



## FAQs

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### **What is the purpose of a capstone?**

A capstone is a culminating academic and intellectual experience that: encourages students to think critically, solve challenging problems, and develop skills such as communication, public speaking, research, media, teamwork, planning, self-sufficiency, or goal setting; helps prepare students for college, modern careers, and adult life; and develops character and life skills.

### **What does it mean for a project to be authentic?**

An authentic project is a project that is real in some way, shape, or form. This could include projects that do one or more of the following:

- meets a real need beyond the classroom
- Is used by real people
- focuses on a real problem relevant to students' lives or faced by adults
- sets up a realistic scenario or situation

### **What is a learning stretch?**

The expectation is that projects challenge students and require students to attain new skills and knowledge. What is a learning stretch for one student may not be a learning stretch for another student. For example, while one student will be challenged to build a rocket, others will be challenged to build a birdhouse. At least one person who reviews every proposal will be familiar enough with the student to determine what is or is not a learning stretch for each student.

### **Will a capstone project strengthen my college application?**

Many colleges are inquiring about capstone projects. Including a description of a student's project can certainly demonstrate that the student possesses many of the skills necessary to be successful in college. More than showing that a student has completed a project (especially given the college application timeline), students should describe and emphasize their process, planning, and learning.

## LOGISTICS

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### **How much time will I need to spend on my capstone?**

Students are not required to track the time they spend on their capstones. However, the expectation is that students spend no less than 30 hours working on the project. Ultimately, a capstone is meant to be a significant endeavor to produce a high-quality product--not something that can be done in a few evenings.

### **Can a family member be my community expert?**

No. Family members cannot serve as a student's community expert. While a parent's expertise can certainly benefit a student's project, the process of finding and working with an adult is as beneficial as the expertise provided.

### **Can a Roaring Fork Schools teacher or staff member be my community expert?**

Except in rare cases, a school employee cannot be a student's community expert for two reasons. First, with more than 400+ students graduating each year, there are simply not enough staff members to support students in this role. Additionally, the experience of reaching out to an adult in the community to describe a project and request support is as beneficial as the expertise provided. This process provides real-world experience that students will absolutely need for college and career success.

### **Can I do a capstone with another person?**

The quick answer is no. In extremely rare cases, students may be able to demonstrate how a partner or group project would enhance the individual student's learning experience. Because an individual student is reliant on his/her partner(s) for success on joint projects, partner and group projects are highly problematic and may actually impede the student's learning experience.

### **If I want to complete my capstone junior year, can I just follow the same timeline, but start spring of sophomore year?**

No. While students have a lot of flexibility to complete their capstone, the bulk of the project is intended to be done senior year. Crew leaders support students through the process: the determined timeline ensures that information is presented before students work through the process.

### **Does my capstone have to be on something career-related?**

No. Students are simply being asked to pick a topic that interests them, which may or may not be career-related. Certainly, a capstone project is an opportunity to explore something that a student is interested in pursuing as a career, but it's also an opportunity to simply explore a hobby or a passion.

### **I want to do an internship. Can this be my capstone?**

No. While an internship is a good basis for a capstone, the internship itself is not a capstone, nor is a presentation about your internship a capstone. You will need to create a product, which can certainly connect to your internship. For example, if you want to intern at a veterinary clinic, you may learn from the staff that they need a way to educate clients on how to prevent heartworm in pets. Your product

might be to a short animated video, print materials in English and Spanish, and a Facebook campaign to get the word out about heartworm.

**Will there be financial support to help me complete my capstone?**

Capstone scholarships of up to \$100 are available on a need basis. Applications must be submitted to demonstrate need.

**Can I turn in something I did in the past as my capstone? Can I do a capstone on something I'm doing in another class?**

No double dipping: anything a student has done in the past or is doing for another class cannot be used as a capstone. However, students can absolutely build on or extend what they have done as part of their capstones.

ASSESSMENT

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**Who approves my proposal?**

Your proposal will be reviewed by a small group of teachers and administrators. They will read your proposal, provide feedback to help make it stronger, and assess it according to a district-wide proposal rubric. The goal of the proposal review is to ensure your ideas are well-developed and realistic before you begin working in depth.

**Who grades my final capstone product?**

Your product will be reviewed by a small group of teachers and administrators. They will review all your documentation in addition to the final product because they want to know about the process and learning involved.

**Does each school use its own rubric, or are rubrics the same across the district?**

While there will be some variation in implementation of the program by school, all schools will use the same materials and have the same expectations for all capstone projects.

**Do we have to give a presentation at the end?**

Yes and no. The expectation is that students present their project in an authentic way, which may or may not be a traditional presentation. Students should consider how to share their project with an intended group. For example, a student who creates a collection of original photography may display it in a local restaurant and host a small opening event. If there is not an obvious and authentic audience for your project, there will be an opportunity to share your product at a showcase event.

**What if my project doesn't go as planned?**

You can have great success even if you experience failure! It's okay and even expected that things do not always go as planned. The important thing for success is that students document the learning that happened throughout the process.

**What happens if I don't complete a capstone?**

Starting with the class of 2018, completing a capstone is a requirement to graduate. Thus, students who do not complete a capstone will not graduate.