Additionally, Capstone fulfills the following OSPS graduation requirement: Commencing with the graduating class of 2022, in order to graduate and be granted a diploma students must satisfactorily complete (1) a minimum of twenty-five credits, including ... a one-credit senior demonstration project or its equivalent, as approved by the State Board of Education.¹

This handbook is pending approval by the Old Saybrook Board of Education.

Capstone History

The Senior Project has been a part of the Old Saybrook High School culture for years. This project has been a point of pride for students and faculty. These projects have often set apart Old Saybrook students from their peers. OSPS focuses on ensuring that instruction is personalized as much as possible and is designed to ensure that the work being asked of students is meaningful and essential. The Capstone Project has many of the same attributes as the senior project, but Capstone enables students to broaden their application of skills and interests.

Definition of a Capstone²

Also called a *capstone experience*, *culminating project*, or *senior exhibition*, among many other terms, a **capstone project** is a multifaceted assignment that serves as a culminating academic and intellectual experience for students, typically during their final year of high school or middle school, or at the end of an academic program or learning-pathway experience. While similar in some ways to a college thesis, capstone projects may take a wide variety of forms, but most are long-term investigative projects that culminate in a final product, presentation, or performance. Capstone projects are generally designed to encourage students to think critically, solve challenging problems, and develop skills such as oral communication, public speaking, research skills, media literacy, teamwork, planning, self-sufficiency, or goal setting—i.e., skills that will help prepare them for college, modern careers, and adult life. In most cases, the projects are also interdisciplinary, in the sense that they require students to apply skills or investigate issues across many different subject areas or domains of knowledge. Capstone projects also tend to encourage students to connect their projects to community issues or problems, and to integrate outside-of-school learning experiences, including activities such as interviews, scientific observations, or internships.

The following are a few representative educational goals of Capstone projects:

¹ The entirety of the High School Graduation Policy is available in the OSHS Student Handbook

² Taken from Glossary of Education Reform: www.edglossary.org/capstone-project

- i. **Increasing student motivation and engagement.** The creative nature of capstone projects, which are typically self-selected by students and based on personal interests, can strengthen student motivation to learn, particularly during a time (twelfth grade) when academic motivation and engagement tend to wane.
- ii. **Increasing educational and career aspirations.** By involving students in long-term projects that intersect with personal interests and professional aspirations, capstone projects can help students with future planning, goal setting, postsecondary decisions, and career exploration—particularly for those students who may be less focused, uncertain, or indecisive about their post-graduation plans and aspirations.
- iii. **Improving student confidence and self-perceptions.** Capstone projects typically require students to take on new responsibilities, be more self-directed, set goals, and follow through on commitments. Completing such projects can boost self-esteem, build confidence, and teach students about the value of accomplishment. Students may also become role models for younger students, which can cultivate leadership abilities and have positive cultural effects within a school.

Goals of Capstone

The following are the overarching goals of the Capstone. Students will be able to demonstrate the following skills³:

- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
 - Critical Thinking and Problem Solving is a habit of mind characterized by the comprehensive exploration of issues, ideas, artifacts, and events as well as applying knowledge and skills in practical ways to solve real-world problems.
- Initiative and Entrepreneurship
 - Initiative and Entrepreneurship denote creative, inventive, and resourceful ways individuals use to solve problems, search out, and strive for new innovations.
- Effective Oral and Written Communication
 - Oral communication is a prepared, purposeful presentation designed to increase knowledge, to foster understanding, or to promote change in the listeners' attitudes, values, beliefs, or behaviors. Written communication is the development and expression of ideas in writing. Written communication involves learning to work in many genres and styles. It can involve working with many different writing technologies and mixing texts, data, and images. Written communication abilities develop through iterative experiences across the curriculum.
- Collaboration across Networks and Leading by Influence
 - Collaboration across networks is the ability to work together with diverse groups to facilitate the exchange of ideas to achieve a goal, make decisions, and solve problems. Leading with influence is the ability to generate results collaboratively, in a variety of contexts without direct authority.
- Agility and Adaptability
 - Agility and adaptability is being able to constantly adjust to changing demands by using a variety of tools to solve complex problems with responsiveness and flexibility. Handling disruption, rapid transformation, and reorganization of

³ Rubrics can be found at:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1I0c7X3BPvUHLzCskSZ7ym6MDnDriZiHC/view?usp=sharing>

information is necessary for 21st century learning: “Learning to be comfortable with being uncomfortable”.

- Accessing and Analyzing Information
 - Accessing and analyzing information is the ability to know when there is a need for information and how to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively use that information for solving problems.
- Curiosity and Imagination
 - Curiosity and imagination is the capacity to synthesize existing ideas and to work creatively in ways characterized by innovation and divergent thinking.

Capstone Components

All information will be housed in Google Classroom.

1. Project Proposal⁴
 - a. This includes, but is not limited to: a description of the project, argumentative synthesis, an anticipated timeline, and teacher and/or mentor approval of a robust project
2. Academic Argumentative Synthesis
 - a. If a student is **not** enrolled in *English in Action*, *News Media Now*, *Advanced Research Methods*, or *Exploramos*, this will be included in the proposal document
 - b. If a student is enrolled in *English in Action*, *News Media Now*, *Advanced Research Methods*, or *Exploramos*, this requirement will be fulfilled within the course
 - c. During the course of a student's high school experience, students learn various critical reading, analytical writing, and synthesis skills. The purpose of the Capstone Academic Argumentative Synthesis task is for students to have an authentic platform to share their knowledge about a topic of their choosing. This task asks students to analyze a perspective or make an argument about a topic. This synthesis may be an expanded essay which presents a student's own interpretation, evaluation, or argument, which is supported with robust, academic sources.
3. Reflection Process
 - a. This includes: conversations with teachers and/or mentors throughout the year and a written reflection of three [21st Century Skills](#) at the end of the project
 - b. Students are required to meet three times throughout the process with at least one of the Capstone coordinators (Sarah Fawcett, sfawcett@oldsaybrookschools.org; Kristen Hunter, khunter@oldsaybrookschools.org)
4. Culminating Presentations
 - a. **Final Presentation:** Capstone students present their project and reflection of their learning to a larger audience of faculty and peers during an Advisory/Flex period. This is a requirement for **all** Capstone students.
 - b. **Student Showcase Gallery Walk:** Capstone students showcase their Capstone projects to members of the Old Saybrook community. This evening event happens in the spring. This is a requirement for **all English in Action, News Media Now, Advanced Research Methods, and Exploramos students.**
5. Robust Project⁵
 - a. This will fulfill the broad goals of the proposal
6. Time Commitment of a minimum of **40 hours**
 - a. This includes time on the academic argumentative synthesis, reflection meetings, and the project itself

⁴ The specific expectations of each of these components is up to individual teacher discretion

⁵ Robust is defined as goals that are mutually agreed upon by the student and teacher/mentor and that provide opportunities for student *growth* over the course of the project.

Old Saybrook High School Capstone Project Expectations

The components of the Capstone Project are as follows⁶:

1. Project Proposal - [Project Proposal](#)
 - a. This includes: a description of the project, an anticipated timeline, and teacher approval of a robust project
 - b. Date Completed _____ Teacher Signature _____
2. Background Research
 - a. Date Completed _____ Teacher Signature _____
3. [21st Century Skill Written Reflection](#)
 - a. Date Completed _____ Teacher Signature _____
4. Robust Project
 - a. Completion based on evidence provided to Capstone Coordinator(s)
 - b. Date Completed _____ Teacher Signature _____
5. Culminating Presentation
 - a. School wide presentation: Date Completed _____
 - b. Gallery Walk (EiA, NMN, Exploramos): Date Completed _____
 - c. TED Talk (EiA, Exploramos): Date Completed _____
6. Time Commitment of a minimum of 40 hours

We certify that the above student has met all of the requirements of the Old Saybrook High School Capstone.

Ultimately, it is the student's responsibility for the success of the Capstone project. Each student must work closely with his/her mentor and Capstone coordinator(s) to ensure he/she is meeting major milestones, charting his/her progress, and reaching out for assistance when needed.

⁶ The specific expectations of each of these components is up to individual teacher/mentor discretion

Student Commitment

As a student at Old Saybrook High School, I understand and acknowledge the following:

- The Capstone project is a graduation requirement of Old Saybrook Public Schools; I must complete this project and all components of the project to successfully graduate.
- *Academic Integrity Agreement*
 - When turning in work or engaging in academic activities, your teachers expect the following:
 - When you borrow the words or ideas of another person, you will indicate that you are quoting, and you must properly credit your source(s). If you borrow another person's ideas and put them into your own words (ie, paraphrase), you still must properly credit that person for those ideas; otherwise, you are plagiarizing.
 - You will not purchase/create a paper online and turn it in as your original work (even if you change some of the sentences).
 - When creating your Works Cited, be sure to use authentic resources. Beware of creating false information or citations or entries. This is considered fabrication of information.
 - Please do not deliberately use or attempt to use in any academic exercise materials, information, or study aids not allowed by your instructor. (AI (i.e Chat GPT) falls in this category.)
- I will, with integrity, document my hours and involvement in this project.
- I will stay in close contact with my teacher/mentor and Capstone Coordinator(s) to ensure I am on track.
- I will use the skills I have learned during my time in Old Saybrook schools and my life experiences, and sometimes the work will be challenging and difficult.
- I will pursue an area of personal interest and broaden my understanding of the topic, reflect on my learning, and actively seek ways to apply this learning to solve authentic problems.
- I will do my best to self-advocate and use my resources to the best of my ability.
- I will adhere to the timelines agreed upon with the Capstone Coordinator(s).
- If I cannot follow the established timelines, the following may occur:
 - I may be risking privileges such as early dismissal from school, late arrival to school, and/or may have to make up lost time during flex time or after school.
 - Development of an action plan with my mentor and Capstone Coordinator(s); This action plan will include:
 - A timeline with my teachers and parents/guardians to get back on track.
 - Weekly check-ins with my teacher/mentor and/or Capstone Coordinator(s)

Student Signature

Date

Student Name

Year of Graduation

Guardian Involvement

The Capstone project at Old Saybrook High Schools offers parents and guardians a unique opportunity to observe their child’s progress through a rigorous, authentic, personalized learning experience. The expectation of the Capstone Project is that each student complete a project of his/her choosing and meet all Capstone requirements, which include an academic argumentative synthesis, a reflection process, and final presentation.

The Capstone Project provides students with opportunities to exemplify all of the components of RAM PRIDE: *Perseverance, Respect, Integrity, Dedication, and Excellence*. There will be times when a student makes mistakes. As a parent/guardian, we ask you to provide the support, encouragement, and motivation to keep your child on track. Student learning in a Capstone Project is derived from the process, as opposed to the product. Specifically, for Old Saybrook Schools, this means being agile and adaptable to adjust to changing demands by using a variety of tools to solve complex problems with responsiveness and flexibility.

Thank you for your support in your child’s journey. If you have any questions, please reach out to the Capstone coordinators or your child’s teacher/mentor.

Thank you for your support,

Sarah Fawcett & Kristen Hunter - Capstone Coordinators

I have read the above communication and understand the requirements described above.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Student Name

Year of Graduation

Capstone Credit

On a student's *final transcript*, Capstone will be delineated as *Credit Earned* (CE). This is a 1.0 credit *that will not impact a student's overall GPA*.

In the final presentation, faculty will assess the Capstone process and project as:

- Exceeding Standards
- Meeting Standards
- Project Needs Development
- Project Needs Improvement⁷

This holistic assessment is based on the growth a student shows in his/her acquisition of OSPS's 21st Century Skills. In order to show this growth, students reflect on their skill acquisition before, during, and after going through the process of the project. The final presentation rubric can be found [here](#).

Connection between CCR (College and Career Readiness) and Capstone

Students may choose to fulfill both the .5 College and Career Readiness graduation requirement and the 1.0 Capstone requirement by completing a joint CCR-focused Capstone project.

The requirements include:

- A [proposal document](#) that outlines the student's plan which includes:
 - Argumentative Synthesis Piece (500-700) related to the student's topic of interest, Career Exploration, Post Secondary Research, Professional Interviews (2), a Career Synthesis, a Job Shadow Opportunity/Mini internship, Application of Learning (where a student shares with an audience the information they have learned through this process), a 21st Century Skill Reflection, a Journal of Progress, and a Final Presentation to a Flex group
- Completion of the [Career Research Form](#) connected to the OSHS 21st Century Skills

Students enrolled in *News Media Now* can also earn CCR credit by developing a project with an explicit career-based focus; engagement with professionals in a career field through interviewing, job shadowing, and/or an internship experience.

Connection between Academic Classes and Capstone

Some classes, such as English in Action, News Media Now, Advanced Research Methods, and Exploramos, help facilitate the Capstone process. These courses' content include direct instruction on developing a project, writing a proposal, writing an argumentative synthesis, and built-in check-ins along the way. Students who earn their Capstone credit through these classes are expected to attend the Student Showcase Gallery Walk and must meet with the Capstone Coordinator(s) to check in about progress.

⁷ In order to earn Capstone credit, a student will need to *Exceed* or *Meet the Capstone Standards*

Proposed Capstone Timelines⁸

Independent Capstone Project Timeline

	Component of Capstone
Quarter 1	- Initial meeting with Capstone Coordinator(s) to learn about the Capstone Requirements - Draft of Project Proposal
Quarter 2	- Follow up meeting with Capstone Coordinator(s) to finalize Capstone Proposal and plan of action - Approved Project Proposal (includes Academic Research, Proposal Summary, 21st Century Skill Explanation, Action Step Table, and Resource Section)
Quarter 3	- Meet with Capstone Coordinator(s) to discuss Capstone progress - Majority of the project is completed as outlined in the Proposal's timeline and action steps
Quarter 4	- Final Presentation to Advisory groups - Final 21st Century Skill Reflection - Final meeting with Capstone Coordinator(s) - Students in English in Action, Exploramos, Advanced Research Methods, and News Media Now will attend the Student Showcase Gallery Walk

English in Action Capstone Timeline

	Component of Capstone
Quarter 1	- Learn about our community and explore a topic of interest
Quarter 2	- Complete Academic Research
Quarter 3	- Complete project proposal (includes Academic Research, Proposal Summary, 21st Century Skill Explanation, Action Step Table, and Resource Section) - Complete project
Quarter 4	- Final Presentation to Advisory groups - Final 21st Century Skill Reflection - Final meeting with Capstone Coordinator(s) - Students in English in Action, Exploramos, Advanced Research Methods, and News Media Now will attend the Student Showcase Gallery Walk

⁸ These dates may differ if a student is enrolled in News Media Now, English in Action, Advanced Research Methods, or Exploramos

News Media Now Capstone Timeline

	Component of Capstone
Quarter 1	- Learn about different genres of media
Quarter 2	- —
Quarter 3	- Complete NMN proposal - (includes Academic Research, Proposal Summary, 21st Century Skill Explanation) - Complete four major works related to Capstone topic
Quarter 4	- Final Presentation to Advisory groups - Final 21st Century Skill Reflection - Final meeting with Capstone Coordinator(s) - Students in English in Action, Exploramos, Advanced Research Methods, and News Media Now will attend the Student Showcase Gallery Walk

CCR / Capstone Timeline

September	- Initial meeting with Capstone Coordinator(s) to learn about the CCR Focused Capstone Requirements
October	- Academic Research - Career Exploration - Post Secondary Research
November	- Professional Interviews (2) - Career Synthesis
December - February	- Job Shadow Opportunity/Mini Internship
March	- Application of Learning
April	- 21st Century Skill Reflection - Journal of Progress
May	- Final Presentation to Advisory groups - Final 21st Century Skill Reflection - Final meeting with Capstone Coordinator(s) - Students in English in Action, Exploramos, Advanced Research Methods, and News Media Now will attend the Student Showcase Gallery Walk

Fundraising Projects

If a student is interested in pursuing a project with a fundraising component, the following steps must be taken:

1. *All fundraising efforts must follow Old Saybrook Public Schools Fundraising Activities Policy (Series 5000)*
2. The fundraiser needs to be *specifically* defined within the Capstone Proposal. This includes, where the monies will be donated, who will be collecting the money, and adult mentors.
3. Administration needs to be made aware of the project.
4. A meeting with Mrs. Bonin needs to be set up to ensure that the monies are allocated to the correct place.

Fundraising can be a great way to support different community organizations - but oftentimes, volunteering of one's time can make a bigger, longer lasting impact.

If you are interested in pursuing a project that has a fundraising component, we STRONGLY recommend working with an established club or organization. Interact is a GREAT PLACE to do this!

Sample Capstone Projects

Projects focused on Community⁹:

- Developing a club at the elementary, middle, or high school that fulfills a need in that community
- Working with a local community organization, like Youth and Family or Grub Club or the Hart House, to make a difference in our community (i.e. U.N.I.T.Y Day Old Saybrook, Cardboard Communities, Lunch Bunch)
- Teaching others how to do a skill (teaching ceramics, knitting, etc.)
- Teaching people in our community about safety concerns (i.e. Fire and Home Safety Education for Seniors, Boating/Kayak Safety)
- Prom dress fashion show and sale (Cinderella's Closet)
- Teaching Goodwin Teachers how to Utilize 3D Printer
- Organizing the OSPS Cancer Walk (event held at OSHS or OSMS)
- Coaching a team (Park & Rec soccer, basketball, lacrosse, Little League, working with the Special Olympics, et. al.)
- Training a seeing-eye dog
- Planning and organizing the Cycle Against Cancer through the Connecticut Sports Foundation
- Literacy Volunteers Book drive
- Educating others about different cultures
- Designing the OSHS submarine
- Mentoring an elementary or middle school student
- Love 146 Lock-in
- OSMS Track and Field Meet (Running Rams)
- Bring Music to Alzheimer's Patients
- Creating the Senior Video (2018)
- Taking action to reduce plastic waste in our community
- Working with teachers at the elementary, middle, or high school to help teach English Learners (ELs) through different teaching methods
- Healing Hearts: Connecting Middle School Students with Emotional Supports
- Working with a local nonprofit (like High Hopes) to recruit volunteers
- Bringing the DARE program to the high school
- Establishing a physical activity component of Goodwin Buddies (sports, yoga, dance, etc..)
- Helping Seniors at the Estuary use social media
- Developing a Habitat for Humanity chapter at OSHS
- Building a pollinator garden

Extraordinary Experiences

- There are times when students have extraordinary opportunities. A student can pursue this opportunity as a Capstone project

⁹ Some of these projects are from classes that specifically help students build Capstone Projects, such as Exploramos, English in Action (EiA), and Advanced Research Methods (ARM).

Projects focused on self-betterment or discovery:

- Deeply exploring a topic of your choosing
- Development of an art, writing, etc. portfolio
- Rebuilding a boat or car
- Writing a first draft of a play, novel, opera, original music, etc.
- Taking advanced art classes at a place like Lyme Art Academy
- Learning a new skill or trying a new activity (becoming an EMT, learning flower arranging, becoming a certified SCUBA diver, learning a new musical instrument, learning how a new computer program, etc.)

Legacy Projects

Some projects lend themselves to leaving a *legacy* at Old Saybrook High School. Below are *some* of the projects that could be carried on for multiple years. These projects also have materials and contact information so students can continue to move the project forward. Please see the Capstone Coordinator(s) for more information.

- **Project Title:** Benefits of Social Connection for the Aging Population Of Old Saybrook
- **Project Title:** Eats & Beats Festival
- **Project Title:** DARE to End Addiction: Incorporation of DARE program into OSHS
- **Project Title:** Foster Care Wellness Packs
- **Project Title:** Healing Hearts - Providing Supports for Middle Students with Chronically Ill Parents;
- **Project Title:** Help for Housing Insecure Teens
- **Project Title:** Introducing STEM to Goodwin
- **Project Title:** Vex Robots: STEM Education Opportunities at Goodwin
- **Project Title:** Lending a Helping Hand: Community Service Fair
- **Project Title:** Let's Get Fit: Goodwin Buddies Athletic Program
- **Project Title:** Locks for Luke
- **Project Title:** Middle School Track Meet (Running Rams)
- **Project Title:** Music for Alzheimer Patients
- **Project Title:** OSHS Hall of Fame
- **Project Title:** Promoting Community Service with Habitat for Humanity: OSHS Habitat for Humanity Chapter
- **Project Title:** Sustainability in Schools: How Students Can Take Action
- **Project Title:** Encountering Survivors/Differences
- **Project Title:** Unified Sports & Social Inclusion
- **Project Title:** Wands for Wildlife

Possible Outreach Opportunities in the Old Saybrook Community

- Acton Library
- Apple Rehabilitation
- Bikes for Kids (www.bikesforkidsct.org/events)
 - Contact: 860-388-BIKE (2453) or info@bikesforkidsct.org
- Bushy Hill
- Camp Hazen (<https://camphazenyumca.org>)
 - Office email: office@camphazenyumca.org
 - Camp Director: Kath Davies kdavies@camphazenyumca.org
- Chamber of Commerce
- Children's Museum of Southeastern Connecticut (www.childrensmuseumsect.org/support-the-museum/volunteer)
 - Contact: 860.691.1111 or email: visitorservices@cmsect.org
- Common Good Gardens (www.commongoodgardens.org/volunteer.html)
 - Located behind Grace Episcopal Church in Old Saybrook. The garden produces organic fruits and vegetables for the local Shoreline Soup Kitchens.
- Connecticut River Museum
 - Connecticut River Museum holds 6 weeks of fun, hands-on activities for children ages 6-15. They are looking for volunteers to fill the role of Junior Intern. Junior Interns are high school students (entering grades 9-12) looking to gain experience in education, museum studies and inquiry-based learning. Junior Interns must commit to a full week of camp; Monday through Friday 9-4. CRM will accept 2-3 interns per session. Please note that Junior Interns must be 16 or older to volunteer for Sailing into the Past and 13 and older for all other camps.
- CT Humane Society
- Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (DEEP in Old Lyme)
- Florence Griswold Museum (<https://florencegriswoldmuseum.org>)
- Forgotten Felines (<http://forgottenfelinesct.org>)
 - Volunteer Coordinator Line: 860-669-1347 or adoptions@forgottenfelinesct.org
 - Volunteer opportunities for students 16 years of age and older
- Goodspeed Playhouse (www.goodspeed.org/about/volunteer)
- Goodwin Elementary School
- Habitat for Humanity
- High Hopes Therapeutic Riding Inc.
 - (<https://highhopestr.org/volunteers>)
 - High Hopes Volunteer Coordinator 860-434-1974, ext. 121
- Ivoryton Playhouse (www.ivorytonplayhouse.org/get-involved/volunteer-and-donations)
- Land Use Department
- Lions Club
- [Literacy Volunteers Valley Shore](#)
- Local Business Owners

- Local Election Boards and Committees
- Middlesex Hospital
(<https://middlesexhealth.org/middlesex-and-the-community/volunteering-opportunities>)
 - Contact: Volunteer Services Office at (860) 358-6735 or email kate.kearns@midhosp.org
- Mystic Aquarium (www.mysticaquarium.org/careers/volunteering)
 - Contact: volunteer@mysticaquarium.org or 860-572-5955
- Old Saybrook Estuary
- Old Saybrook Fire Department (www.oldsaybrookfire.com/index.html)
 - 860-395-3149 for the Junior Division advisor
- Old Saybrook High School Interact Club
- Old Saybrook Historical Society
(<https://saybrookhistory.org/volunteer-opportunities>)
 - Contact: 860-395-1635
- Old Saybrook Middle School
- Old Saybrook Parks and Recreation
(<https://oldsaybrookct.myrec.com/info/default.aspx>)
- Old Saybrook Police Department
(www.oldsaybrookct.gov/police-department/community-oriented-policing/pages/explorer-program)
- Old Saybrook Youth & Family Services
(www.oldsaybrookct.gov/youth-and-family-services)
- Project Courage
- Rotary Club
- SARAH Foundation
- SCORE - Part of the US Small Business Administration
- Shoreline Soup Kitchen & Pantry
 - (<https://shorelinesoupkitchens.org/give-help/donate-time>)
 - The Shoreline Soup Kitchens & Pantries has many opportunities to volunteer at our meal sites and pantries. To facilitate your volunteering we have a regularly scheduled monthly volunteer orientation meeting. There is no need to pre-register for the monthly new volunteer meetings. Meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month at Grace Episcopal Church, 336 Main Street, Old Saybrook. NO RSVP necessary. Times: 5:30 p.m. for all mandatory community service volunteers only; 6:30 p.m. for all others - the minimum age for volunteers is 12 - youth 15 and under need to be accompanied by a parent or guardian.
- The Kate (www.katharinehepburntheater.org/support/volunteer)
 - Shirley Colquhoun, Volunteer Coordinator, shirley.colquhoun@thekate.org
- Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
- Vista Life Innovations
- YMCA - Westbrook

Capstone Proposal

Capstone Proposal

[Name(s)]

[Name of Project]

Background Academic Research

- Research 3-4 *reliable and valid* **articles** related to your topic. For example, if your project has to do with physical fitness, you might research the mental health benefits of working out.
- Write 500-750 words synthesizing an argument about your topic. For example, you argue that working out positively affects your physical health but the mental health benefits greatly exceed the physical.
- In your response, include at least 5 in-text MLA citations.
- At the end of the response, please include a Works Cited section.

Proposal Summary

Describe exactly what you will do clearly and concisely. Also explain why it matters.

21st Century Skills

- Choose *THREE* OSHS 21st Century Skills
- For each skill, explain how your project enables you to develop these skills. For each skill, please write 100-200 words each.

Action Steps

Dates	Task	Time Commitment
1		
2		

Resources

- [describe people (including teachers) who you will work with on this project]

Approval Signatures

[Scholar Name], OSHS
Student

[Teacher/Mentor Name],
Teacher/Mentor

Reflection Expectations

It is expected that students reflect on their progress of the project as they move through the process. Students may want to journal about their experiences. This includes successes, opportunities for growth, or questions they have.

Throughout the school year, students will meet with one of the Capstone Coordinators to ensure he/she is on track to meet the Capstone requirement. During these meetings, students are expected to bring evidence of their progress and any work they have completed in the process.

Students will receive an appointment to these meetings via their Old Saybrook email account.

Final Reflection

To get the most out of your Capstone experience, you will need to be both self-directed and self-reflective. Keeping a journal will help you in both of these areas. It will give you a place to **reflect** on your experiences – to ask questions, express your emotions, set goals, and dream big.

At the end of your Capstone journey, you will have a final meeting in which you submit a **two-page typed reflection**. In this reflection, you will choose **three** [21st Century](#) rubrics and reflect on your growth as a learner through this process.

Your overall assessment for Capstone is based on your ability to self-assess, reflect, and make plans for future growth.

Capstone Presentations

The purpose of Capstone is to enable students to demonstrate mastery of the following attributes (more information is available in the introduction of this Handbook):

- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
 - Initiative and Entrepreneurship
 - Effective Oral and Written Communication
 - Collaboration across Networks and Leading by Influence
 - Agility and Adaptability
 - Accessing and Analyzing Information
 - Curiosity and Imagination
-

Final Presentation

The **final presentation** of Capstone enables students to showcase how they have met these attributes of an OSHS graduate. Students *typically* can do this presentation during Advisory/Flex. This allows students to share their projects and learning with a larger audience of faculty and peers.

- This is a requirement of all Capstone students.

The presentation should include the following components:

- Summary of the Project
- Highlights of the Project
- Challenges Faced
- 21st Century Skill Reflection
- Areas of Improvement

For students who are earning a CCR & Capstone credit, the final presentation must address how this experience has helped the student move forward with College &/or Career goals.

Student Showcase Gallery Walk

The **Student Showcase Gallery Walk** is an opportunity for students to showcase his/her Capstone project to the Old Saybrook community. During this evening event, students bring a poster or trifold that describes his/her project.

- This is a requirement of News Media Now, English in Action, Advanced Research Methods, and Exploramos.

Final Presentation Format Options

The final presentation can take one of three formats:

- ❑ 7 minute TEDTalk using the PechaKucha format
 - ❑ This presentation is fully memorized with slides moving automatically behind the speaker. The presentation needs to take on the TEDTalk format. More information about the requirements for a TEDTalk can be found at www.ted.com
- ❑ 15-25 minute presentation using traditional Powerpoint slides, a Sway, Prezi, etc.
 - ❑ This presentation is mostly memorized and includes images from the student's experience, what he/she accomplished, learning throughout the process, and a reflection of the 21st Century skills that the Capstone project asks of students. This presentation may include a *brief* video of the student engaging with his/her project.
- ❑ 30-45 minute presentation using traditional Powerpoint slides, a Sway, Prezi, etc. *with an additional "hands-on" component for audience members*
 - ❑ This presentation is mostly memorized and includes images from the student's experience, what he/she accomplished, learning throughout the process, and a reflection of the 21st Century skills that the Capstone project asks of students. This presentation may include a *brief* video of the student engaging with his/her project. *Additionally*, this presentation includes a portion where audience members are able to try something new, learn a new skill, or make something. This type of presentation is ideal for a student who has learned a new skill or tried a new activity. *This is also the method that *will be used* if students choose to present in a pair/trio.

Note: none of the above presentation types are better than another; students have the choice of presenting in the best way that fits their needs and project.

21st Century Skills Rubrics

Accessing and Analyzing Information

21C Rubrics, High School - Accessing and Analyzing Information

Accessing and analyzing information is the ability to know when there is a need for information and how to identify, locate, evaluate and effectively use that information for solving problems.

	Beginning - 1	Developing - 2	Mastery - 3	Advanced - 4
Teacher	- Provides print resources for research and information acquisition. - Directs student use of electronic resources.	- Evaluates electronic resources for appropriateness. - Utilizes school databases for enhanced research and information acquisitions.	- Incorporates problem and project based learning into instruction. - Utilizes open-ended questions and emphasizes higher order thinking skills. - Guides and encourages the use of appropriate resources to solve authentic problems.	- Creates structures that guide student inquiry and facilitates the use of information. - Provides opportunities for students to access, evaluate, synthesize and use information effectively and efficiently to conduct research, solve problems and manage projects throughout all content areas. - Provides ongoing constructive/descriptive feedback that allows for students to self-reflect, modify and improve.
Students	- I found sources about my topic from a provided list - I explained if a provided source addressed or answered my question - I explained why a provided source was credible - I followed the steps in a learning process that have been given to me using provided resources	- I found sources about my topic - I determined how or if a source addressed or answered my question - I determined if a source was credible using established criteria - I followed the steps in a learning process that was given to me and found my own resources	- I used strategies to find multiple resources about my topic - I analyzed multiple sources to determine if they answered or addressed my questions - I determined if sources were credible using critical thinking skills - I figured out what to learn about next based on what I found first	- I selected and used appropriate sources to assemble, evaluate, and utilize information - I analyzed multiple sources and determined how they connect to answer or address my questions thoroughly - I determined if sources were credible, and also described the sources' bias - I engaged in a process of figuring out what to learn about next based on what I'd already learned

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Agility and Adaptability

21C Rubrics, High School - Agility & Adaptability

Agility and adaptability is being able to constantly adjust to changing demands by using a variety of tools to solve complex problems with responsiveness and flexibility. Handling disruption, rapid transformation, and reorganization of information is necessary for 21st century learning: "Learning to be comfortable with being uncomfortable".

	Beginning - 1	Developing - 2	Mastery - 3	Advanced - 4
Teacher	- Initiates independent problem solving opportunities with a singular solution. - Provides feedback as needed. - Utilizes primarily traditional instructional methods (lecture, direct instruction, etc.)	- Provides students with multiple tools and ways to solve problems. - Provides frequent, descriptive feedback. - Provides opportunities to tackle both simple and complex problems.	- Creates a variety of learning opportunities that include challenges with and without clear solutions. - Encourages students to work collaboratively. - Provides deliberate feedback to students during formative and summative assessments.	- Creates conditions that require student demonstration of adaptability to change. - Provides real-world opportunities for problem solving that utilize multiple solutions. - Provides ongoing constructive/descriptive feedback that allows for students to self-reflect, modify and improve.
Students	- I identified what had changed, or that people disagreed with me - I listened to feedback - I sometimes listened to the values and opinions of others	- I adapted my behavior when something changed, or when the people I was working with disagreed with me - I made improvements based on feedback - I listened to and accepted the values and opinions of others	- I adapted my thinking when something changed, or when the people I was working with disagreed with me - I received feedback, reflected on it, and used it to make improvements - I listened to diverse values and beliefs and worked to reach solutions	- I embraced change when it occurred and valued the opportunities created by new circumstances - I sought out feedback for reflection and used it to make improvements - I understood, negotiated, and balanced diverse values and beliefs to reach workable solutions

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Collaboration across Networks and Leading by Influence

21C Rubrics, High School - Collaboration Across Networks and Leading by Influence

Collaboration across networks is the ability to work together with diverse groups to facilitate the exchange of ideas to achieve a goal, make decisions, and solve problems. Leading with influence is the ability to generate results collaboratively, in a variety of contexts without direct authority.

	Beginning - 1	Developing - 2	Mastery - 3	Advanced - 4
Teacher	- Provides independent learning experiences for students. - Uses primarily traditional instructional methods (lecture, direct instruction, etc.)	Creates structures for students to work in groups on products and projects.	- Provides learning opportunities for students to network with diverse teams. - Establishes group norms to facilitate effective collaboration.	- Provides opportunities for students to take leadership roles in collaborative projects. - Provides opportunities for students to transfer these skills to other contexts.
Students	I sometimes contributed to my group	I contributed to my group	I contributed knowledge, opinions, and skills to my group	I contributed knowledge, opinions, and skills to my group actively and consistently
	I assumed responsibility for my own work	I assumed responsibility for my group sometimes	I assumed responsibility for my group	I assumed responsibility for the success or failure of my group
	I understood that good groups need both leaders and contributors	I understood my role within the group	I understood and fulfilled my role within the group	I easily and quickly moved between leader and support roles when necessary
	I understood the value of compromise	I compromised sometimes	- I compromised sometimes - I valued the knowledge, opinions, and skills of all group members	- I compromised - I valued and put to use the knowledge, opinions, and skills of all group members
	I looked to others in my group for good examples	I sometimes set a good example for others in my group	I set an example for others working toward a common goal	I influenced and guided others toward a common goal
	I worked towards group goals when directed to do so	I worked towards group goals sometimes	I actively worked towards group goals	I worked towards group goals consistently and actively

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Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

21C Rubrics, High School - Critical Thinking and Problem Solving

Critical Thinking is the act of building an understanding of how an issue or situation evolved—looking at it from a systemic perspective and not accepting things at face value. Problem Solving is the process of identifying a problem, asking good questions about the problem, seeking answers to those questions, and formulating and implementing solutions.

	Beginning - 1	Developing - 2	Mastery - 3	Advanced - 4
Teacher	- Disseminates information with limited real world connections. - Places little emphasis on helping students think and analytically, make decisions, and solve problems.	- Provides direct instruction on critical thinking and problem solving skills. - Creates opportunities, including technology, for students to solve basic problems.	- Incorporates problem and project based learning into instruction. - Utilizes open-ended questions and emphasizes higher order thinking skills. - Guides and encourages the use of appropriate resources, including technology, to solve authentic problems.	- Provides authentic opportunities for problem solving that utilize multiple solutions. - Provides structure that allows students to ask open-ended questions and formulate and articulate solutions to problems. - Utilizes a variety of learning activities, including technology, that allow students to choose and engage in solving authentic, relevant problems.
Students	- I identified a problem when it was presented to me - I developed questions - I answered questions with evidence - I planned and designed a potential solution to a problem using provided options	- I identified a problem - I developed open-ended questions - I answered questions with relevant evidence that I gathered and evaluated - I planned and designed a potential solution to an authentic problem using appropriate tools	- I identified an authentic problem, opportunity and/or challenge - I developed and answered open-ended questions - I answered questions by analyzing and evaluating relevant evidence - I planned, designed, and implemented solutions to authentic problems using effective tools	- I frequently recognized and identified authentic problems related to a single issue, opportunity and/or challenge - I developed and answered open-ended questions from a variety of different perspectives (scientific, economic, social, etc.) - I answered questions by finding patterns, cause/effect relationships and evidence related to the current situation or problem - I planned, designed, implemented, evaluated and revised solutions to authentic problems using effective tools

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Curiosity and Imagination

21C Rubrics, High School - Curiosity and Imagination

Curiosity and imagination is the capacity to synthesize existing ideas and to work creatively in ways characterized by innovation and divergent thinking.

	Beginning - 1	Developing - 2	Mastery - 3	Advanced - 4
Teacher	- Limits instruction to specific content. - Makes connections to existing knowledge.	- Provides instruction to accommodate a variety of learning styles, interests and capabilities. - Promotes students to identify trends, make predictions and think skillfully.	- Creates a student-centered environment. - Provides opportunities for students to demonstrate collaboration, critical thinking and communication skills. - Establishes group norms to facilitate effective communication.	- Create opportunities for students to elaborate, refine, analyze, and evaluate their own ideas in order to improve and maximize creative efforts collaboratively and independently. - Provides ongoing constructive/descriptive feedback that allows for students to self-reflect, modify and improve. - Provide opportunities for students to collaborate with an audience beyond the school to create original work.
Students	- With teacher support, I created work that imitates existing models - I identified the audience for my new work - I understood that learning involves both successes and mistakes	- I created work that imitates existing models - I made choices in my work based on the characteristics of my audience - I identified when my new ideas were effective and when they were not	- I created new work informed by existing models - I used what I know about my audience to create work that could be meaningful to them - I reflected on why some of my new ideas were effective or not	- I analyzed existing models, found patterns, and used ideas from those models to create new work - I engaged with a real world audience to create work meaningful to them - I reflected on the new ideas I tried, kept the ones that worked, and modified the ones that didn't

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Effective Oral and Written Communication

21C Rubrics, High School - Effective Oral and Written Communication

Students will be able to communicate their thoughts clearly and precisely, balancing an awareness of their audience with their own unique voices.

	Beginning - 1	Developing - 2	Mastery - 3	Advanced - 4
Teacher	- Initiates communication opportunities. - Utilizes primarily traditional instructional methods in the classroom (lecture, direct instruction, etc.)	- Creates structures for students to articulate thoughts and ideas using verbal and nonverbal communication skills in a variety of forms. - Integrates multimedia and technologies.	- Models effective communication. - Creates structures for students to use communication for a variety of purposes. - Provides opportunities for students to make connections beyond the classroom.	- Models effective communication in multiple ways for multiple purposes. - Provides opportunities for students to make global connections. - Creates structures, provides opportunities, and assesses progress.
Students	I identified a goal for my communications	I identified a goal for my communications and planned that communication	I used communication skills to accomplish a goal	I used communication to accomplish a range of goals (e.g. to inform, instruct, motivate, or persuade)
	I communicated with peers and adults	I initiated communication with peers and adults	I initiated and sustained both oral and written communication with peers and adults	I figured out how to initiate both oral and written communication with peers and adults, and then sustained that communication
	I explained my thoughts and ideas to others	I explained my thoughts and ideas using oral, written, nonverbal and multimedia communication skills	I explained my thoughts and ideas effectively using oral, written, nonverbal and multimedia communication skills	I articulated thoughts and ideas effectively using oral, written and nonverbal communication skills in a variety of forms, media, and contexts, including across languages and cultures
	I listened to my audience	I listened carefully to my audience and understood what they were saying	I listened carefully to my audience so that I could understand what they meant	I listened effectively to understand both spoken and unspoken meaning and then adjusted my communication as needed

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Initiative and Entrepreneurship

21C Rubrics, High School - Initiative and Entrepreneurship

Initiative is the practice of being self-directed in determining ways to seek out new opportunities, ideas, and strategies for improvement. Entrepreneurship is putting those ideas into practice.

	Beginning - 1	Developing - 2	Mastery - 3	Advanced - 4
Teacher	- Disseminates information with limited student engagement. - Utilizes primarily traditional instructional methods in the classroom (lecture, direct instruction, etc.)	- Provides instruction to accommodate a range of learning styles, interest and capabilities. - Creates limited entry points and avenues for learning.	- Creates student-centered tasks for all students. - Provides students opportunities to learn through multiple pathways/entry points.	- Creates student-centered learning experiences through multiple pathways and venues on a regular basis. - Provides an opportunity for students to use data and self-reflect on their learning, set their own goals and inform their instruction. - Provides constructive feedback to students on a continuous basis and allows students opportunities to reflect, modify and improve. - Uses entrepreneurship as a real-world context to have students demonstrate the importance of academic content.
Students	- I chose appropriate learning goals from a list - I followed a plan for how to use my available time - I identified things I'd like to learn more about - I reflected on past learning experiences	- I chose appropriate learning goals from a list and then self-monitored my progress using provided tools - I made a plan for how to use my available time - I followed steps to deepen my learning on chosen topics - I reflected on past learning experiences to help guide my work	- I set appropriate learning goals and self-monitored my progress using evidence - I made a plan for how to use the available time and followed it through - I planned and took steps to deepen my learning on chosen topics - I reflected on past learning experiences to help me reach a goal	- I used evidence to set short and long term learning goals, self-monitored my progress, and made adjustments when necessary - I made a plan for how to use the available time, followed it through, and adjusted as needed - I planned and took steps to gain expertise extending beyond basic mastery of skills and/or curriculum - I reflected critically on past learning experiences to inform my future progress

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Permission to Leave School for Capstone Responsibilities

Student Name: _____ **Student Signature:** _____

Parent Signature: _____

Supervising teacher name and signature: _____

Date Submitted: _____

Purpose of Leaving School: _____

Contact Name: Sarah Fawcett, Kristen Hunter, 860-395-3175

Means of Transportation: **Student MUST provide own transportation**

By signing this form, all parties have agreed that the student has permission to participate in a day or portion of a day out of school for their Capstone project, and all school rules, dress code, and regulations as outlined in the OSHS Student Handbook apply to this and all field trips.

Letter Day & Date: _____

Period	Class	Teacher Signature