



PORTRAIT OF A NEVADA LEARNER

Piloting the Portrait Case Study

School Name and District

Spring Valley High School, Clark County School District

Names of Individuals and Roles

Tara Powell, Principal

Lisa Ancona, Assistant Principal

Lisa Withrow, CTE Teacher

Introduction

The senior graduation project marks the final step before graduation and serves as a culmination of a student's academic journey. This project demands critical thinking, research, collaboration, writing, and public speaking skills. The project team prioritizes the creation of the senior project and backmaps competencies at every grade level to ensure future students are prepared for success in society.

The project's purpose is to address the lack of academic and soft skills among graduates entering the workforce. Additionally, it is important for students to be able to truly show what they have learned and prove that they are ready to enter the college and career arena all the while capitalizing on their unique talents, gifts and passions. In order to accomplish this goal, the high school must set high expectations for students and stay relevant to the changing demands of the college and career markets. To accomplish this, the project focuses on embedding soft skills alongside academics to make students truly college and career-ready. Research identifies communication, listening, critical thinking, and interpersonal skills as crucial for success in the job market. The project aims to provide students with the necessary skills to adapt to future career demands, particularly in light of rapid technological advancements and changing job requirements.

As an IB school, the project embraces the organization's mission of developing inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring individuals who contribute to creating a more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. The ten learner profile traits - inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced, and reflective - align with the project's goal of developing a well-rounded high

school graduate who possesses both academic and soft skills. By aligning these traits with the College and Career Readiness Standards, the project creates a comprehensive profile of a high school graduate.

Intended Impact

- The project requires students to think critically, write, research, collaborate and present (public speaking).
- The Senior Project is the summative assessment for 12th grade students to show what they have learned throughout their high school career coupled with the soft skills they will need to be college and career ready.
- IB learners strive to be inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced and reflective. These ten learner profile traits truly support the graduate profile and the wide range of academic skills along with soft and hard skills the graduate will need in order to be college and career ready.

Project Work

The Senior Project serves as a culminating assessment for high school seniors to demonstrate their academic and soft skill development, preparing them for college and career readiness. The project is truly an interdisciplinary approach to display student learning throughout their educational experience. The project requires students to choose an approved topic of genuine interest and complete a research paper, maintain a progress portfolio, develop a product, and present their work to a committee. The Senior Project provides a comprehensive evaluation of students' academic and soft skill proficiency, reflecting on their years of high school learning.

Project Ideas: The topic for the project is based on a student's interest and demonstrates global readiness.

Examples:

- Entrepreneurship
- Service
- Self-enrichment
- Job shadowing
- Career explorations
- Volunteering
- Physical product

Sources: [50 Senior Project Ideas](#), [Senior Project Ideas](#)

Components:

- Research paper on an approved topic of a student's choice. This paper is completed during the student's English 12 class.
- Portfolio documenting their progress and self-reflection. The portfolio should show the progression of the student's work throughout the process and can be documented through a variety of means to include: writing, photos, videos, etc.
- Product- This product/project is completed in the student's chosen area. The student must show a learning stretch (learn something new) and demonstrate a 21st Century Skill.
- Presentation to a committee (school staff and community representatives/partners).
Students are required to pass all four (4) components of the project.

Next Steps

- Create a senior project handbook with all correlating documents, artifacts, forms, success criteria and rubrics.
- Create a calendar of checkpoints for implementation with fidelity and the culmination of the project timeline with presentation
- Backmap "projects" at each grade level to build up to the senior project.
- Review the 10th grade IB project (named Project Y) and the 11th grade CAS project to avoid redundancy and provide consistency with the Senior Project.
- Establish community partnerships with businesses, non-profits, organizations, etc.

Lessons Learned

- Trying to encapsulate in one project what students have learned throughout their high school career is a huge undertaking.
- Soft skills and academic skills need to be strategically taught alongside the curriculum throughout their time in high school. Preparing students for the world in senior year is too late.
- Educators (education) need to keep up with what is happening in the world so when students leave us they are ready to be productive society members.

Project Artifacts: Case Study Information

- ["A Capstone Project Before Graduation? New York Debates New Ways To Earn A Diploma"](#)
- [North Carolina Senior Project](#)
- [High School Senior Project Ideas](#)
- [CAS International Baccalaureate Project](#)
- [College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards](#)
- [Employability Skills for Career Readiness Standards](#)