

Colorado Graduation Guidelines Promising Practice

District	Denver Public Schools
School	Denver School of Science and Technology – Stapleton High School
Contact Information	
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Title of artifact	Senior Project Class Letter – DSST
Type of practice	Communications

Brief description of artifact

This letter from the Senior Projects Coordinator to the twelfth graders of each graduating class provides basic information on the Senior Project, including information on the course; timeline for preparation, work, and completion; evaluation; and approval requirement.

Types of practices in the CDE Graduation Guidelines Promising Practices collection:

1. Communications, such as announcements to school community and business community
2. Implementation process plans, such as strategic plans and timelines
3. Implementation tools connected to local graduation requirements, for instance:
 - o Testing implementation (ACT, AP, ASVAB, CMAS, IB, PARCC, SAT), such as classes and retreats, administration procedures and agreements
 - o Capstone implementation, such as instructions and samples
 - o Concurrent Enrollment implementation, such as classes and agreements
 - o Career/academic assessment implementation (e.g., ACCUPLACER, COMPASS, Work Keys), such as administration procedures and agreements
 - o Industry Certificates implementation, such as samples
4. Local graduation requirements aligned with state guidelines, such as board policies
5. Regarding students with exceptionalities
6. Other: _____



May 27, 2015

Dear Twelfth Graders of the Class of 2016,

I am so excited to work with you all on your Senior Projects over the course of the next year. This letter provides some basic information about your Senior Projects course and is intended to get you thinking ahead to the project you would like to pursue. Senior Projects does not officially start until Tri-2 of your senior year, but it will be very helpful to get a head start on your ideas over the summer and fall.

The Senior Project at DSST is a culminating experience in which students choose a topic of study and complete a product, write a thesis paper, and present their final work in May to a panel of experts. Your senior project Product is the focus of your Senior Project class, while your Thesis is the focus of your Senior English class in Tri-2 and Tri-3. You will present both the product and your thesis in your Senior Project Presentation at the end of the year. Your product and your thesis both address different aspects of an Essential Question (EQ), which is a deep and thought-provoking question related to your chosen area of study. In Trimester 2 of Senior Projects, students will generate ideas, decide on a project, and submit a formal proposal for their Senior Project Product. In Trimester 3, the focus shifts to product completion and presentation preparation.

Products are evaluated on their originality and personal challenge, academic rigor, quality, and the accompanying documentation of the creative process along the way. The best and most successful projects put the student in his or her Element. The Element is defined as the point at which one's passions meet his or her talents. For example, a student has a passion for finding alternative energy sources and a talent for engineering, so he chooses to build a solar-powered go-kart. I encourage you to spend time over the summer thinking of what makes you tick as a person; ask yourself what you really, really care about. Your passion(s) are the place to start when thinking of a senior project, and we will pick up here, with finding your passion, in class this winter. Consider beginning a journal or starting a set of notes somewhere to record your thoughts and ideas.

Please feel free to email me your ideas or questions any time over the summer or fall at my DSST address (below). You must obtain prior approval from me before pursuing your product idea, so if you intend to get a head start on your project, please be sure to get in touch before starting to discuss your ideas and obtain permission to proceed.

I really look forward to working with you in the upcoming school year. Have a wonderful and restful summer, and I will see you later this fall!

With best wishes,

Ms. Smith
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