

Colorado Graduation Guidelines Promising Practice

District	Denver Public Schools
School	Denver School of Science and Technology – Stapleton High School
Contact Information	
Name	Whitney Smith
Email	whitney.smith@scienceandtech.org

Title of artifact	Senior Project Introduction – DSST
Type of practice	Communications

Brief description of artifact

This communication provides an introduction to the Senior Project, specifically the essential question, the product, the paper, the presentation, and the timeline.

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:
 - Testing implementation (ACT, AP, ASVAB, CMAS, IB, PARCC, SAT), such as classes and retreats, administration procedures and agreements
 - Capstone implementation, such as instructions and samples
 - Concurrent Enrollment implementation, such as classes and agreements
 - Career/academic assessment implementation (e.g., ACCUPLACER, COMPASS, Work Keys), such as administration procedures and agreements
 - 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: _____

◆ Intro to Senior Projects at DSST

Every senior at DSST is required to complete a Senior Project. Students choose their project topics based on their interests and curiosities; in any given year, projects may range from graphic design to engineering to sociology. Regardless of topic, all projects must be approved through a proposal process, and all projects consist of an essential question that links the 3 P's: the product, the paper (or thesis), and the presentation.

The Essential Question

The essential question represents a big idea that has global, enduring value beyond the classroom. The question is probably not easily answered, and will require the student to think critically and investigate from different perspectives. Examples of essential questions include “How has my culture influenced my identity?”, “How have economic theorists influenced our current political system?”, and “How will carbon limits impact our transportation system?”

The Product

The work product may take many forms, but it should be authentic and require the student to learn and apply new skills and knowledge. Examples of past products include a solar-powered car, a public presentation at a local library branch, original logos for a Denver company, a bilingual children's book, an electric guitar, a documentary about homelessness in Denver, and many more.

The Paper

Students write a researched-based paper on a topic that compliments their product. They may choose from several genres. Students write this paper in their Senior English class.

The Presentation

In May, students present their learning to a panel of community members. At their presentations, they discuss their product, paper, and demonstrate skills they have learned.

Timeline

In 2010, students begin their Senior Projects on November 29th, at the start of the 2nd trimester. Senior Project class meets four days a week, just like their other classes. Students spend the 2nd trimester learning about the project process, working on their proposals, and conducting background research. In the 3rd trimester, students begin the Senior Thesis in their English class. They also start working on their products.