

Northern Lakes Regional Academy Senior Handbook

2017-18

A successful Capstone project will assist the student in practicing the skills that colleges and employers require:

1. Listening

8. Presenting

2. Organizing
3. Time Management
4. Reading
5. Writing
6. Researching
7. Collaborating

9. Creating
10. Speaking
11. Interpersonal Skills
12. Critical Thinking
13. Problem Solving
14. Independence/Self Discipline

Dear Northern Lakes Regional Academy Senior,

In less than a year you will be out of high school, embarking on a new journey. It is time for you to take stock of your skills and demonstrate them through problem solving and self-directed learning. The Senior Capstone process gives you the opportunity to do this by choosing an area of special interest, combining your knowledge and skills from various disciplines, satisfying your curiosity, and productively utilizing your talents. It additionally involves you giving back to the NLRA community by mentoring younger students and defending your right to graduate.

Your Senior Capstone experience will involve true exploration. You will select a topic of your choice, gather knowledge through research, write a nine to ten page research paper related to your topic, and complete a product that demonstrates application of some aspect of your research. This product must involve a learning stretch. A learning stretch is “the art of making great demands upon one’s abilities while gaining knowledge, comprehension, or mastery through experience or study.” Your research and resulting product must make you grow intellectually and emotionally. All capstone experiences must involve at least one non parent mentor outside of the NLRA staff.

The Capstone Project will be finalized when you showcase your project and learning in front of a public audience in front of a team of judges. You will share information covering how your education has helped you meet the Seven Core Values of Northern Lakes Regional Academy during your senior Defense which will be evaluated separate from the Capstone project. You will use your web-site and Project Foundry results to build a strong presentation celebrating your growth.

You are a senior! You have experienced many years of education. It is time to show what you know and what you can do. It is time for us to view your many talents and skills as a public celebration of your passage to adulthood. This Senior Capstone will be a milestone in your life. Enjoy and grow from this process.

Sincerely,

NLRA Staff

Dear Parents and Guardians of seniors,

Northern Lakes Regional Academy's requirements for graduation include:

1. Earning the 28 credits as listed in the NLRA graduation credit requirement document, and
2. Completing the NLRA Senior Capstone Project.

Your student's reading, writing, speaking, thinking, information accessing, time management, problem solving, and organizing skills will be showcased in the Senior Capstone Project. This experience cannot rely solely upon what your student already knows. It must demonstrate an aspect of new learning and growth, a learning stretch.

A successful Senior Capstone Project involves parental and teacher support as well as student initiative and self-discipline. Credits are earned by meeting rigid, sequential deadlines and the completion of each component successfully before moving on to the next step. Your student will be informed of the deadlines and requirements as we proceed. A Senior Capstone Project handbook has been given to your student and a copy is available to you on our website.

In a few months, after years of acquiring skills and knowledge, overcoming frustrations, and demonstrating perseverance, your student will be a high school graduate. These are, indeed, exciting times? Join us in this significant learning journey.

If you have any questions, please contact Mark Beise or Pete Peterson at 715-234-2181 or email at beisem@ricelake.k12.wi.us or peteronje@ricelake.k12.wi.us.

Sincerely,

Mark Beise
Pete Peterson

All students will need to have a minimum of 100 hours logged in Project Foundry as part of their Capstone Experience including the research and paper writing time associated with this project. This experience will be worth between 1.0 and 2.0 academic credits in total including the research paper, yet the paper will generally be completed and assessed during a separate senior workshop.

1. Research Paper 9-10 pages minimum with correctly cited sources

Example: If the product is a bilingual book, the paper may be to research and write on “English Language Learners: The Role of Culture in the Acquisition of a Second Language.”

2. Project

- Competition
- Research Project
- Community Service
- Construction of a product or plan in an area of technology, design, textiles, woodworking, engineering, portfolio, etc.
- Certification (CNA, Eagle Scout, etc.)
- Innovative idea involving a patent search
- Job Shadow combined with one of the above components
- Internship

3. Mentor or Outside Expert

A nonparent expert from outside the school must be identified and serve as a source of information, mentor, guide, and/or fact checker. Students must log all time and incidents where they met with their mentor and the mentor must evaluate the student.

4. Learning Journey Documentation

Students must document their learning periodically through some sort of learning journal. This can take the form of a website, blog, or other creative format but must show continual growth.

5. Public Showcase

Senior Capstone projects will not be determined to be complete until the student has participated in a public showcase to discuss their learning in relation to this project.

Senior Capstone Paper & Project

- I. Exploration
 - a. Find a Topic/Issue
 - b. Identify a piece of corresponding literature
 - c. Identify and contact an outside mentor
 - d. Identify the product
 - e. Write Project Proposal
 - f. Start to keep weekly reflections and time log
- II. Research
 - a. Preliminary Work
 - i. Source Cards
 - ii. Note cards
 - iii. Mentor Contact and interview
 - iv. Use your literature
 - b. Writing the Paper
 - i. Outline
 - ii. Rough Draft - Peer Edited
 - iii. Second Draft – Advisor Edited
 - iv. Final Draft
 - c. Continue to keep weekly reflections and time log
- III. Project
 - a. Make sure it is ‘Learning Stretch’
 - b. Mentor Contacts (at least four contacts – recorded)
 - c. Documentation of Learning Journey (Video, still pictures, blog, etc.)

- d. Weekly reflections and time log
- IV. Presentation
- a. Presentation Content and Delivery
 - b. Visual Aids
 - c. Answer to questions
 - d. Reflection and Self-Evaluation

Choosing and Contacting Your Mentor (Outside Expert)

Your mentor should be someone who has extensive knowledge about your project. Though we would like to involve the local community as much as possible, your mentor does not have to be local. The amount of time a mentor is willing to spend in communication with you will vary. Please be cognizant of the fact that many adults lead very busy lives and due to this, your time/communication with them needs to be purposeful. You will find a wide variety of mentor commitments. Some will only be able to communicate through e-mail at their convenience, some will be available to answer questions through phone calls, and some will be willing to work directly with you one-on-one. Make sure you communicate with your mentor how much time you estimate you will need. Analyze what you will need for your project and brainstorm a number of mentors in the event that your first choice is not able to make the commitment you need.

Initial Contact –

1. Find a quiet place to call. There should be no interruptions. There should be no loud music or noise near you.
2. Have your paper and pencils ready. Have your script and anything else you need in front of you.
3. You may be nervous, but try to sound friendly and cheerful.
4. Talk slowly and clearly. Speak up but not too loud. Don't chew gum or eat while on the phone.
5. Be polite and patient. If the person you are calling is busy, ask when you can call back.
6. If a secretary answers, explain who you wish to talk to and why. If they are unavailable, ask if you can set up an appointment to talk.
7. Always thank your mentor (and/or their secretary) at the end of the call.
8. If the person agrees to be a mentor, send them a thank you note along with a copy of your Senior Capstone Overview.

Follow-up Contact -

1. Always find out if it is a good time to talk and offer to call back or make an appointment.
2. Continue to thank them and send updates if applicable.
3. Invite them to NLRA to visit our facility (discuss with your advisor for appropriate date).
4. First impressions are crucial but so are last impressions.

Remember – depending on how much time you spend with your mentor, they could be another reference for applications, contact person for jobs, etc. All your interactions with them are important!

Project Information

The project must:

- Be something the student produces.
- Be related to the research paper.
- Indicate the student has gone beyond what he/she previously knew.
- Include a minimum of three contacts with mentor.
- Include a log documenting the steps taken, time spent, and signature of mentor
- Include documentation with photographs, video, etc. of process of the product producing process.

Considerations:

- Cost - If the project requires large expenditures, you may want to make another choice. Expenditures will not necessarily enhance the evaluation of the product.
- Time – Can the proposed project be completed in the time available?
- Display - the final project must be demonstrated and explained when it is due and during the Senior Seminar.
- Logistics – will you be able to work on this project at school? Will you be able to get where you need to in order to work on the project?

- Equipment – if the project requires special equipment (sewing machine, saw, computer, engraver) is it available to you during hours the hours you need it?

Internships/Job Shadows:

For our purposes, these two categories are considered projects even though they may seem to fit in a different area. The above information still applies including documentation of the process. You will have to be a little creative using pictures of the business, pictures of the work you are doing, etc. Please remember to be professional in your workplace. Make sure to get permission for photos and videos first and do not disrupt the working environment.

Mentor Involvement Log

This form or Project Foundry must be used to document your time with your mentor. It is to be filled out by the student not the mentor.

Student Name: _____

Mentor Name : _____ Mentor Title: _____

Mentor Address: _____ Mentor contact number _____

_____ Mentor contact e-mail _____

Documentation of 3 interactions are required.

Date	Location	Description of activity performed	Time in	Time out	Total Time	Mentor's Signature

Mentor Signature _____

Dear Mentor:

Thank you so much for volunteering your time to help a student with his/her Senior Capstone Project. The Outside Expert portion of the Capstone Project offers seniors the opportunity to gain specific information regarding an occupation, body of knowledge, or skill from an adult expert in the field.

The time, place and approximate length of the interactions you have with our NLRA senior should be arranged by the student with you prior to your meetings. After the cumulating meeting with your mentee, we ask that you provide us with the following information. This will help us determine how effectively the student utilized this opportunity. You may either give this completed evaluation to the student or send it to Jeremy Peterson at Northern Lakes Regional Academy. Your evaluation is an important part of his/her graduation requirements.

Thank you again for taking the time to share your expertise with one of our students.

Sincerely,

NLRA Staff

Student's Name: _____ Date: _____

Mentor's Name: _____

1. Did the student make prior arrangements for your meetings? Yes _____ No _____

2. Did the student arrive punctually for your meetings? Yes _____ No _____

3. Did the student take notes as needed? Yes _____ No _____
4. Did you feel the student used his/her time with you in a way that was valuable? Yes _____ No _____
5. Are you a relative of the student? Yes _____ No _____

Additional comments welcome:

Example of a professional letter

Your Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code
Date

Recipient Name
Title
Company Name
Street Address
City, State, Zip Code

Dear Recipient Name:

Bulk of letter

Sincerely,

Your Name
Title

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Thank you letters

Your outside expert and any other individuals that are involved in your project should receive a thank you letter. We expect you to write a thank you letter rather than use a purchased card-shop thank you note. You will be expected to have a copy of any letters you write in your portfolio for your advisors to look over.

Use the format described on the Professional Letter Format page.

Within the body of the note:

1. First paragraph should mention why you are thanking your outside expert/mentor. Example: "I want to thank you for all of the hours you spent helping me carve my Alaskan Tlingit Totem." Express your thanks simply and directly.
2. Include a line or two to say specifically what you appreciate about your mentor. A specific quality, feature, or action would be appropriate. Example: "You were always there when I needed assistance." Be sure to be honest in your comments.
3. Finally you should end the note with a general statement such as, "My Senior Seminar would not have turned out as well without your help."

Instead of "Sincerely" you can close with the words "With gratitude." In addition make sure to SIGN your name in ink, not just type it.

Student Outline for Senior Defense

Senior Defense: During your Senior Defense you will need to cover the below points in great detail. In each case you must show how you have grown during your time at NLRA/high school. Use evidence you have accumulated in your online portfolios and in Project Foundry and be very specific. You do not have to cover the items listed in any particular order and can use any presentation format you wish. You will have 30 minutes to present and the panel will have 10 minutes to ask questions. You will have to turn in your end Google Site as proof of your portfolio of work, but can present using any format you wish.

1. Make sure to introduce yourself.
2. Discuss, using evidence, how your capacity to **communicate** in a written and oral format has grown since coming to NLRA. Read excerpts from your writing that clearly show growth.
3. Discuss how you have contributed to your **community** through the community service you performed as well as how you have positively contributed to the NLRA community.
4. Discuss your **commitment** to your Senior Capstone Project or to some other larger project. Explain what you did, why you did it, how you were challenged by it, and the value it contributed to your personal and academic growth. Contrast this with a project you may have started that you were not as committed too.
5. Discuss your growth during **collaborative** learning experiences. Explain what you did, why you did it, how you were challenged by it, and how it helped you grow. How did you learn lessons from one experience to collaborate better in a future experience?
6. Discuss a scenario where you had to **think critically**. Explain what it was and what made you proud in how you handled it. Contrast this with an instance where you believe a deeper level of thinking would have been required.
7. Discuss a scenario where you displayed **creativity**. Explain what it was and why this was creative for you. Contrast this with a project that might not have been as creative.
8. Discuss a scenario where you used **curiosity** to complete a task or project. Explain how your inquisitiveness led you to further discoveries. Contrast this with an experience where you may not have showed great curiosity.
9. What are some take-away lessons that you learned at NLRA that will help you in your future academic and personal endeavors? Make sure to share where you are headed after NLRA for future plans.

Upon completion of this senior defense, you will need to submit both your online portfolio of work, your presentation itself (if something other than website was used), as well as a written reflection discussing your presentation. This seminar and defense will be worth 0.10 credit in English 11-12.