

# Senior Project Handbook AAEC High School, Red Mountain 2018-2019

**You should use a 3 ring binder specifically for Senior Project. Put this handbook and all your Senior Project materials in it.**

Coordinator:

Mrs. Cravens

[ccravens@aaechighschools.com](mailto:ccravens@aaechighschools.com)

Dear Parents/Guardians of Seniors:

Your student is required to complete a Senior Project. Senior Project allows each senior to demonstrate his/her years of educational experience and knowledge by demonstrating new learning and growth in a field of interest for the student. This process will showcase your student's reading, writing, speaking, thinking, self-discipline, problem solving, and researching skills. Senior Project consists of the following components:

- Project that involves community outreach
- Research Paper
- Portfolio
- Press Releases
- Final Presentation

All work for Senior Project is expected to be the original work of the student. Plagiarism or falsified documents are unacceptable.

A successful Senior Project process involves school, parental, and community support, as well as student initiative and discipline. Your student will receive guidance and deadline information requirements. Your student will also have a staff member as a mentor to help them with learning, growth, and scheduling.

Accommodations for Special Education students, early graduates and students with other extenuating circumstances must be presented to the Senior Project coordinator and the school administrators for approval no later than Friday August 17<sup>th</sup>

By providing your signature on the Parent Permission Form, you are acknowledging your awareness of your student's participation in Senior Project, as well as affirming that you have discussed with your student the ethical manner in which the project will be completed.

Sincerely,

Christi Cravens  
Senior Project Coordinator

## Senior Project Expectations

**This project is student-driven and student initiated.** It is a long-term commitment that requires students to weave together multiple curriculums and learning styles. Students must be willing to demonstrate a learning stretch through their work – they need to get out of their comfort zone and try something new. Students must remain in contact with mentors on a regular basis and maintain all due dates.

Senior Project will require research, communication skills, and a hands-on approach to learning. It is a culminating activity to show off what has been gained during the last twelve years of schooling, and a chance for students to interact with the community in a meaningful way.

All seniors will be required to sign forms that they have not falsified or plagiarized any part of their work. If a student is found forging, cheating, or plagiarizing work, it will not be accepted.

As with any class at AAEC, you must receive a C to pass.

## The Four Tenets of the AAEC, Red Mountain Senior Project

- 1. Benefit to the Larger Community:** Because we are all members of a broader community, each Senior Project must incorporate some aspect of giving back to the community. It can be the entire focus, or a small part, but some aspect must involve community outreach. This way, all work, time, and energy will result in a larger contribution than the project itself.
- 2. Multi-faceted Approach:** Because of the complex nature of this work, each Senior Project must incorporate multiple modes of thinking in the planning, implementation, and exhibition of their products.
- 3. Collaboration:** One of the most important skills anyone can learn in life is the ability to work with and learn from others. Throughout the Senior Project, the student will be expected to work with others in both the school and the community at large.
- 4. Academic Rigor:** The Senior Project is designed to challenge student thinking and abilities beyond what has previously been done. This means that the topic must be large enough for the student to consider multiple perspectives and delve deeply into the issues, but not so large that it will only lead to a superficial or unchallenging understanding.

## Senior Project Basic Requirements

### The Project Involving Community Outreach:

The project is the heart of the experience. You will choose a project that extends your learning, stretches your potential, challenges your abilities, and gets you involved the community outside of AAEC. This means you must learn and/or try something **NEW**. Parental permission will be required on all projects. All projects must be approved by your Senior Seminar teacher.

- Your field work will be meaningful and connected to the topic you choose
- You will choose to create/do something meaningful that is connected to your field work
- The end product should reflect some type of learning stretch/growth on your part
- The end product must have some benefit to the greater community outside of AAEC.
- The end product should be something you can share somehow in your presentation
- You will follow all guidelines listed in the handbook.
- Most fundraising should be done **outside of school**, in the local community

### The Research Paper:

With the approval of your Senior Seminar teacher, you will select a research paper topic that connects to your project. You will then write a formal research paper.

- You will need at least six sources, of which one is an interview that you will conduct with an expert in the field you are studying
- You will include a research paper of at least six, but no more than eight, pages in MLA or APA format
- You will create a Works Cited page at the end of the paper correctly cited in MLA or APA format (does not count towards your page count) with at least six appropriate sources
- Research Papers are due on Friday December 7<sup>th</sup>

### The Presentation:

- You will do a practice presentation in your Senior Project class.
- You will include pictures and information about your field work, end product, and your research paper.
- You will create a Power Point type presentation and may use notes as assistance, but will speak freely (not read or memorize) for the entire ten to twelve-minute speech
- You will be presenting in front of a panel, and should be prepared for a five-minute question and answer session at the end of your presentation
- You will follow all guidelines listed in the handbook for the Presentation

### The Portfolio:

It is expected that you will work on your Senior Project for a MINIMUM of 30 hours (on research, writing, fieldwork, etc.). Senior Project hours can count as service hours—see Mrs. Cravens for more information. Since so much of the work for this is done outside of school time, you will need to keep accurate records of the time you devote to your work. There will be forms for you to fill out where you can detail who you've talked to, what you've learned, what you've done, etc. You will also include notes, reflections, artifacts, and other pertinent information.

- Your portfolio must be kept in a 3 ring binder.
- The portfolio must remain up-to-date at all times, and will be checked on Checkpoint days
- You will follow all guidelines listed in the handbook for the Portfolio

### Press Releases:

- We want the community at large to learn about the great work that you are doing.
- Writing is one of the most important skills you learn during your school career.
- You will write 2 press releases about your project and will send them to at least 2 news outlets.

## Important Dates for Senior Project

September 7<sup>th</sup> —Project Proposal (may be turned in before due date)

April 24<sup>th</sup> 3:30- 7:30pm – Senior Project Presentations

April 25<sup>th</sup> 3:30-6:30pm- Senior Project Presentations

### Checkpoint 1: Wed/Th September 19/20 (40 points)

- Project Proposal and Approval Form (10 points)
- Copy of Letter of Intent for Academic Mentor (10 points)
- Parent Signature Form (5 points)
- 1 Academic Mentor (AM) Conference Rubric completed (5 points)
- Possible People to Interview Form completed (need at least 2) (5 points)
- At least 3 entries in Project Log (5 points)

### Checkpoint 2: Wed/Th October 3/4 (35 points)

- 1 more AM Conference Rubric completed (total of 2) (5 points)
- At least 3 new entries in Project Log (5 points)
- Interview scheduled (5 points)
- List of at least 12 interview questions (10 points)
- At least 3 sources for paper in MLA format (10 points)

### Checkpoint 3: Wed/Th October 17/18 (40 points)

- At least 1 more AM Conference Rubrics completed (total of 3) (10 points)
- At least 3 more entries in Project Log (5 points)
- Interview Answers with Expert (5 points)
- Copy of Thank you note to interviewee (10 points)
- Works Cited in MLA format with at least 6 sources (10 points)

### Checkpoint 4: Wed/Th November 7/8 (30 points)

- 2 or more artifacts showing work on project (10 points)
- At least 1 more AM Conference Rubric completed (total of 5) (5 points)
- Outline of Research paper (10 points)
- At least 3 more entries in Project Log (5 points)

### Checkpoint 5: Mon/Tues November 19/20 (20 points)

- At least 1 more AM Conference Rubric completed (total of 6) (10 points)
- At least 3 more entries in Project Log (10points)
- Rough Draft of Research Paper (worth its own grade of 75 points)**

**\*\*\*Final Research Paper due Friday December 7<sup>th</sup> (worth 200 points) \*\*\***

### Checkpoint 6: Wed/Th December 12/13 (40 points)

- At least 1 more AM Conference Rubrics completed (total of 7) (10 points)
- At least 1 more artifact (5 points)
- At least 3 more entries in Project Log (5 points)
- Peer Edited Rough Draft of Research Paper (20 points)

**Checkpoint 7: Thursday January 17<sup>th</sup> (30 points)**

- Monthly Plan for 2<sup>nd</sup> Semester Form completed (10 points)
- At least 1 more AM Conference Rubric completed (total of 8) (5 points)
- At least 3 new entries in Project Log (5 points)
- Project Title (10 points)

**Checkpoint 8: Wed/Th February 6/7 (30 points)**

- Graded Research Paper (10 points)
- At least 1 more AM Conference Rubric completed (total of 9) (10 points)
- At least 3 more entries in Project Log (10 points)

**Checkpoint 9: Wed/Th February 27/28 (30 points)**

- Rough draft of first press release (10 points)
- At least 1 more AM Conference Rubric completed (total of 10) (10 points)
- At least 3 new entries in project log (10 points)

**Checkpoint 10: Wed/Th March 20/21 (50 points)**

- Final Draft of first press release (20 points)
- At least 2 more AM Conference Rubric completed (total of 12) (10 points)
- At least 3 more entries in Project Log (5 points)
- At least 2 more artifacts (10 points)
- Signed up for practice presentation (5 points)

**Checkpoint 11: Wed/Th April 3/4 (40 points)**

- Rough draft of 2<sup>nd</sup> press release (10 points)
- Rough draft of slides (10 points)
- At least 1 more AM Conference Rubric completed (total of 13) (10 points)
- At least 3 new entries in Project Log (5 points)
- Signed up for final presentation (5 points)

**Checkpoint 12: Wed/Th April 17/18 (50 points)**

- Final draft of 2<sup>nd</sup> press release (10 points)
- Evidence of attending/participating in 2 other Senior Project Form completed (10 points)
- At least 2 more AM Conference Rubrics completed (total of 15) (15 points)
- At least 3 more entries in Project Log (5 points)
- Rough draft of 1 page Reflection on Project (10 points)

## Senior Project Academic Mentors

### Academic Mentor

Once your project proposal has been approved, you will choose a staff member at AAEC as your Academic Mentor. Staff members will have a limit of 4 Senior Projects. Those that get their proposals approved first will have first choice in choosing an Academic Mentor.

You will be required to meet with your Academic Mentor at least twice a month for a total of fifteen meetings. You may choose to meet with your Academic Mentor more often. You will also be required to document your meetings on your Academic Mentor Conference Rubric in your Portfolio. You will find a copy of this form on page 19 of this handbook. These meetings should be led by you, not the mentor. It is the student's responsibility to schedule these meetings.

Your Academic Mentor will make sure that you are on track with your dates/progress and help with any questions you may have about your project. S/he may also guide you in research strategies for your paper and may proofread your rough draft of the research paper.

The following is a sample of possible meeting agendas. Each project is unique; therefore, mentors will guide students in different ways. Make sure that you are utilizing your academic mentor to problem solve, generate ideas, and double-check what you are doing.

### Letter of Intent Guidelines

By the time of your first meeting with your academic mentor, you must give them a letter of intent explaining your project. This should be in letter format. You need two copies—one for your mentor to keep and one to put in your portfolio. Below are guidelines of how to structure your letter.

Dear Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_,

Paragraph 1: Describe the general area of interest (history, art, culinary arts, biology, etc.) and explain why you've chosen this area. Also tell the mentor what you already know about or have accomplished in this area.

Paragraph 2: Include the specific topic on which your paper will focus, some of the ideas you hope to include, and possible resources you may use.

Paragraph 3: Begin with a transitional sentence showing the relationship between your paper, fieldwork, and end product. You may also include who will be involved, potential cost, potential time spent, and possible resources.

Paragraph 4: Explain your understanding of plagiarism and falsification of evidence and the consequences of such acts.

Sincerely,

(Your name)



## Senior Project Examples

*Remember, your project needs to involve Stretch and Challenge (get out of your comfort zone and try something new). You need to reach out into the community and become involved in the world around you.*

### ACCEPTABLE PROJECT EXAMPLES

#### Paper Topics/Related Projects

- Organize an Agriculture Day, a Health Fair, or a Career Fair for a school in our area
- Cooking Classes for kids at the Boys and Girls Club
- Direct or assist-direct a school play
- Organize a Salt River Cleanup Day
- Teach an elementary, middle or high school class
- Plan and Design an effective sustained advertising campaign for a product, charity, etc. (more than a poster or recording)
- Design a training plan and coach a Special Olympics participant
- Hold a hiking survival class for the community
- Plan and implement a charity event (barrel race, 10K, etc.)
- Design and produce costumes for a local play
- Design and implement a Red Ribbon campaign for an elementary school
- Teach an art class at a Senior Citizens' Home
- Design and implement a Prom Promise or other type of safety program
- Be editor of the Yearbook

### UNACCEPTABLE PROJECTS

*These projects will cause problems and are not acceptable for your Senior Project.*

- Illegal activities.
- Group projects: you may be reliable, but your friends and colleagues may let you down. No group projects will be allowed.
- Unfinished work: we know you mean well when you say you will write a novel, but turning in three chapters is not quality, finished work and will not be accepted.
- No stretch or challenge: building a dog-house, painting a room, baby-sitting your nephew, or taking pictures of your friends and family demonstrate little effort.

**This is your opportunity to take a risk and do something worthwhile for yourself or your community.**

*\*Please Note: Once your project is approved, it will be difficult to change it. Please take care in your decision of a topic, and choose a project that will be meaningful and interesting to you.*

## **The Research Paper**

Your research paper should be 6-8 pages in length and must include a works cited page in MLA or APA format with at least 6 sources.

Your thesis statement must be clear, concise, and related to your fieldwork in some way.

At least one of your sources must be an interview. Guidelines for the interview are on page 12.

Research papers are due Friday December 7<sup>th</sup>

Your final graded research paper must be included in your final portfolio that you will turn in at your Senior Project presentation in April.

Research papers will be graded according to “The Six Traits Writing Rubric.” A copy of this rubric can be found at <http://www.azed.gov/standards-development-assessment/six-traits/>

## Interview for Research Paper

Your interview needs to be with an expert in your field from whom you can gain good, in-depth knowledge about your project and your research paper topic.

How to find an expert:

- Ask someone who works in the appropriate field
- Ask your academic mentor if they know anyone
- Ask someone who works/volunteers with a charitable organization in the appropriate field
- Ask a professor in the field or in a related field
- Still not sure who to ask? Talk to your family, friends, teachers, professors, etc. – someone will know someone for you to talk to!

Before the interview:

- Remember, your interview should be at least 30 minutes; any less and you are not utilizing your interviewee as a source of good information.
- Call/email/visit and make an appointment. Introduce yourself and state the purpose of your interview and how long you think it will take. Don't wait! Putting off contacting this person may make it so that he/she cannot fit you into his/her schedule—the sooner, the better! Jointly decide on a date, time, and place for the interview.
- Write out clearly-phrased questions that reflect your purpose for the interview. Write out more questions than you may have time for in the interview, and prioritize. (You should have at least 15 questions)
- Gather all materials you'll need ahead of time—pens/pencils, paper, any equipment. Make sure your laptop is working if you're using one.
- Call or email the day before the interview to confirm the appointment, so neither of you will forget.
- Dress appropriately for the interview. You should not be wearing a t-shirt, tank top, shorts or jeans. Look professional if you want to be taken seriously.

During the interview:

- Ask follow up questions to clarify or get additional information.
- Write good, clear notes and/or record the interview. You may not quote the interviewee in your paper unless you have written his/her exact words.

After the interview:

- Be sure to send a thank-you note to the interviewee. It can be a simple several word note just thanking him/her for his/her time and assistance in your project. Put a copy of it in your portfolio.
- Be sure you have all of the information correct in order to include in your citation. Double check the spelling of his/her name and all pertinent information.
- Clarify anything you have a question on before incorporating it into your work. You don't want to bother this person continually, but you do want to have all of your information correct.

## Senior Project Presentation

Once you have completed your thirty hours (or more) towards your Senior Project requirement, completed your fieldwork, researched a related topic, written an in-depth research paper, and compiled a professional portfolio that includes all required elements as outlined in this Senior Project Handbook, you will be ready to celebrate your accomplishments and share your discoveries.

### **SPEAKING DIRECTIONS:**

Prepare a presentation that is 10-12 minutes which does the following:

- Captures the attention of the audience and introduces the purpose of your presentation
- Explains the process you went through to complete your project
- Addresses the stretch and challenge of your project
- Describes any problems you encountered and details the ways you dealt with them
- Identifies concepts or skills you learned
- Establishes the connection between the research paper and the project
- Reflects on any changes that you would make if you were to do your project again
- Discusses ways that your educational experience prepared you for this project
- Concludes with either a statement of the value of the project or a speculation that brings the speech to a satisfying close
- Wear business casual clothing-No jeans, shorts, spaghetti straps, no flip flops

**In addition to the preceding content elements, you must be aware of essential delivery components: eye contact, body composure, vocal expression, volume, appearance, and an audio/visual aid (power point presentation) are all important aspects of a successful presentation.**

### FINAL NOTES

- Speeches will be delivered in Mrs. Cravens' room (134). See Mrs. Cravens for specific audio/visual needs.
- Video clips should be limited to one minute. All videos must be downloaded beforehand!
- Students should be prepared to answer questions from the panel for approximately five minutes.
- Points will be deducted for speeches under ten minutes; speeches will be halted after twelve minutes.

## Senior Project Presentation Evaluation Rubric

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Project \_\_\_\_\_

Judge's Total \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** Score is based on 5(10) = Excellent; 4(8) = Above Average; 3(6) = Average; 2(4) = Below Average; 1(2) =Failing. Each judge will deduct 5 pts. from the total for each minute under the 10 minute minimum. The total points possible are 100.

### AREA I: CONTENT

#### Introduction

1 stated or implied purpose of presentation with attention getter 5 4 3 2 1 0

#### Body of Speech

2 Main idea and points supported by accurate and appropriate details 5 4 3 2 1 0

Transitions enhance logical flow of presentation

3 Explanation of paper topic and connection to fieldwork/ project 5 4 3 2 1 0

4 Explanation of process, learning, problems encountered and 5 4 3 2 1 0

changes made

#### Conclusion

5 summary of ideas or appropriate wrap-up/closure 5 4 3 2 1 0

### AREA II: DELIVERY

1 Eye contact (not reading notes, surveys room) and 5 4 3 2 1 0

Body composure (poise, gestures, posture)

2 Voice/vocal expression (rate/volume, inflection, pacing, 5 4 3 2 1 0

enthusiasm)

3 Language usage (appropriate word choice, style, no slang) 5 4 3 2 1 0

4 Dress/appearance (business casual) 5 4 3 2 1 0

5 Audio and/or visual aids 5 4 3 2 1 0

### AREA III: PROJECT

1 Evidence of Stretch and challenge 10 8 6 4 2 0

2 Evidence of project process 10 8 6 4 2 0

3 Evidence of project fulfillment 10 8 6 4 2 0

4 Evidence of learning 10 8 6 4 2 0

5 Overall quality of the project 10 8 6 4 2 0

## Senior Project Portfolio

Your Portfolio will be kept in a 3 ring binder in which you will house all of your important papers to show your work to your Academic Mentor and your Senior Seminar teacher. You will turn in your Portfolio when you present your Senior Project. The portfolio must include:

- A cover/title page with your name and the project name
- Senior Project Portfolio Evaluation Form\*
- Reflection (1 page typed, single spaced discussing why you chose your topic and what you learned or how you grew through the process of completing the project)
- Project Proposal and Senior Project Approval Form \*
- Parent Signature Form\*
- A copy of the Letter of Intent to your Academic Mentor (guidelines in handbook)
- Academic Mentor Conference Rubrics (15 minimum)\*
- Senior Project Logs\*
- Graded Research Paper
- Possible Interviewee Form\*
- Questions asked in your interview with an “expert” in the field (guidelines in handbook)
- Interviewee’s answers to your questions)
- 2 press releases
- Evidence of attending/participating in at least 2 other Senior Projects Form\*
- Artifacts that show your work
- Any other pertinent pieces that show your progress and growth

\*=forms that can be found in the Senior Project Handbook

There will be several Checkpoints when you will be responsible for bringing your portfolio to class for a check. It must be up-to-date on those days (see the list on pages 6 and 7 for specific dates). This is the way for the school to know that you are on-track with your knowledge, growth, field work, and project guidelines so you don’t get behind. Please keep your portfolio in a safe place, and add to it every time you have something important.