

# **CENTRAL DAUPHIN SCHOOL DISTRICT**



## **GRADUATION PROJECT GUIDE 2009-2010**

## INTRODUCTION

The *Graduation Project* is a meaningful learning experience that is part of every student's educational responsibility in the Central Dauphin School District. The project gives each student an opportunity for in-depth learning of a self-selected topic of interest. The purpose of the project is to ensure that every graduate of the Central Dauphin School District is able to apply, analyze, integrate, and evaluate information and to communicate significant knowledge and understanding of a topic. By researching, developing, and presenting a Graduation Project, each student will also show that s/he has the ability to be an independent learner. Academic integrity is expected, and plagiarism will not be tolerated. Any work that is plagiarized will result in failure of the Graduation Project.

The project begins with the identification and approval of the student's particular area of interest. The project will be under the guidance of a faculty project advisor who will provide direction and assistance, **but the student carries primary responsibility for directing his/her learning.** All projects require a summary presentation to the project advisor.

This project guide describes the components of the Graduation Project, the steps necessary to complete the project, a timeline, and evaluation criteria. These guidelines emphasize that both PROCESS and PRODUCT are important components of the Graduation Project.

Both the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Central Dauphin School District Board of School Directors have adopted the Graduation Project as a requirement for graduation from high school. More importantly, however, the Central Dauphin School District believes that the Graduation Project is a positive learning activity that serves all students well as they pursue their life goals, both now and in the future.

The high school Graduation Project must be completed successfully for a student to fulfill District and State requirements for graduation. Any student who has not completed the requirements for graduation will not be permitted to participate in graduation ceremonies, nor will he/she receive a diploma until the project is satisfactorily completed.

## GRADUATION PROJECT STUDENT TIMELINE

1. Select an area of personal interest to be the focus of your project. April 2009
2. Complete and submit a project interest card. Give the card to your homeroom/first-period teacher. By April 20, 2009
3. Schedule an appointment and meet with your advisor to discuss/confirm the proposed project. May 13 – 29, 2009
4. Complete and return project contract to advisor. May 29, 2009

**Parents or guardians will be notified if requirements 1 through 4 are not complete by May 29, 2009.**

5. Schedule a time and meet with your advisor to present the preliminary plan of your project. September 14 -25, 2009
6. Schedule an appointment and meet with your advisor to show evidence of continuing in-depth work.
  - Research
  - Activity log
  - Portfolio (if required)October– December, 2009
7. Meet with advisor to assess progress of project. January – February, 2010

**Parents or guardians will be notified if requirements 1 through 7 are not complete by March 1, 2010.**

8. Complete project and schedule final presentation By April 16, 2010

**Final presentation to advisor must be completed satisfactorily by April 30, 2010!**

**ALL** graduation projects, regardless of the category, will require a **portfolio** which includes: research, an activity log, a reflection paper, and a final presentation of the project. Projects will be evaluated using a set of rubrics.

## **GRADUATION PROJECT: CAREER OPTIONS**

### Career Search and Research

The student will do **research** of at least three (3) different jobs within a career field of personal interest. Topics to be covered can include, but are not limited to the following: job descriptions, necessary skills and education, training, apprenticeships, required certifications or degrees, occupational licensing, potential salary, and career outlook. The complete **portfolio** will be shared with the advisor in a final conference presentation.

### Job Shadowing

The student will conduct in-depth **research** of one job of personal interest. The student will schedule a day to shadow someone in the chosen job. While shadowing, the student will keep a record of the day (to be included in the activity log). The complete **portfolio** will be shared with the advisor in a final conference presentation.

This option requires pre-approval for job-shadowing. **The student must obtain the *Guidelines for Shadow Day* and complete all required paperwork prior to the shadow experience (on website).** Advisors will direct this activity. Final permission for excused absence from school for the purpose of job-shadowing will be given by the building principal.

## **GRADUATION PROJECT: SERVICE OPTIONS**

### Community Service Volunteer

The student will work as a volunteer outside of the school. The student will **research** the background/history, mission, and recent work of the organization. Examples include, but are not limited to church work, campaigning for a candidate, working at a soup kitchen, coaching a Little-League team, assisting with a Brownie or Cub Scout troop, or volunteering at a day-care center or hospital. The complete **portfolio** will be shared with the advisor in a final conference presentation.

### School Service Volunteer

The student will work as a volunteer inside the school. The student will compile **research** related to the area of service. Examples include, but are not limited to coordinating a school fundraiser, organizing a school assembly, tutoring other students, serving as a teacher aide, serving as a student athletic trainer, serving as a manager for an athletic team, or working with handicapped students. The complete **portfolio** will be shared with the advisor in a final conference presentation.

The student may also opt for a product-based service to the school. The student will compile **research** related to the product. Examples include, but are not limited to creating a data base of famous school alumni, producing a work of art that will remain in the school, or creating an area outside the school for environmental study. The complete **portfolio** will be shared with the advisor in a final conference presentation.

## **GRADUATION PROJECT: ACADEMIC OPTIONS**

### Academic Competition or School Representative

The student will enter an academic competition (Science, Scholastic, High Q, FBLA, Latin Fest, Music, Art, etc.), and/or represent the school at a county, state, or national- level organizational convention (Key Club, Student Council, etc). The student will compile **research** related to the competition and/or organization. The complete **portfolio** will be shared with the advisor in a final conference presentation.

### Extension and Presentation of Assigned Research Project

The student will extend a **research** project or paper assigned in any class by presenting his/her research to the class. The oral presentation must be 7-10 minutes in length and be accompanied by a visual display. This option requires a presentation evaluation completed by the teacher in whose class the presentation is given. The complete **portfolio** will be shared with the advisor in a final conference presentation.

### Student Performance or Portfolio

The student will compile a **portfolio** of original art, music, or writing in preparation for a scholastic competition, Governor's School admission, or college entrance interview. The number of pieces will be determined by the competition or by conference with the advisor. The student will **research** the competition or college or area of creative work. The complete **portfolio** will be shared with the advisor in a final conference presentation.

## GRADUATION PROJECT GUIDELINES

### Portfolio Guidelines

The portfolio is a way for you to keep all your materials organized in one place. It can range from a simple pocket folder to an elaborate three ring binder.

#### Student Portion

1. The signed contract
2. All required research and/or related materials
3. The Activity Log indicating a minimum of 20 hours of work
4. The Reflection Paper
5. Documentation of a classroom presentation (if applicable)

#### Advisor Portion

1. Completed Portfolio Checklist
2. Completed Evaluation Rubrics
3. If “not yet satisfactory”
  - a. copies of progress monitoring
  - b. the Graduation Project Results Sheet

### Guidelines for the Activity Log

You must document your progress toward completion of your Graduation Project. Progress should be occurring on a regular basis, and you must show that you have worked **at least twenty hours** on the project. Your twenty hours will include the time you spend doing research, the time you spend writing, and the time you spend on any other activities directly related to your project. For example, you would include the time you spend job-shadowing or the time you spend preparing for a competition, or the time you spend volunteering.

You will be required to log the date of your work, how long you worked, who was involved, what you did, and where you did the work. You must write a minimum of three sentences for each entry in your log. Recording your reactions/thoughts each time you work will aid you when you write the final reflection paper.

Entries must be complete to receive a satisfactory rating.

### Guidelines for Research

All graduation projects, regardless of the option chosen, require research.

You must document the sources you use in the research process. Each source must be written in your log using proper MLA format.

There must be a minimum of four pages of research/materials (as documented in your Activity Log) in your final portfolio. This is the actual “stuff” you collect, write, or produce as a result of the research process. Research materials may include a compilation of research documents related to the selected graduation project, a new paper related to your topic, pictures of a product, a printed copy of PowerPoint slides, etc. You will need to plan with your advisor the documents you want to include in your portfolio. If you elect the extended research option, you need to include the original paper in your portfolio.

You must provide a thoughtful description/reaction for each source you document. For example, you may explain why you choose that source, why the source is relevant to your topic, what you learned from the source, how the source helped you, etc.

### **Guidelines for the Reflection Paper**

Your reflection paper is an important part of the graduation project. The paper will be scored using the project rubric. You should become familiar with the rubric prior to writing your paper. Papers that are incomplete or do not receive a satisfactory rating must be revised and resubmitted until they are of acceptable quality.

Your reflection paper should be typed, double-spaced, using Times New Roman size 12 font, on white paper, and with one-inch margins. No variation will be accepted. Your paper should be no shorter than two full pages and no longer than three full pages.

Begin your paper with a brief summary of the project. Define the goal of the project and explain why you choose this project. Then, explain what you learned from doing your project. You should include what you learned from your research as well as what you learned from the experience of actually doing the project. You should indicate what you have learned about yourself and explain what impact doing the project has had on your future career or educational goals.

### **Guidelines for Presentation (Extended Research Project ONLY)**

Your presentation must be presented to the class in which you do the original research paper or project. The presentation must be seven to ten minutes in length and include a visual product. The visual product(s) must be relevant to the research. Your presentation must explain the importance, value or impact of your research, and focus on the key issues/ideas. The presentation will be scored using the presentation rubric. You should become familiar with the rubric prior to giving your presentation.

**GRADUATION PROJECT INTEREST CARD**  
**Sample**

Your first period teacher will give you a card like this. You must fill it out and return it to your first period teacher no later than **April 20, 2009**.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

1<sup>st</sup> Period (Day 1) Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Circle One:            Career            Academic            Service  
                                 Project            Project            Project

Related Academic Subject: \_\_\_\_\_

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Office Use Only

Advisor Assigned/Date \_\_\_\_\_

Advisor Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## **GRADUATION PROJECT CONTRACT**

1. Describe the topic of your project.
2. Explain the reason(s) for the selection of this topic.
3. Describe a plan for gathering, organizing, and presenting information: how will you complete this project? (list tasks and activities)
4. What are some potential resources you will use to complete this project?
5. Explain what you hope to learn by doing this project.

## GRADUATION PROJECT CONTRACT

I have read the Graduation Project guidelines and understand that the required Graduation Project must be completed by **April 20, 2010**, and presented to my advisor by **April 30, 2010**.

I understand that the high school Graduation Project must be completed successfully for a student to fulfill District and State requirements for graduation. Any student who has not completed the requirements for graduation will not be permitted to participate in graduation ceremonies, nor will he/she receive a diploma until the project is satisfactorily completed.

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Student Signature

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Date

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Advisor Signature

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Date

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Parent/Guardian Signature

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Date

## GRADUATION PROJECT ACTIVITY LOG

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Remember: You must log a **minimum of 20 hours** of activity for completion of the Graduation Project.

| <b>DATE/<br/>TIME<br/>WORKED</b> | <b>WHO? WHAT?<br/>WHERE?</b><br>(MLA format for<br>research-based<br>entries ) | <b>REACTIONS/INSIGHTS</b><br>You must write a minimum of three sentences for each entry. | <b>ADVISOR<br/>COMMENTS/INITIALS</b> |
|----------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------------|
|                                  |  |  |                                      |
|                                  |  |  |                                      |

\*Make additional copies as needed

**GRADUATION PROJECT PORTFOLIO RUBRICS**

\*Advisors must initial and date the appropriate column.

**I. WORK ETHIC**

| <b>QUALITY</b>   | <b>NOT YET SATISFACTORY (DATE)</b> | <b>COMMENTS</b> | <b>SATISFACTORY (DATE)</b> |
|--|------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Clearly defines the origin and goal of the project.                  |                                    |                 |                            |
| Follows directions and has participated in conferences with advisor. |                                    |                 |                            |
| Submits all work completely.   |                                    |                 |                            |
| Attends conferences and is prepared with required materials.         |                                    |                 |                            |

**II. RESEARCH**

| <b>QUALITY</b>  | <b>NOT YET SATISFACTORY (DATE)</b> | <b>COMMENTS</b> | <b>SATISFACTORY (DATE)</b> |
|---|------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Shows evidence of a variety of sources; meets required number of sources (4). |                                    |                 |                            |
| Sources are appropriate for the topic.  |                                    |                 |                            |
| MLA style is followed consistently and correctly.                             |                                    |                 |                            |
| Content of reaction statements is consistent with research requirements.      |                                    |                 |                            |

III. ACTIVITY LOG

| QUALITY  | NOT YET SATISFACTORY (DATE) | COMMENTS | SATISFACTORY (DATE) |
|--|-----------------------------|----------|---------------------|
| Total hours meet the requirement of the project (20).                      |                             |          |                     |
| Content of reaction statements adequately reflects time spent on activity. |                             |          |                     |

IV. REFLECTION PAPER

| QUALITY  | NOT YET SATISFACTORY (DATE) | COMMENTS | SATISFACTORY (DATE) |
|--|-----------------------------|----------|---------------------|
| Meets the required number of pages (2-3).  |                             |          |                     |
| Contains an illustrative, meaningful analysis of the project experience.                           |                             |          |                     |
| Contains few errors in organizational structure, grammar, spelling, punctuation, word choice, etc. |                             |          |                     |
| Demonstrates correct format and logical organization.  |                             |          |                     |

V. PRESENTATION IN CLASSROOM

(For extended research project only)

| QUALITY  | NOT YET SATISFACTORY (DATE) | COMMENTS | SATISFACTORY (DATE) |
|--|-----------------------------|----------|---------------------|
| Meets the required length of presentation (7-10 minutes).                                |                             |          |                     |
| Provides adequate and specific content that reflects the purpose of the project.         |                             |          |                     |
| Demonstrates clear focus with well- developed ideas.                                     |                             |          |                     |
| Includes thoughtful and meaningful analysis of project experience.                       |                             |          |                     |
| Delivers presentation with an academic tone (rather than informal, conversational tone). |                             |          |                     |
| Includes visual product(s) relevant to the project.                                      |                             |          |                     |

