Graduation Project

Southern Tioga School District



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Dear Southern Tioga School District Student,

The purpose of the Graduation Project is to provide you an opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge and maturity gained during your high school career. The Graduation Project provides the opportunity to choose an area of study, to combine different disciplines, to explore new horizons, and to utilize talents in a productive manner. The project is the culmination of the knowledge, skills, and experience achieved throughout your high school career.

The Graduation Project is a multi-faceted production. The components include the following:

- Documentation
- Experience
- Reflection
- Presentation

The first facet, the Documentation component, involves writing a career-related research paper. The topic must involve a current and controversial issue within the field. This paper will be written during your junior year and may build on career research conducted during the Career Preparation Portfolio (CPP) class. The writing and evaluation of this paper will occur during your 11th grade Communications class. This research paper becomes an integral part of the documentation component of the Graduation Project. As you enter into your senior year, you will continue to document and manage your progress.

During the second facet of the project, the Experience component, you will produce a tangible product. The product might include something physical that can be seen and touched, a community-based service that can be documented, or something performed. The experience must include a minimum of twenty hours, which must be verified by an adult familiar with your topic. You may not be paid for your efforts and the adult may not be a relative.

The third facet of the project is a 7-9 page Reflection paper which includes the following sections: title page, acknowledgments, personal introduction, reflection, evaluation, and resources. This paper is written and evaluated during the 12th grade Communications course.

Finally, you will give a 10-15 minute Presentation followed by a question and answer period. In the presentation, you will discuss your experience, present your documentation, and reflect on your personal growth. The presentation must include a visual. Examples include the following: pictures, videos, charts, graphs, Power Point, digital portfolios, etc.

Although this is an extensive project, be assured that if you meet the deadlines, give your best, and risk a little, you will not only be successful, but you will also accomplish something worthwhile. This project fulfills the Pennsylvania Department of Education requirements and will be evaluated on a pass/fail basis.

Sincerely,

The Southern Tioga School District Graduation Project Committee

Dear Parents/Guardians of a Southern Tioga School District student:

As your son/daughter may have indicated, our seniors are required to complete a Graduation Project. This Project has many components, which include a research paper, a reflection paper, a related project experience requiring formal documentation, and an oral presentation. This Project will call upon your son/daughter to use the skills he/she has acquired and developed throughout twelve years of formal education.

The first component of this Project, the research paper, will require students to use specific skills such as research, organization and time management to produce a typed document. The second component is the actual project, a "hands-on" experience or product related to an aspect of the research topic. The student will need a community mentor who will provide expertise on the project and verify that the student has spent at least 20 hours working on it. This experience must be completed outside of the regular classroom. The third component involves a reflection paper based on the experience and research throughout the course of the Graduation Project. The last component of the overall Project is a ten to fifteen minute oral presentation given by the student. During this presentation, the student will explain the learning that occurred in completing the research and project.

One of the objectives of the Graduation Project is to teach students to manage their time in order to meet deadlines. Due dates for the components are given to students in advance, and it is the responsibility of the students to meet them. If the student is absent on a specific deadline, it is student's responsibility to turn in back work on the day of his/her return. However, exceptions may be made for a serious illness.

A successful Graduation Project involves parent and teacher support as well as student initiative and self-discipline. To pass the Graduation Project, the student must successfully complete each of the above components. I hope that you will become involved with your son/daughter in this project. If we all work together, this will be one of the most rewarding experiences the students will have in high school!

Please sign the portion below to indicate your understanding of the Graduation Project requirements. Please return this form to your son/daughter's Communications teacher. You may wish to make a copy of this document for your records. Thank you.

Name of Student	
I have read and understand the requirements	for the Graduation Project.
Parent/Guardian Signature	Date
Phone (home) (wo	k)

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Southern Tioga School District Graduation Project is to challenge each student to go beyond the traditional educational program. By transferring learned skills to self-selected areas of physical, intellectual or artistic interest, students will:

- expand their personal knowledge
- apply self-learning to practical, real-life situations
- explore career paths
- become life-long learners

DOCUMENTATION GUIDELINES

Documentation for the Senior Project begins with the Career Preparation Portfolio (CPP) Portfolio in the 10^{th} grade year.

Items must include:

- 1. Reflective paper based on Career Pathways
- 2. Interest inventory
- 3. Resume
- 4. Cover letter
- 5. Thank you letter
- 6. Career report
- 7. Career plan chart

IMPORTANT: This portfolio will be updated throughout the process on a yearly basis.

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION INCLUDES:

- 1. Final copy of the 11th grade research paper
 - > Includes title page and source page
- 2. Final copy of the 12th grade reflection paper
 - ➤ Includes six components:
 - 1) Title/Cover Page
 - 2) Acknowledgements
 - 3) Personal Introduction
 - 4) Reflection
 - 5) Evaluation
 - 6) Ten Resources
- 3. Necessary Forms include:
 - 1) Project proposals/written plan
 - 2) Signed parent letter
 - 3) Signed Community Mentor letter
 - 4) Community Mentor Verification sheet
 - 5) Outline for oral presentation
 - 6) Experience Log of 20 hours from project experience

RESEARCH PAPER GUIDELINES

The first component of the Graduation Project is a Research Paper, which is completed during the 11th grade Communications class. This paper will be written using MLA/APA guidelines and will be five to seven typed pages long. The research paper should be focused on a controversial issue associated with a career. The due dates for the research paper along with additional requirements (i.e. annotated bibliography, outline, etc) will be established by the Communications teacher. Listed below are some examples of possible research topics:

> Career: Plastic Surgeon

Controversial Issue: Is plastic surgery a good solution for cosmetic issues?

> Career: Restaurant Owner

Controversial Issue: Should restaurant owners be forced to ban smoking in their

establishments?

> Career: Education

Controversial Issue: Should school uniforms be required in high schools?

Career: Automotive Mechanics

Controversial Issue: Is a two-stroke engine better than a four-stroke engine?

> Career: Professional athlete

Controversial Issue: Are there acceptable uses for steroids?

EXPERIENCE GUIDELINES

The Graduation Project Experience must have official approval and may take the form of one of the following:

Community Service Experience

Examples: Work at a Nursing Home Facility; Eagle Scout; Volunteerism with DARE or local soup kitchen

Creative Production

Examples: a dance performance, an oral history performance, creating a classroom museum, writing historical fiction, a play, children's books, a volume of poetry, an art exhibit, a fashion show, a sculpture exhibit, performing original music compositions, creating a video.

Practical Application

Examples: Building a playground, constructing a greenhouse, completing auto body design and repair, developing new or applied tools, organizing a drive such as a toy drive, food drive, fund raiser, etc.

Career Exploration

Examples: Planning and implementing a career discovery process built upon one's interest, an intern or shadowing experiences at multiple work locations in a chosen field at various career points, teaching assistantships, peer tutoring, after-school tutoring, etc.

ABOUT GROUP WORK

Most projects will be individually developed. Occasionally, group work may be most appropriate for the experience component of the project. In these instances, each student's role and product must contribute to the group and stand alone for assessment purposes. Each student must fulfill all required assignments.

For group work, a formal, detailed contract must be proposed and submitted by the group. A detailed outline of each portion of the project must be clearly explained; each portion must be declared by each group member. The acceptance of the proposal is at the discretion of the building administration for each high school.

REFLECTION PAPER GUIDELINES

A major component of the Graduation Project is a Reflection Paper, which is completed in the final year of high school during the Communications class. This paper will be written using MLA/APA guidelines and will be seven to nine typed pages including six components:

1. Title Page (1 page)

o Centered and placed in the middle of page.

Topic of Paper/Topic of Project (Title)

Your Name

Date

Name of High School

2. Acknowledgements (1 page)

- o Who helped you with this experience? (i.e., parents, advisor, mentor, etc.)
- o How have these individuals helped your experience?
- o How would you like to thank them?
- o You may mention any other information about them in this section.

3. Personal Introduction (1 page)

- o Introduce yourself.
- o Briefly explain your past and future plans.
- o Discuss why and how your topic was chosen.
- o Who or what influenced your decision?

4. Reflection (2-3 pages)

- o What were your original learning objectives (Letter of Intent Form) and how did you address each one in your project?
- o Briefly discuss the steps taken to reach your learning objectives.
- o What subject areas did you incorporate in your Graduation Project and how was this incorporation completed?
- o Compare and contrast this experience to your original career topic investigation (11th grade research paper).
- o What are your thoughts on the project? Give a general overview and give specific references to the subject areas of focus.
- o What obstacles did you encounter? How did you overcome them or what could you have done to overcome them?
- o What would you like the evaluation panel to see in your presentation and your finished product?

REFLECTION GUIDELINES (continued)

- 5. Evaluation (1-2 pages)
 - o What was the most important part of this experience that you will take with you in years to come?
 - o If you were required to repeat the experience, what ideas/subjects would you investigate further or elaborate upon?
 - o What conclusions have you drawn regarding the experience?
 - o What are your culminating thoughts on the experience? Are there any lingering questions you still have on the topic? If so, explain.
- 6. Resources (1 page)
 - o Include at least ten resources that you have used in preparation for this experience. These should be documented in MLA/APA Format.

PRESENTATION GUIDELINES

- Your presentation must be 10-15 minutes in length followed by a brief question and answer period.
- You must discuss your experience, present your documentation, and reflect on your personal growth.
- The presentation must include a visual. Examples include the following: pictures, videos, charts, graphs, Power Point, digital portfolios, etc.
- Please remember to dress appropriately.

Please refer to the Oral Presentation Evaluation Rubric Sheet located in this packet.

ADDITIONAL PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

- > Students who do not turn in a paper will not be permitted to give a presentation.
- > Students who do not complete the required 20 hours of logged work for the experience by the specified date will not be permitted to give a presentation.
- > Students who do not submit a portfolio on the specified date will not be permitted to deliver a presentation.
- > Students must not be paid for any work completed for their Graduation Project.
- Any musical instruments studied for a Graduation Project must be played either in person or on video. Audio tapes alone are not acceptable as verification.
- A visual aid is a required as part of the presentation.
- > Time spent assembling your portfolio does not count as part of the 20 hour requirement.

MENTOR QUALIFICATIONS

- ➤ 21 years of age or older
- > not a member of your immediate family
- > must have some expertise in the area of project
- > must be able to commit the necessary time to guide you and validate the time on this experience

The following section contains the FORMS needed for the project.

All of these forms will eventually be returned to you and should be kept in your documentation portfolio.

CHECKLIST of DOCUMENTATION COMPONENTS

The following section contains the FORMS needed for the project. All of these forms will eventually be returned to you and should be presented as part of your documentation component. You may use this as a reference to check your progress.

	Reflective Paper based on Career Pathways
	Interest Inventory
Completed in	Resume
the Career Preparation	Cover Letter
Portfolio (CPP) class	Thank You Letter
	Career Report
	Career Plan Chart
	Final Draft of the 11th grade Research Paper
Completed in	Project Proposals/Written Plan
the 11th grade Communications	Signed Parent Letter
class	Signed Community Mentor Letter
	Community Mentor Verification Form
Completed in	Outline for Oral Presentation
Completed in the 12th grade	
Communications class	Experience Time Log of 20 hours (signed by the Community Mentor)
	Final copy of the 12th grade Reflection Paper

LETTER OF INTENT AND APPLICATION

Name	
Date	Year of Graduation
Project Title	
Brief Description	
I. What do you plan to accomplish or explore?	
II. How does this project reflect your abilities and	interests?
III. How will you go about completing this projec	
IV. What will you use to complete your project?	
V. How will you present your project for evaluati	
Student Signature	Date
Parent Signature	Date

COMMUNITY MENTOR FORM

Dear Graduation Project Community Mentor:	
This form indicates that you have agreed to serve as a	community mentor to
(student's name)	for his/her Graduation Project.
The nature of the project is:	
Your name (please print):	
Your organization (if applicable):	
Your position:	
The approximate duration of the project:(inclu-	ude dates)
We can reach you at (phone):	
(address):	
Please briefly explain your qualifications, expertise help you serve as a community mentor on this proj	
Mentor's Signature Reminder of Mentor Qualifications: • 21 years of age or older • not a member of the student's immediate family	Date
 must have some expertise in the area of project must be able to commit the necessary time to guide t 	he student and validate the time he/she

spent

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WRITTEN PLAN

Name	Date
Project Title	
Year of Graduation	
Type your plan on a separate	sheet of paper and attach it to this form.
Describe in detail how you plan to carry ou have finished this project? What do you wa How will you know if you are successful?	t your project. What do you hope to achieve when you nt others to gain from your project?
Student Signature	Date

The Southern Tioga School District encourages its students to participate in a community-based activity as part of the Graduation Project. The choice of the activity for the project is that of the student, although the District will have some input in approving or disapproving activities.

The Southern Tioga School District and its employees or agents are not responsible for the safety or well being of any of its students participating in community-based activities as part of the Graduation Project. The parents and the student should take whatever action they believe necessary to evaluate the risks of the Graduation Project activities. By proposing or accepting a Graduation Project with community-based elements, the parents and the student agree to assume the risks present in performing the project.

COMMUNITY MENTOR VERIFICATION FORM

Dear Community Mentor:	
Please fill out this form and return it to the student or to completed his/her efforts.	the school after the student has
Student's Name:	
Project:	
You have been chosen to verify this student's efforts on the time spent on the project phase of the assignment ha student's efforts is necessary. Please answer the following project. Keep in mind that this student's research paper refers only to the physical aspects of the project.	s been out of class, verification of the ng questions to help us evaluate his/her
1. Can you verify that he/she spent at least 20 hours crea Yes No Please comment:	ating this project?
Have you seen this project at different stages of comp Yes No Please comment:	pletion, not just the final phase?
3. What specific problems did this student encounter and	d overcome?
4. What successes have you seen this student achieve?	
Mentor's Name (Please Print)	Mentor's Signature
Phone number	Date

Thank you for your time and cooperation. It is greatly appreciated.

EXPERIENCE TIME LOG

Name			
Project Title _			
them. You ma	on your project, keep track of your activities and the times attach as many sheets as necessary. Your community te time spent. Thank you.	ne you spend mentor need	on each of ls to initial each
<u>DATE</u>	<u>ACTIVITY</u>	TIME SPENT	MENTOR'S INITIALS

The following section contains the RUBRICS which will be used to grade the elements of the project.

Use these rubrics as a reference while creating the various elements

DOCUMENTATION EVALUATION

Student:		-				
Title/Cover Page	0	1	2	3	4	5
10th grade Career Preparation Component—						
Career Pathways Reflective Paper	0	1	2	3	4	5
Interest Inventory	0	1	2	3	4	5
Resume	0	1	2	3	4	5
Cover Letter & Thank You Letter	0	1	2	3	4	5
Career Report	0	1	2	3	4	5
Career Plan Chart	0	1	2	3	4	5
11th grade Research Component—						
Final/Clean Copy of Research Paper	0	1	2	3	4	5
Cover Page & Sources Used in Paper	0	1	2	3	4	5
12th grade Reflection Component—						
Acknowledgements	0	1	2	3	4	5
Personal Introduction	0	1	2	3	4	5
Reflection	0	1	2	3	4	5
Evaluation	0	1	2	3	4	5
Ten Resources	0	1	2	3	4	5
Original Project Forms: (all must be signed and completed)						
Letter of Intent & Written Plan	0	1	2	3	4	5
Parent Permission	0	1	2	3	4	5
Community Mentor Form	0	1	2	3	4	5
Mentor Verification Form	0	1	2	3	4	5
Experience Time Log of 20 Hours	0	1	2	3	4	5
Neatness & Clarity	0	1	2	3	4	5

Comments: Total: _____/100

RESEARCH PAPER EVALUATION

Student:	Dat	e:

POINTS	COMMENTS
0 1 2 3 4 5	
0 1 2 3 4 5	
0 1 2 3 4 5	
0 1 2 3 4 5	
0 1 2 3 4 5	
0 1 2 3 4 5	
0 1 2 3 4 5	
0 1 2 3 4 5	
0 1 2 3 4 5	
	0 1 2 3 4 5 0 1 2 3 4 5 0 1 2 3 4 5 0 1 2 3 4 5 0 1 2 3 4 5 0 1 2 3 4 5 0 1 2 3 4 5

The author used correct capitalization and	0 1 2 3 4 5
punctuation:	
• $5 = 1$ or no errors	
• 4 = 2-3 errors	
• $3 = 4-5$ errors	
• $2 = 6-7$ errors	
• 1 = 8 errors	
• 0 = more than 8 errors	
<u>Organization</u>	
The introduction of the paper flows from general to	0 1 2 3 4 5
	012343
specific and draws the reader's interest.	
Paragraphs have topic sentences and are an	0 1 2 3 4 5
appropriate length. Thoughtful transitions show how	
ideas connect.	
A satisfying conclusion leaves the reader with a sense	0 1 2 3 4 5
of closure and resolution.	
<u>Style</u>	
The writer does not use jargon that confuses and uses	0 1 2 3 4 5
vocabulary appropriate for the audience.	
Words are specific and accurate; it is easy to	0 1 2 3 4 5
understand what the writer means.	
Sentences are well constructed, vary in length, and	0 1 2 3 4 5
have varied sentence beginnings. There are no	
sentence fragments or run-on sentences.	
sentence fragments of run on sentences.	
Voice	
The tone of the writing adds interest to the	0 1 2 3 4 5
	0 1 2 3 4 3
message and is appropriate for the purpose and the	
audience.	
n	
Research	
The paper contains convincing evidence to support	0 1 2 3 4 5
the thesis, and the sources are current and relevant.	
Quoted material is effectively introduced and there is	0 1 2 3 4 5
an effective balance of paraphrasing, summarizing,	
and quoting	
All sources on Works Cited page are included in the	0 1 2 3 4 5
paper and the works cited page and parenthetical	
citations employ correct MLA/APA format	
Total Points (100 Possible)	
20002 0000000)	

REFLECTION PAPER EVALUATION

Student:	Date:

CRITERIA	POINTS	COMMENTS
INTRODUCTORY ELEMENTS:	Grade Scale	Comments
Title Page The paper contains a title page, which includes the following: Topic of paper/topic of project, the student's name, date, and the name of the high school.	0 1 2 3 4 5	
Acknowledgements This page should be one page long and include information about who helped with the experience and how they helped. It should include various information about people who assisted the student with the project.	0 1 2 3 4 5	
Personal Introduction This page should be one page long. It should be an introduction of the student and briefly explain past and future plans. Students should also use this page to discuss why the topic was chosen and who or what influenced the decision.	0 1 2 3 4 5	
REFLECTION ELEMENTS:	Grade Scale	Comments
Ideas and Content The original learning objectives are established and the necessary steps taken to reach the objectives are covered extensively.	0 1 2 3 4 5	
The subject areas explored in the completion of the Graduation Project are explained.	0 1 2 3 4 5	
An overview of specific references used throughout the Project is covered extensively.	0 1 2 3 4 5	
A comparison between the experience portion of the Project and the original career topic (11th grade research paper) is explored.	0 1 2 3 4 5	
A discussion of the student's individual thoughts on the project is given, which includes any obstacles encountered and his/her resolutions.	0 1 2 3 4 5	

REFLECTION PAPER EVALUATION (continued)

WRITING ELEMENTS:	Grade Scale	Comments
Focus The single controlling point made with an awareness of task (mode) about a specific topic.	0 1 2 3 4 5	
Conventions The paper is a minimum of seven full pages, double spaced with appropriate one-inch margins. 12-point, Times New Roman or Arial font, and each paragraph is indented.	0 1 2 3 4 5	
The author avoids the use of contractions and uses numbers appropriately. Digits are not used to begin a sentence.	0 1 2 3 4 5	
The paper is free from spelling and grammar errors: • 5 = 1 or no errors • 4 = 2-3 errors • 3 = 4-5 errors • 2 = 6-7 errors • 1 = 8 errors • 0 = more than 8 errors	0 1 2 3 4 5	
The author used correct capitalization and punctuation: • 5 = 1 or no errors • 4 = 2-3 errors • 3 = 4-5 errors • 2 = 6-7 errors • 1 = 8 errors • 0 = more than 8 errors	0 1 2 3 4 5	
Organization The introduction of the paper flows from general to specific and draws the reader's interest.	0 1 2 3 4 5	
Paragraphs have topic sentences and are an appropriate length. Thoughtful transitions show how ideas connect.	0 1 2 3 4 5	
A satisfying conclusion leaves the reader with a sense of closure and resolution.	0 1 2 3 4 5	

REFLECTION PAPER EVALUATION (continued)

WRITING ELEMENTS (continued):	
Style The writer does not use jargon that confuses and uses vocabulary appropriate for the audience.	0 1 2 3 4 5
Words are specific and accurate; it is easy to understand what the writer means.	0 1 2 3 4 5
Sentences are well constructed, vary in length, and have varied sentence beginnings. There are no sentence fragments or run-on sentences.	0 1 2 3 4 5
Yoice The tone of the writing adds interest to the message and is appropriate for the purpose and the audience.	0 1 2 3 4 5
Additional Comments:	

Summary of Evaluation of the Reflection Paper			
<u>Criteria</u>	Possible Points	Points Earned	
Introductory Elements: (Title page, Acknowledgements, Personal Introduction)	15		
Reflection Elements:			
(Ideas and Content)	25		
Writing Elements:			
(Focus, Conventions, Organization, Style, Voice)	60		
organization, bryte, voice)	00		
TOTAL	100		

ORAL PRESENTATION EVALUATION

Student:	Date:
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CRITERIA	POINTS	COMMENTS
Voice		
Voice has a pleasant pitch; speech at an appropriate rate of speed for audience and purpose.	0 1 2 3 4 5	
Voice volume appropriate for the size of the room and the audience.	0 1 2 3 4 5	
Physical Presence		
 Dressed neatly and appropriately for type of presentation and audience. 5 = Professional dress (suit, dress slacks, collared shirt, dress shoes, tie, jacket (optional) for boys; dress, suit, dress slacks with jacket (optional)for girls) 4 = Business casual (dress shirt/golf shirt, no tie, casual shoes (no tennis shoes)for boys; skirt or slacks and sweater/blouse, dress shoes for girls) 3 = Casual (khaki/cargo slacks with large pockets, solid color/collarless jersey, casual shoes for boys; casual slacks, casual top, casual shoes for girls) 2 = Any one of the following: jeans, tennis shoes, flip-flops, or printed t-shirt 1 = Two or more of the following: jeans, tennis shoes, or printed t-shirt 0 = Unkempt look; no attempt to meet criteria 	0 1 2 3 4 5	
Head up, used good posture, and stood tall, conveying an image of self-confidence.	0 1 2 3 4 5	
Facial expressions, body language, and attitude conveyed interest and enthusiasm in subject matter.	0 1 2 3 4 5	
Made good eye contact with the audience.	0 1 2 3 4 5	
No distracting mannerisms throughout presentation (chewing gum, tapping fingers, hands in pockets etc.).	0 1 2 3 4 5	

<u>Language</u>	
Enunciated clearly and pronounced words correctly.	0 1 2 3 4 5
Used correct grammar.	0 1 2 3 4 5
Used vocabulary appropriate for the subject matter and the audience. Content	0 1 2 3 4 5
Presentation included an introduction that stated the premise of the paper.	0 2 4 6 8 10
Presentation included a body with supporting information and documentation for the thesis or topic.	0 2 4 6 8 10
Presentation included a conclusion that summarized the paper and restated the thesis or topic.	0 2 4 6 8 10
Content was organized in a logical, orderly, and meaningful manner.	0 1 2 3 4 5
Presentation met the time requirements of a minimum of 10 minutes and a maximum of 15 minutes in length, including the exhibition. • 5 = 10-15 minutes; did not exceed time requirements • 4 = 8-9 minutes • 3 = 6-7 minutes • 2 = 4-5 minutes • 1 = 2-3 minutes • 0 = Less than 2 minutes	0 1 2 3 4 5
Anticipated questions the audience might have about the subject matter and were prepared to answer questions not covered in presentation itself or to elaborate on points previously made.	0 2 4 6 8 10
<u>Total Points</u> (100 possible)	
Additional Comments	