



WHEELER CAPSTONE STUDENT HANDBOOK
2024-2025

Wheeler High School
North Stonington, CT

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Wheeler High School Graduation Requirements

MISSION

The Mission of Wheeler High School/Middle School, in partnership with families and community, is to provide students with the education that will best help them to live lives of accomplishment and satisfaction in a complex and changing world.

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

Analysis
Collaboration
Communication
Literacy

SOCIAL/CIVIC EXPECTATIONS

Resiliency
Respect
Responsibility

CORE VALUES

We are committed to the belief that ALL children are capable and have a fundamental right to attain high levels of educational achievement so they can have highly rewarding lives and demonstrate responsible citizenship.

We believe that in order to have the largest impact upon student learning and to provide opportunity for high level achievement, it must start with the instructional core, specifically through:

- ~Changing the role of the student in the instructional process to be active participants;
- ~Ensuring a high level of complexity of the content within the curriculum;
- ~Supporting the knowledge and skill development of teachers;
- ~Assessing student work using our school-wide rubrics and using the data to drive instruction across ALL grade levels and departments.

We believe that in order to ensure an environment for continuous improvement we must constantly review and improve systems and structures so our focus can remain on learning for ALL students.

Wheeler Capstone Mission Statement

The Wheeler Capstone challenges students to demonstrate and display mastery of the academic and social/civic expectations acquired while attending North Stonington Public Schools. One of the goals of the Capstone is to allow students to take control of and have a powerful voice in their own education and development, both as learners and as individuals. Student choice and personal interest are valued and recognized during each phase of the Capstone. It is an opportunity for students to demonstrate what they know and are able to do by showcasing these achievements in a real-world situation. The Wheeler Capstone is the last step of our North Stonington Public Schools Vision of the Graduate where our students showcase their hard work and progress in our school wide academic and social/civic expectations.

OVERVIEW

The Capstone provides students with the opportunity to apply and broaden their knowledge and skills in an area of personal interest. Throughout their senior year, under the guidance of community mentors, teaching staff, and the Senior Capstone Coordinators, seniors will complete an educational experience determined to be worthy in scope and content. This program requires students to demonstrate Wheeler High School's Academic and Social/Civic Expectations.

While these skills have been taught throughout students' high school careers, this is the time for them to demonstrate:

- Immersion in an area of interest
- Thinking beyond the conventional academic experience, exploring a personal academic interest, social service, possible career, or creative project
- Development of independent learning techniques, self-direction, self-reliance, and confidence; application of knowledge outside the classroom
- Personal and intellectual growth, decision making, and independent research skills as a transition to the worlds of college and work
- Making connections in the community through networking and developing critical communication skills

Senior Capstone Completion

Students must complete all required components of the Capstone to meet expectations of North Stonington Public School's Vision of the Graduate. Students will be graded on all components of the Capstone in their Junior and Senior English classes using our school wide rubrics. This is the last assessment of our Wheeler seniors to show their proficiency in all four areas of our academic expectations: Analysis, Collaboration, Communication and Literacy and in our Social/Civic Expectations: Respect, Responsibility and Resiliency. Each student will create and present a multimedia presentation to an audience that may include mentors, community members, parents, teachers, and other students.

NSPS Vision of the Graduate

**Analysis
Collaboration
Communication
Literacy**

**Respect
Responsibility
Resilience**

Demonstrated through:

TRADITIONAL CAPSTONE TRAJECTORY	PATHWAY PROGRAMS <i>Engineering, Business, Education</i>	WORK STUDY/APPROVED FIELD EXPERIENCE
Freshman Classes	Freshman Classes <i>Application to Pathway Program</i>	Freshman Classes
Sophomore Classes	Sophomore Classes <i>Pathway Based Schedule</i> <i>Sophomore Experiences</i>	Sophomore Classes
Junior Classes <i>Senior Project Proposal</i> <i>Junior English Class</i>	Junior Classes <i>Pathway Based Schedule</i> <i>Junior Experiences</i> <i>Internship Proposal</i> <i>Junior English Class</i>	Junior Classes <i>Job Placement Proposal or Approved Experience Application</i> <i>Junior English Class</i>
Senior Classes Field Experience (20 hours)	Senior Classes <i>Pathway Advisory</i> Internship (60 or 120 hours)	Senior Classes <i>Alternative Schedule Possible</i> Job Placement or Approved Experience (60 or 120 hours) Check-ins and Mentor Meetings
Sample Topics: Yoga, Physical Therapy, Teaching, Fishing, Event Planning	Possibilities: Business: Local Small Businesses, Yellow Farmhouse Engineering: Extruders, EB, Stonington Steel, Julia M Leeming LLC Education: NSES, child care programs Other Placements as approved	Possibilities: EB, New England Tech, Yellow Farmhouse, NSES, Westerly Ed, Nosto Fire Department, hands-on trade experiences
Senior Capstone Experience <i>Senior English: Research Paper, Portfolio, Presentation</i>		

Major Capstone Components

Resume – The resume is crafted during each student’s junior year. Its purpose is to highlight each student’s strengths and objectives for his future. The basic resume is functional for both job applications or college admissions.

Proposal – The proposal is the foundation of the Capstone experience, regardless of which path you choose. During their junior year, students will explore possibilities and develop essential questions that can be turned into a project proposal. The proposal must outline how they will be challenging their current knowledge, how they plan to conduct their fieldwork, and how they expect to meet the four Wheeler Academic Expectations.

Fieldwork – If students choose the traditional Capstone, they must complete a **minimum** of 20 hours of fieldwork with an expert in the chosen field of study. If students are a part of the Pathways, they must complete a required 60 hours of fieldwork in their area of study to receive .5 credit or 120 hours to receive 1.0 credit. If students choose the Westerly Education route, they must complete the training to receive their certificate. If they are doing Work Study, they must work 60 hours for .5 credit or 120 hours to receive 1.0 credit. **Reflective journals** must be kept on the fieldwork experience regardless of which Capstone option they choose. All seniors will be required to sit for a midyear assessment journal on their Capstone experience, regardless of what option they choose.

- ALL community mentors must be approved by the Capstone Advisors. Traditional Capstone fieldwork must be completed prior to the end of the first semester. Pathways and Work Study fieldwork will continue throughout the school year. The timeline for Westerly Education is dependent on the programming through Westerly Ed each year.
- **Fieldwork cannot start until community mentor forms and proposals are approved.**
- Students CANNOT be paid for traditional Capstone fieldwork hours or Pathway internships hours.
- Students cannot choose a mentor who is immediate family.
- All traditional Capstone fieldwork hours must be completed outside of the school day. However, seniors can leave to do hours during senior release, and students are authorized to miss ONE pre-approved school day or two half-days to complete fieldwork. **Proper paperwork must be completed and signed by teachers, parents, and a Capstone Coordinator in advance of the requested date. The paperwork must also be completed by the community mentor on the day of the fieldwork hours for the absence to be changed from unexcused to excused.**

Research Paper – Students will need to choose a paper topic that will help them learn more about their chosen field. The Capstone research paper will be supported in the Senior English classes. The paper must be in the form of an argument.

Digital Portfolio – The portfolio includes the components that are compiled from the project throughout the year. Items such as pictures, lesson plans, drawings, videos, and other items should be saved and incorporated into the portfolio. The portfolios will be used for each senior’s own benefit and for school/community exhibitions.

Presentation – The Senior Capstone presentation is a culminating experience to showcase students’ accomplishments. They will also complete a presentation to a panel of judges, during which visuals will be used to explain a portion of what was learned through their Capstone experience.

Senior Capstone Timeline

Due Date	Capstone Component
Spring (Junior Year)	Initial Capstone Proposal <i>Parent must sign off on proposal</i>
**End of school year (Junior Year)	<i>If you plan to do your fieldwork hours during the summer please be sure the Mentor Google form is submitted and email Mrs. Cawley at jescawley@northstonington.k12.ct.us</i>
September 27, 2024 (Senior Year)	Final Proposals (if changed) <i>Parent must sign off on proposal (if changed)</i>
October 18, 2024 (Senior Year)	Mentor Google Form Submitted
January 7, 2025 (Senior Year)	*Fieldwork hours (minimum of 20 hours for all students) Capstone Journals complete Mentor Evaluation submitted to Coordinators Hours Google Form will be submitted to Coordinators
Third Quarter (Senior Year)	Research Paper
April 25, 2025 (Senior Year)	Digital Portfolio
June 6, 2025 (Senior Year)	Presentation

*Capstone Fieldwork Time Log- (Digital)

***The Capstone Coordinator will send a Google Form to each mentor to approve and verify hours worked.**

**If students find mentors during the summer and would like to earn hours, they must turn all of these forms into the Wheeler High School Main Office prior to beginning those hours.

Capstone Topic Selection

The selection of a Capstone topic is the most important phase of the Senior Capstone experience. The topic chosen will affect all components of the Capstone experience and a student's senior year. The topic selected can be a hobby, career path, or community service.

Students should consider a project that is a **stretch** for them. For instance, a senior who has taken dance lessons for several years should not, as a project, choose "dance" if that student had already mastered the art. Such a student would need to **stretch** a little further, perhaps selecting choreography or teaching dance to youth.

Students will submit the proposal to the Capstone Coordinators for approval. They review the proposals and approve them or make suggestions so the students can revise them. If a student opts to change his/her project, s/he must submit a NEW proposal and get approval.

Capstone Proposal

Please complete the form and attach a typed title and answer for the Background & Rationale, Fieldwork & Community Mentor, and Wheeler Academic Expectations.

Due Date: _____

Name _____

Home Telephone _____

Parent E-mail _____ Student E-mail _____

Please be sure emails are written accurately and neatly so they can be entered correctly

TITLE: Your title should provide a **solid definition** of the work you plan to do.

BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE: Why do you want to do this project? What experience do you currently have in this area? How will this be a STRETCH for you? What are some questions you have about your topic that you would like to have answered while at your fieldwork?

FIELDWORK & COMMUNITY MENTOR: What type of fieldwork might you do to learn more about your chosen topic? At what stage are you in securing a community mentor? Please list who the mentor is (if you know) and whether you have made any contact with him/her.

WHEELER ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS: How will you meet and demonstrate all four of Wheeler High School's Academic Expectations (Analysis, Collaboration, Communication, and Literacy) through the successful completion of your Senior Capstone? Explain in detail how you think the work you will do for your project will satisfy each of the four expectations.

SIGNATURES:

Student: _____ Date _____

Parent(s): _____ Date _____

**Wheeler High School Field Trip Permission
Capstone SCHOOL ABSENCE (20 hour project only)**

- Eligible students may take one full day or two half-day absences for shadowing.
- To be completed by STUDENT AT LEAST 5 DAYS prior to requested date.
- Must be signed by your mentor the day you are there and returned to Ms. McCusker or Mrs. Cawley.

Please excuse _____ (name of senior) from classes on _____ (date of shadowing). He/She will be shadowing his/her mentor, and is able to do so only during school hours. The student understands that he/she must make up all the work, and must do so within **two days** following the absence. This absence is an excused field trip and should not count against the Attendance Policy.

Reason for shadowing:

Why this cannot be done outside of school hours:

I affirm that all of the above information is true and accurate:

(1)*Student signature (required)

(2)*Parent signature (required)

(3)TEACHERS: Please sign below to verify that you have been notified of this absence:

Period 1: _____

Period 2: _____

Period 3: _____

Period 4: _____

Period 5: _____

Period 6: _____

Period 7: _____

Period 8: _____

(4) *Capstone Coordinator (required)

Date

I affirm that _____ (student name) shadowed

_____ (community mentor) on the date noted above from _____ to

_____ (indicate times).

Waiver

Wheeler Pathways Program Use Only

I (for myself, my heirs, executors, and administrators), hereby expressly release and discharge the Town of North Stonington, its officers, employees, agents, and volunteers from any and all claims, demands, injuries, damages, actions, or causes of action whatsoever resulting from my participation on this program. It is expressly agreed that the work site and use of any of its facilities shall be undertaken by me at my sole risk and that the Town of North Stonington shall not be liable for any injuries or damages I incur or cause to be incurred by others and with the use of any and all damages I incur by others and with the use of any and all services and facilities associated with this community-based learning experience.

I have sufficient health, accident, disability and related insurance to cover me during my field experience. My health policy carrier and policy number is _____ (attach a copy of health insurance card.) I further understand that I am responsible for costs of such insurance and for any expenses not covered by this insurance.

Further, I understand that the Town of North Stonington provides no transportation relative to this program and release the Town of North Stonington from any and all responsibility with respect to such transportation. I understand that I am solely responsible for my own transportation to and from the internship site.

Does the participant have any medical conditions, allergies, medications or anything else that you would like to make us and the internship site mentor aware of?

(Please circle one) YES or NO

If you answered yes, please include what you would like for the coordinator and the participant's Intern Mentor to know. Thank you for helping us in our goal to provide all interns with the safest environment possible.

(Print Student Name)

(Sign Student Name)

(Date)

(Print Parent/Guardian Name)

(Sign Parent/Guardian Name)

(Date)

Social/Civic Expectations: SENIOR CAPSTONE MENTOR EVALUATION: RESPECT, RESPONSIBILITY, RESILIENCY

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Mentor Name: _____

DOMAINS	PROFICIENCY	TASKS	RATING	Student	Mentor	EVIDENCE/COMMENTS
Respect	- <i>During the senior capstone experience, student respects self and all rules, persons/property/ opinions and differences of others</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Did the student dress appropriately? ● Was the student professional, respectful and humble? ● Did the student communicate with you appropriately and effectively throughout the project? 	Approaching Meets Exceeds			
Responsibility	- <i>Shows an ability to act independently and is accountable for all actions during their senior capstone experience</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Was the student punctual, courteous and professional? ● Did the student complete the activities you assigned or provided? ● Did the student demonstrate interest and passion in the project? ● Was the student engaged as an active learner and participant? 	Approaching Meets Exceeds			
Resiliency	- <i>Shows an ability to adapt appropriately both socially and academically to all experiences embedded with this senior capstone experience</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Did the student work to solve problems? ● Did the student face new learning and challenges with an appropriate attitude? ● Did the student ask appropriate and insightful questions? ● Did the student suggest or offer new ideas during the project? 	Approaching Meets Exceeds			