

New capstones program for graduating seniors



The Roaring Fork School District (RFSD) is excited to introduce Capstones, a program for graduating students that provides an opportunity for students to direct their own authentic learning experience and build meaningful skills. Capstones represent a change not only in the district's graduation requirements, but also in the approach needed to achieve the commitment outlined in its mission statement—that of ensuring all students have the knowledge, skills and character to thrive in a changing world.

Capstones are the result of countless conversations that took place as part of a community-wide visioning process in 2013. Through 16 community meetings, the district heard from 1,400 parents and community members that their expectations for a well-rounded student learning experience requires a dual commitment to academic excellence and character development.

Capstones projects are a response to the community's expectation that students demonstrate competency in core subjects, develop critical thinking and reasoning, and enhance 21st century skills so that they are prepared for college, modern careers, and adult life.

Capstones give students the time, space, and resources to explore a topic of personal interest and enjoy the intrinsic satisfaction of learning. While capstones may take different forms, all students work one-on-one with a Capstone advisor and a community mentor to complete a deep learning exploration. Students will track their experience through a variety of means, including journals, blog posts, and product creation, and then present their experience and learning in a meaningful way to a relevant audience. Ultimately, capstone projects provide not only a platform for students to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and character, but also a real-world learning experience that both prepares and excites students for their next steps.

A small number of students will participate in the capstone pilot program this year, and all students graduating in 2018 will complete a capstone project. RFSD received a generous grant from the Margulf Foundation to help launch the capstones program. Grant funding will be used to hire support staff and to offer professional development opportunities. Families of students who will participate in the pilot will receive more information at the start of the school year, and all families can help support the program by talking to students about their interests and passions and helping them brainstorm project ideas.

Capstones are a community-inspired program that must also be embedded in our communities to be successful. And so, we invite your participation and support! As students will be working with mentors throughout the valley, we are seeking mentors in a variety of fields who can offer their time and expertise. If you are interested in learning more, volunteering, or otherwise supporting the program, please contact Kelsy Been at kelsybeen@rfschools.com.

Roaring Fork Schools Board of Education meeting schedule

The public is invited to attend RFSD Board of Education Meetings, which are held the second and fourth Wednesday of each month. Members of the public may provide input during Open Forum.

Board agendas and packets are posted online the Friday before at www.rfsd.org.

August 24: 5:30 p.m., Bridges (Carbondale) District Office

September 14, 5:30 p.m., Basalt High School

[For a complete list of district events click here!](#)