# COLUMBIA HIGH SCHOOL
# 2013-14 SENIOR PROJECT HANDBOOK

**Each senior in the State of Idaho must plan and carry out an independent, meaningful, long-term project that benefits the student and a larger community.**

Every attempt has been made to make these materials accurate and up to date. However, dates and other details should be regarded as approximate and not exact. Specifics and changes, should any be necessary, will be announced promptly as the year goes on. Some particulars of major assignments may vary somewhat from teacher to teacher.  However, the basic project requirements (outlined in this handbook under **PROJECT**) will be the same.

## PLEASE SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH YOUR PARENTS!

Your parents need to understand the various components and requirements of your Senior Project.  Please note that this handbook can also be found on the Columbia High School homepage.
www.nsd131.org/columbia

## PROJECT OVERVIEW

The Senior Project at CHS is an opportunity for you to demonstrate what you have learned and to showcase this achievement. It must be successfully completed as a graduation component in a student's senior year.

The Senior Project is a fitting conclusion to your high school education as it introduces you to a process for lifetime learning. Students will derive a sense of ownership of a body of work that is a reflection of personal interests and abilities. It offers many opportunities to expand on the culmination of your K-12 education.  A student may want to explore career paths or apply learning to real-life situations that will serve to benefit their individual growth.  Through this opportunity students are able to demonstrate accumulated skills in time-management, research, problem-solving, human interaction, organization, and public-speaking skills.

This is a long-term project, but you must be careful not to get caught in a time-crunch. Plan ahead and your project will be less stressful and much more enjoyable. You will receive additional specific information and instructions on major assignments as the process progresses.

In accordance with the District Standards, the senior project is a pass/fail. You must pass your Senior Project in order to meet graduation requirements. Your project final grade will receive one of the three scores: Above Proficient (exceeds minimum expectations), Proficient (meets minimum expectations), or Below Proficient (does not meet minimum expectations). In order to receive your Senior Project Credit, you must receive an Above Proficient or Proficient on your Senior Project.

Your Advisor, Mentor, English and Government teachers will all be providing the input on your final grade.

*** Students enrolled in a Nampa School District Academy will use their successfully completed "Capstone" project to meet the Senior Project Idaho Graduation Requirement.**

# THE FOUR COMPONENTS OF THE SENIOR PROJECT:

**Proficiency is required in each component and a final Pass/Fail credit will be attached to transcript upon completion of all four components.**

## 1. PROJECT…

The first component is your **project** – or *product*. Each senior will plan and carry out an independent, meaningful, long-term project that benefits the student and a larger community. You must research and document information on a subject of your choice -- a subject in which you have an interest, but are not already an expert. Your research must be a worthwhile stretch beyond what you already know. As part of your research, you must obtain a mentor to assist in advising you throughout the project. Your mentor cannot be a Columbia faculty member, a family member or anyone under 21 years of age. Your mentor must be someone who is knowledgeable or a professional in the area of your interest. Your mentor will be guiding you and providing feedback on your finished product. Select a product within your financial budget, keeping in mind that you are not expected to spend money in order to complete the Senior Project. The "project" portion of the Senior Project will be overseen by your teacher Advisor.

**PROJECT (Product) REQUIREMENTS**
1. A Project Proposal will be submitted describing the project and the aspect of that project to be researched; this can contain questions you have and different possibilities you hope to explore in connection with your project.
2. Take at least 15 hours to complete
3. Product will be related to research (think about a product to fix, improve, do, learn, understand, see, create, or experience in your community or world)
4. Product must give back to a larger community
5. Product may be tangible, service oriented, or skill-based
6. Product must present a learning stretch, taking you beyond what you have ever done before.
7. Product should pursue your interests or future plans
8. Product completed by student...NOT by mentor or parent
9. Mentor time log required, with mentor's signature for each contact

**CHOOSING A PROJECT**

You will begin by choosing a topic for learning; anything from hands-on projects to career studies. The project begins with a question or with an interest that evolves into a question. This question helps drive the project experience, the research component, the product, and the presentation.

Choose something you know little or nothing about. The best Senior Projects involve new learning. Choose something that you think might be beneficial and interesting. Significance is a factor in the final evaluation of your project. Was it worth doing? Did it make a difference to you and/or to someone else?

Generally, projects that are already requirements in a course that you are enrolled in are not appropriate; projects that go beyond class requirements generally are. Projects that you are already doing on the job are not appropriate; learning new job-related skills generally is appropriate. If your teachers, mentor, and/or panel question your project in these regards, they may directly challenge you to defend the suitability of your project.

Should you feel at a loss for ideas, discuss your project with your advisor. He/she may be able to provide you sound advice based on experience and interest.

## POSSIBLE PROJECTS

**Teaching Projects**: Design and teach a unit to elementary students. Design and teach a short unit or reinforce a concept for other high school students in an existing class. Design and teach a mini-class during a time set aside from normal classes. Etc.

**Community Projects**: Serve as an aide in a senior citizen's home or a daycare center or a hospice, assist members of a city committee to prepare a presentation, get active in a political party or a union. Take on some new, more responsible role in your church. Etc. Get active. Do something that will make a difference.

**Vocational Projects**: Contact several different employers who will provide on-the-job experiences and an interview about job demands. Survey employers as to job requirements and specifications. Work as an intern/observer in a business/professional office or in a city agency or with an elected official. Learn aircraft welding. Learn to operate a lathe or milling machine.

**Primary Research Projects**: Compile an oral history. Research a building or a landmark. Research an ancestor. Survey area residents on some matter of concern to city government or business or a neighborhood association. Conduct an independent science experiment. Etc.

**Performance Projects**: Create and perform in public a dance, a play, a reading, musical numbers, a speech. Etc.

**Production Projects**: Design and build a boat, a bow, a knife (note: weapons projects can be presented by pictures only; we are a zero-tolerance campus). Rebuild an engine. Remodel a kitchen. Build a horse trailer. Draw a series of illustrations for a book. Paint a series of portraits. Create a photo essay. Write and /or produce a film. Etc.

**Academic Projects**: Design your own unit or your own course. Read/research a writer, a period, a movement, a genre in depth. Become an expert on a historical period or event or institution. Perhaps you can find a professor to be your mentor and guide your studies.

Etc. Etc. Etc. There can be as many different projects as there are seniors. Choosing a project because many other people are choosing it is not a virtue. Be original. Be creative. Be ambitious. Go for it! Usually, a project should not be something that is already a requirement in another class or a regular part of your job. It should extend; go over and above. If you have questions, talk to your advisor for guidance.

## THE PROJECT PROPOSAL

A formal Project Proposal will be the first major component of your project. This will be introduced and completed on your own time and with your advisor. Before your project becomes "official," it must be approved by your advisor. You must convince these readers that your project is both worthwhile and feasible. Not only is the Project Proposal an important assignment in its own right, approval is necessary for you to receive credit for later parts of the Senior Project.

## FINDING A MENTOR

You will need to find an adult who will serve as a mentor. A mentor is someone with real expertise in the field of your project, more experienced, usually older. The mentor will guide and supervise the time you spend on the project. Your mentor is not to do the project for you, rather to be a resource for you when you have a question or need guidance on the topic.

Once you have decided on an area of interest, your mentor can help you plan out what you will do and what might be an appropriate research paper topic.

Ultimately, you will be held accountable for having a suitable mentor. Find a mentor. Take a chance. Look into new fields. Don't be afraid to ask someone you do not know to mentor you. You will be surprised at how many people know about the project and love to help.

Your mentor cannot be someone here at Columbia High School or your parents; branch out! It is recommended that you send a letter of request to the mentor asking him/her to help you on the project you have chosen.

*Note: Your advisor is <u>NOT</u> your mentor. Your mentor is someone from the community outside of Columbia High School.

# Columbia High School
# MENTOR ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Statement of Assignment**

You must find a mentor (21 years or older) with expertise in your area of interest. Your mentor cannot be someone here at Columbia High School or your parents; branch out! In addition, if your mentor cannot commit the time to teach you, you may choose to find another expert to give you direct instruction on what you want to learn.

You must complete and submit the mentor form as soon as you have identified a mentor. At the first meeting with your mentor, have him/her help you define and articulate your project goals. Do not begin working with your mentor until approval by your advisory teacher has been obtained. Once the mentor is approved, you may begin meeting with him/her as needed. Your mentor will need to sign off on the project goals you have listed.

We strongly advise that your parents help you arrange meetings and work time with your mentor. Your parents should support and encourage you with your project and should be in regular contact with your mentor, but ultimately, the success of your project is dependent on you.

**Rationale for the Assignment**
* Having a mentor that is highly qualified in the field will allow you a better resource as you are learning and gaining knowledge about your topic.
* Your mentor should be someone that can help guide you to the places to find the answers, rather than simply giving them to you.

**Mentor's Role**
* Be a resource for you; however, you are expected to do your own work with mentor assistance only when needed.
* Provide guidance on the shape or form of the project. The Senior Project advisor will help determine whether or not a project is too broad or too narrow, but the mentor will help determine the form the project takes and what you need to learn in order to accomplish the goals of the project.
* Mentors should help students get started and then guide them through the process of deciding what steps to take and in what order. The mentor should not make the decisions.
* Provide emotional support when you experience roadblocks and setbacks. The Senior Project advisor will provide guidance when obstacles arise, but the mentor can support you by helping you brainstorm alternative plans.
* Be able to attest to what they have seen. Mentors will be asked to complete an evaluation of the student's work. They should be prepared to submit a final evaluation on the completed project to the Senior Project advisor who will use the information from the mentor and possibly other experts in the field to make a final assessment of the project phase.
* Mentors should be available for contact throughout the semester and complete evaluations promptly.

## 2. PAPER…

The second component requires you to apply the information you have gained from your project to write a research **paper.** This will be in two parts, the first being the Annotated Bibliography, and the second the Research Paper. This paper will reflect your process throughout your Senior Project where you will conduct research on a topic related to your project. The paper must argue a point, propose/ support a solution or elicit a change in belief. There must be a clear relationship between your project and your research. Your research paper will be part of your English class and grade. Your English teacher will oversee and grade the research paper.

**PAPER REQUIREMENTS**
1. Conduct research on a topic related to your project. The paper must argue a point, propose/ support a solution or elicit a change in belief.
2. MLA format
3. 3-5 pages of written text; graphics and visuals are acceptable but do not constitute written text.
4. 5 sources minimum with an **annotated bibliography**
5. Typed, double spaced, one inch margins, Times New Roman or similar 12 point font
6. Mixture of writer's words, quotes, paraphrases
7. Free from plagiarism (Plagiarism is unethical and writing such papers will be documented and considered in the final grade which may affect your final transcript)
8. Turned in on or before due date

## 3. PORTFOLIO…

The third component of the project is the **portfolio**. You must keep good records of your progress and preserve everything in a portfolio that demonstrates your journey throughout the entire Senior Project. These documents include personal notes, photographs, time logs with your mentor, receipts, letters, your annotated bibliography and research paper, etc. Although components of the portfolio will be graded throughout the year, your Government teacher will grade the entire portfolio for completeness and appearance prior to your scheduled presentation. The portfolio portion of your Senior Project will be overseen and graded as part of your Government class and grade.

**PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENTS**
1. Title Page
2. Table of Contents
3. Final Approved Copy of Project Proposal
4. Mentor Agreement Signature Form
5. Final Copy of Annotated Bibliography
6. Clean and Revised Copy of Research Paper
7. Signed and Completed Project Time Logs
8. Signed and completed Mentor Evaluation Form
9. Reflection Form
10. Supplemental items including pictures, letters, plans, receipts

## 4. PRESENTATION…

The final component of the project will be the **presentation**. This will be a speech between eight to ten minutes, live-and-in-person with an allowance of up to 5 minutes to set-up and up to 5 minutes to take-down, given before a panel of judges. You will sign up for a date and time for either early December or April 16, 2014.

**Your presentation is first and foremost an informative speech.** It should focus on what you did, why you did it, and what you learned. All the tips and techniques you learned in speech class should help you here. Your panel will grade you using a specifically created presentation rubric, focusing on content, organization, delivery, and overall effect.

Your research, your journal, any pictures or artifacts you have -- they all come together in your presentation, where you will formally show your Senior Project Portfolio.

**PRESENTATION REQUIREMENTS**

1. The presentation demonstrates that the student has met the basic requirements of the project:
    a. fix, improve, do, learn, understand, see, create, or experience in their community or world
    b. 15-20 hours to complete
    c. give back to a larger community
    d. challenge and expand the student's knowledge and/or skills
    e. pursue the student's interests or future plans
    f. is meaningful, real, and "hands on"
2. The speaker presents extemporaneously—the speech is not read from slides or notecards and may not be pre-recorded.  Minimal notes are allowed.
3. Meets the time requirements (Between 8 and 10 minutes live-and-in-person presentation with an allowance of up to 5 minutes to set-up and up to 5 minutes to take-down)
4. Judged on content and delivery. Language is accurate, professional, and articulated well.  Voice is appropriate for the room size.
5. The presentation is organized using a traditional presentation format:
    a. Introduction (gets the audience's attention, gives them a reason to listen, and previews the presentation),
    b. Organization (is easy to follow, clear logical order, and is fully developed)
    c. Conclusion (reviews the main points and gives the audience action to take, based on what they heard).
6. Attire and personal appearance is professional and appropriate for the presentation.  It encourages the audience to see the speaker as a legitimate participant in the activity being presented.
7. Audio and/or visual aides enhance the understanding of the product (but are not the presentation— the speaker does not sit back with the audience and watch a video, etc.)
8. Portfolio available to panel
9. Vulgar or inappropriate material is not worthy of evaluation.  Any presentation that violates community standards will be stopped and will be rated Unsatisfactory (0).
10. **You are required to use a multi-media presentation program**, such as PowerPoint or Prezi.

Final presentations will be judged by the panelists. They will evaluate you on **how clearly and completely your presentation conveys your project. Appearance and over-all effect** are also important.

**SOME FINAL ADVICE**

Pay attention to your **appearance**, especially for the public presentations. Dress as you would for a job interview. You cannot go wrong with a dress shirt and tie, or with a dress or slacks. Exceptions, a job-specific uniform, for example, might be a necessary part of the demonstration itself, so therefore dress attire would not be appropriate. Teachers and panelists pay attention to this, and it can affect your grade.

# Proposal Template

**TO:**  Columbia High School Faculty

**FROM**:  (Your Name)

**DATE**:  (Current Date)

**SUBJECT:**  Columbia Senior Project Proposal

**Topic:** (1 or 2 words telling your topic choice, i.e. Decorative Wood Carving)

**Overview:** (3-5+ sentences briefly describing what your project will look like.)

**Research Paper Question:** What is the big question you hope to discover through this process? Your paper should answer the "So What?" of your project.  It should argue a point, propose a solution, or elicit a change in belief.  You should also list other questions you would like answered as you are working on discovering the answer to your big question.

**Project Significance:** Why is your project worth doing/learning? How will it benefit yourself and a larger community? What do you hope to learn? Is it new knowledge or an extension of prior knowledge? Convince us that this project is a worthy one.

**Goals/Objectives:** Identify at least 3 goals that you want to accomplish with this project. At this point what do you see the final product or experience being? How will you know if you have been successful?

**Plan:** Explain the what, when, where, how long, with whom [other than mentor, this will come later], etc. When will you meet with your mentor? How often? When and how will you complete your service hours? What days will be set aside for working on your project? How many hours per week will you need to complete to be finished by presentation time? Be detailed; this will show that you've thought it through and are realistic in what is to be done. This section, and the next one, may take some initial preparation. The more you put into the planning now, the more likely you will gain approval and have a successful experience with your project.

**Requirements:** Time, money, materials, equipment, facilities, and/or assistance by others. Be realistic on the cost and the money. Where will you obtain the needed items or funding? Do some initial footwork to get an approximate idea of cost and materials.

**Problems & Solutions:** Try to foresee the possible problems that might arise, and then attempt to plan for them. Do your best to predict the problems you may face so you are not blindsided by them as the time for presentations approaches.

**Possible Mentors:** You will need a list of at least 3 possible Mentors. You don't have to have them approved yet, just that you have thought about who would be a good candidate. Be sure to include the Mentor's name & qualifications. Utilize the community!

Parent/Guardian Consent: _____  Date: _____

CHS Advisor Approval: _____  Date: _____

*(Once you have your advisor teacher's signature, you may consider your proposal accepted and begin work. You will want to work closely with your Advisor to meet all aspects of the Senior Project. )*

# Columbia High School
# MENTOR INFORMATION & AGREEMENT FORM
### (To be completed, returned to your Advisor and put in your Portfolio)

Name: _____

Type of Business: _____

Address: _____

_____

Telephone Numbers:         Office: _____

                                     Home: _____

                                     Cell: _____

                                     Fax: _____

Email: _____

Best time(s) to be contacted: _____

**Mentor Agreement to Serve (**For Mentor to complete and sign)

I agree to serve as a Senior Project Mentor to _____. I will advise and

assist with his/her Senior Project Product plans to _____

_____

_____

_____        _____

Mentor Signature                                          Date

**Parent Approval of Mentor (**For Parent to complete and sign)

I am aware that _____ will be serving as a Senior Project Mentor for

my son/daughter _____, and give my permission for them to meet

together for this purpose. I understand that these meetings will be scheduled at mutually agreeable times and

will take place at _____.

_____        _____

Parent/Guardian Signature                            Date

# Columbia High School
# SENIOR PROJECT TIME LOG
(To be completed and put in your Portfolio)

| Date | What I did and hours completed | Mentor Initials |
|------|-------------------------------|-----------------|
|      |                               |                 |
|      |                               |                 |
|      |                               |                 |
|      |                               |                 |
|      |                               |                 |
|      |                               |                 |
|      |                               |                 |
|      |                               |                 |
|      |                               |                 |
|      |                               |                 |

**Total hours completed (at least 15):_____**

# Columbia High School
## SENIOR PROJECT MENTOR FINAL EVALUATION
(To be completed, returned to your Advisor and put in your Portfolio)

**Mentor**:
Please assess the student's performance in each of the designated areas. Your evaluation may be based on evidence provided by the student, your conversations with the student, and any relevant observations regarding the student. Feel free to add additional comments as well.

Once you have completed the final evaluation, please sign here.

_____        _____

Mentor Signature                                                              Date

Forms may be returned to the student or you may fax to the high school. Please fax all pages including this one.
The school's fax number is: (208) 498-0573

**INITIATIVE** – Includes task-management, goal setting, pacing, problem solving and independent work completed by student. Evidence could include your personal observations, documents, conversations with student and other relevant input.
☐ Student exceeds expectations
☐ Student meets expectations
☐ Student does not meet expectations

Additional Comments:

**RESOURCEFULLNESS** – Includes creativity, responsible use of materials and time, and prioritizing of needs and timing of duties to complete project.
☐ Student exceeds expectations
☐ Student meets expectations
☐ Student does not meet expectations

Additional Comments:

**DEPENDABILITY** – Includes punctuality, work ethic, communication, and student behavior.
☐ Student exceeds expectations
☐ Student meets expectations
☐ Student does not meet expectations

Additional Comments:

**OVERALL MENTOR RECOMMENDATION**:
Based on your experience with this student, would you provide a professional recommendation for this student?
☐ YES
☐ YES WITH RESERVATION
☐ NO

# Columbia High School
## SENIOR PROJECT FINAL REFLECTION FORM
(To be completed and put in your Portfolio)

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Research Topic _____

Describe your project/product IN DETAIL:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What are three things you learned from working on this project/product?

1. _____

_____

_____

_____

2. _____

_____

_____

_____

3. _____

_____

_____

_____

What challenges did you encounter in doing this product/project? How did you overcome them?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What would you do differently if you could start over?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What is the most important skill or piece of knowledge you have acquired during the product/project phase?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

What did you learn about yourself through this product/project?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

How would you evaluate your work on this project?  Did you meet your own expectations or not?  Justify your response.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

# Columbia High School
## SENIOR PROJECT PORTFOLIO CHECKLIST
(To be completed by your Government teacher and put in your Portfolio)

| Date Completed | Item | Government teacher Initials |
|---|---|---|
|  | Title Page with Name (this may be the cover of your Portfolio) |  |
|  | Table of Contents (unless appropriate—please try to keep items in the order listed here) |  |
|  | Approved Senior Project Proposal |  |
|  | Mentor Information and Agreement Form |  |
|  | Final Annotated Bibliography |  |
|  | Final Research Paper on top with subsequent drafts to follow |  |
|  | Time Log—At least 15 Service Hours Documented |  |
|  | Mentor Evaluation Form |  |
|  | Reflection Form |  |
| Not required | Additional items: Thank you notes, photos/pictures, notes, tickets, flyers, letters of recommendation, plans, calendars, timelines, outlines, receipts, lists of people/businesses contacted, artifacts from service, etc. |  |