Senior Project

2021-2022

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Senior Project Checkpoints 2021 – 2022

What	When
Senior Project Introduction *SP Coordinators visit Advisories to introduce Senior Project and answer questions.*	September 20th -24th
Mentor Selection Form *Fill out a Mentor Choice form.*	Thursday, September 30th - Friday, October 1st
Mentor Confirmation *Notification of mentor/mentee pairings.*	Friday, October 15th
Proposal Letter *Share/Submit Google Doc to mentor and panel.*	Wednesday, December 8th
<u>**Panel Meeting**</u>**: Proposal Letter** *Present proposal to panel.*	LATE START Monday, December 13th 8:30 - 10:00 am
Applied Piece Proposal Letter *Share/Submit Googledoc to mentor and panel.*	Friday, February 11th
<u>**Panel Meeting**</u>**: Applied Piece Proposal** *Present letter to mentor and panel.*	Wednesday, February 16th 7:00 - 8:15 am
<u>**Panel Meeting**</u>**: Research** *Present panel with evidence of complete and thorough research.*	Wednesday, March 30th 7:00 - 8:15 am
<u>**Panel Meeting**</u>**: Completed Project** *Provide panel with evidence that ALL work is complete.* *Panel decides whether to assign a presentation date.*	LATE START Monday, May 9th 8:30 - 10:00 am
Senior Project Presentations *Share project with a public audience.*	**Thursday, May 19th & Friday May20th**
Final Reflection *Share/Submit Google Doc to mentor.*	Wednesday, May 25th

Getting Started...

What's involved in Senior Project?

Here's your Quick Guide for a meaningful and successful Senior Project experience.

1. Mentor Selection Process

You will need to choose eight SHS staff members to be your potential mentor. Your name will be entered in a lottery and you will be given your highest choice of mentor available.

  ➢ When thinking about your choices for potential mentor, please think about who will best support you and meet your unique needs as a student. Think about all your years at Souhegan and all the staff members you have worked with.
  ➢ Fill in the **Google Form** with your choices.
  ➢ You will find out your mentor approximately two weeks after the form is due.

2. Mentor Communication

You must meet with your mentor once a week – from the date you are assigned your mentor until your presentation. Your on-going mentor communication will be checked at every panel meeting. Address some or all the following topics:

  ▪ What did you do this week? Where did you visit? Who did you interview?
  ▪ What was the most important thing you learned?
  ▪ Did you accomplish the goals you set from last week? Did they change?
  ▪ What is giving you trouble? Where can you get help?
  ▪ What are your goals for next week?

3. Selecting Your Topic

Considerations:

Passion: It is critical that you pick a topic that is of *real* interest to you. There is no greater drudgery than working on a boring or "easy" topic month after month!

New Learning: Be sure that the topic you select allows for *new* learning.

4. About those Rubrics

The Senior Project is assessed using SAU39's Portrait of a Graduate:

  ❖ Knowledge Constructor (KC)
  ❖ Critical Thinker (CT)
  ❖ Effective Communicator (EC)
  ❖ Confident Global Citizen (GC)
  ❖ Engaged Learner (EL)
  ❖ Skilled Collaborator (SC)

Checkpoints

&

Rubrics

Senior Project Proposal Letter

Your formal proposal letter must contain:

☐ ## Essential Question and sub-EQs

Check out Appendix I on how to craft great Essential Questions and sub-EQs that will guide your exploration.

☐ ## Research

Be sure to discuss:
- The background research you have already done; what you have learned so far.
- The <u>types</u> of research you <u>have done</u> and <u>will continue to do</u>.
- For more information, see page 12.

☐ ## Evidence of communication with potential Outside Expert

- State who you have reached out to, how you have communicated with them, and what their response has been.
- State how they will support your project. What is their expertise? What are their credentials?

☐ ## Potential Applied Piece to demonstrate your new learning

- Discuss your initial thoughts for your Applied Piece. Don't get too specific! This could be a brainstorm of ideas so your panel can share initial feedback with you.
- For more information, see pages 9-10 and Appendix II.

Outside Expert: Finding One & Communication

Requirements:

- Give your mentor the contact information for your outside expert.
- Share evidence that your outside expert has confirmed working with you.
- Document all contact with your outside expert – it's part of your research!
- Communicate with your outside expert <u>for the duration</u> of your project.
- Confirm your outside expert by the deadline!

What makes a good outside expert?
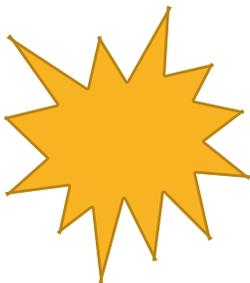
- ✪ Your outside expert should be a person who has expertise in the topic you are studying and is available to answer questions and give advice throughout your project.

- ✪ Your outside expert cannot be a relative or a Souhegan staff member.

- ✪ He or she does not need to be local; you may communicate in person or digitally – email, text or social media all work so long as you can document the contact!

DUE: Wed, Dec. 8th

Checkpoint #1: Proposal Letter

Requirements	Grad. Comp.	Indicators for Meets Competency
1. Introduces project idea	EC GC	• States your topic of interest • Explains why you are interested in this topic
2. Includes EQ and sub-EQs	KC	• States a <u>well-crafted</u> EQ that will guide your project • States sub-EQs that direct and give substance to your EQ
3. Summarizes and documents preliminary research	KC	• Includes a variety of credible and appropriate sources • Effectively summarizes information from these sources • Explains the main ideas and key concepts you have learned so far • Accurately documents sources on a separate page in MLA format
4. Evidence of communication with potential Outside Expert	EC	• States name of contact, how you communicated with them, and what their response has been to date • States how they will support your project, their related expertise and credentials
5. Identifies a potential application of research	KC	• Communicates your ideas for a potential Applied Piece based on your research
6. Presents information in a well-organized, formal letter	EC	• Uses formal tone appropriate for your audience • Provides sufficient support and detail • Includes sentences that are well constructed
7. Weekly Narratives	EL	• Brief descriptions of completed work in format agreed upon with mentor

❑ Complete   ❑ Incomplete

If incomplete, please outline a specific action plan:

Applied Piece Proposal Letter

Your Applied Piece Proposal Letter must include:

- ☐ Your EQ and sub-EQs
- ☐ A summary of your research to date
- ☐ Confirmation of and Contact Info for your Outside Expert
- ☐ Your proposed Applied Piece with tentative dates (SEE APPENDIX II)
- ☐ Any applicable safety and cost concerns (SEE APPENDIX II)
- ☐ Your plan (with dates) for how you are going to complete your Applied Piece by the panel meeting (SEE APPENDIX II)
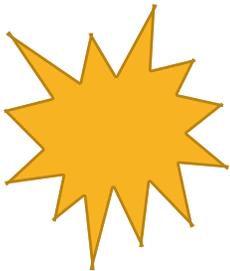- ☐ An appropriate audience to share your Applied Piece with (SEE APPENDIX II)

What is an Applied Piece?

Your Applied Piece <u>APPLIES</u> your new learning to an original creation.

Your Applied Piece <u>DEMONSTRATES</u> your new learning.

In your Applied Piece, you <u>SYNTHESIZE </u>your new learning.

Your Applied Piece is <u>SHARED</u> with a relevant, appropriate, and authentic audience.

"Could I have done my Applied Piece without having completed my research?"

- ✪ If the answer to this question is yes, your Applied Piece is *not* a synthesis of your learning and therefore not a true applied piece!

- ✪ Your Applied Piece is the application of your research and should demonstrate new learning in the creation of something original.

Guidelines & Requirements: *NEW & IMPORTANT!*

If you are considering any of the following types of projects, see Appendix II on pp. 22-27

- ✪ Publishing any type of media (text, audio, video)
- ✪ Teaching a class/lesson/clinic/workshop
- ✪ Organizing an athletic event
- ✪ Organizing a theater, musical, or dance performance
- ✪ Presenting to the School Board

The following are *not* acceptable:

- Testing on humans or animals
- Putting a person's well-being at risk
- Brochures or letters to the editor

Additional Considerations:

- Applied Piece sharing: Ask yourself, who would be interested in my project and how can I best share it with them?
- For any Applied Piece involving money or the use of school facilities, you must contact the main office before your Applied Piece will be approved. A staff member will direct you to the necessary forms and people.
- The final approval of any Applied Piece rests with the Senior Project Coordinators and the administration.

DUE: Friday, Feb. 11th

Checkpoint #2: Applied Piece Proposal Letter

Requirements	Grad. Comp.	Indicators for Meets Competency
1. Introduces project	EC	• States your EQ and sub-EQs
2. Assesses research to date	KC	• Accurately interprets information from a variety of appropriate sources • Effectively summarizes information • Synthesizes information to reveal an understanding of complex relationships, issues, and ideas
3. Contacts a potential Outside Expert	EL	• Lists the credentials of your potential Outside Expert • Includes Name and Contact Info for Outside Expert • Demonstrates communication to your potential Outside Expert and receipt of a response
4. Describes proposed Applied Piece (including confirmed dates for facilities use, fundraising, teaching, or other specific events and any applicable safety and cost concerns) 5. Explains ways in which Applied Piece is a true application of research 6. Explains how Applied Piece helps answer the EQ	CT	• Presents clear and focused idea for Applied Piece • Generates a plan for completion of the Applied Piece. • Demonstrates connection between research, EQ, and Applied Piece
7. Presents information in a well-organized, formal proposal	EC	• Uses formal tone appropriate for audience • Provides sufficient support and detail • Includes sentences that are well constructed
8. Weekly Narratives	EL	• Brief descriptions of completed work in format agreed upon with mentor

❑ Complete ❑ Incomplete

If incomplete, please outline a specific action plan:

Research

Your research much include:

Types of Research

- ✪ *Printed resources:* books, technical literature, literature, articles from reputable and relevant sources.
- ✪ *Electronic research*: current information from reputable and relevant web sites or other electronic resources.
- ✪ *Personal experience*: interviews, internships, apprenticeships, site visits, formal observations, formal experiments (including learning from Outside Expert)

Evidence of Research

- ✪ You need an organizational system —agreed upon by you and your mentor—in which you keep the evidence of your project. *Your evidence may be hard copy, electronic or both (e.g., a Google Drive folder).*
- ✪ While researching you must document your research.
  - o Printed or electronic sources must have accompanying notes to exhibit your acquisition of knowledge. *Highlighting or underlining alone is not sufficient!*
  - o Learning from personal experiences must be documented formally. *Documentation of research may include: notes/reflections, interviews, photos/screenshots, audio/videos, emails.*
- ✪ Works Consulted must be maintained.
- ✪ Learning from Outside Expert (emails, etc.).

DUE: Wed., March 30th

Checkpoint #3: Evidence of Research

Requirements	Grad. Comp.	Indicators for Meets Competency
1. Research includes printed and/or electronic sources.	KC	• Locates a variety of appropriate information sources and data types. • Uses credible and valid sources. • The number of sources is sufficient to thoroughly address EQ and sub-EQs.
2. Research includes notes to show your new knowledge from printed and electronic sources. *Highlighting or underlining alone is not sufficient (e.g., use T-notes, Evernote, etc).*	EC	• Demonstrates effective use of a note-taking system. • Demonstrates knowledge of basic facts, common terms, concepts and principles.
3. Research includes personal experiences including contact with outside expert, interviews, internships, apprenticeships, site visits, formal observations, formal experiments	KC	• Locates a variety of appropriate information sources and data types. • Uses credible and valid sources. • The number of sources is sufficient to thoroughly address EQ and sub-EQs. • Demonstrates knowledge or skills gained through contact with outside expert
4. Research formally documents learning from personal experiences *(e.g., interviews, photographs, videotapes, reflections).*	EC	• Demonstrates effective use of a note-taking system. • Demonstrates knowledge of basic facts, common terms, concepts and principles.
5. Includes a Works Consulted	EC	• Accurately documents sources of information in MLA format.
6. Weekly Narratives	EL	• Brief descriptions of completed work in format agreed upon with mentor

❑ Complete   ❑ Incomplete

If incomplete, please outline a specific action plan:

Applied Piece & Project Completion

You must meet the following requirements:

Applied Piece Completion

- ✪ Did you do what you said you were going to do? Refer to your proposal letter and Applied Piece proposal letter.
- ✪ If you say, "I'm all done, I just have to…" then you're not done.

Project Completion

- ✪ Provide evidence of completion of all work: both your <u>Research</u> and your <u>Applied Piece.</u>
- ✪ Share a draft presentation or a presentation plan.

Final Completion

- ✪ Your panel will determine whether you have met the requirements based on the evidence you present.
- ✪ If your project is complete, your panel will then assign you a presentation date during Senior Project Presentation Days.

DUE: Monday, May 9th

Checkpoint #4: Applied Piece and Project Completion

Research checkpoint must be completed before proceeding to the Applied Piece and Final check.

Was the research checkpoint met? ❑ Yes ❑ No

If yes, proceed to the rubric below. If no, please re-assess research using rubric.

Requirements	Grad. Comps.	Indicators for Meets Competency
Applied Piece is complete	CT	▪ Clearly demonstrates application of research ▪ Provides insight into an answer for the EQ ▪ Demonstrates original thinking and new learning ▪ Shared with an appropriate audience
Weekly Narratives	EL	▪ Brief descriptions of completed work in format agreed upon with mentor
All project requirements are complete, except for presentation	EL	▪ NO additional work remains
Draft Presentation/Plan	EL	▪ Draft slide deck, presentation plan or outline

❑ Complete   ❑ Incomplete

If incomplete, please outline a specific action plan:

Presentation

Your presentation must:

- ☐ Answer the Essential Question through evidence of research
- ☐ Be well organized
- ☐ Have effective supporting materials
- ☐ Describe your learning process
- ☐ Explain how you applied your new learning to an original project
- ☐ Be at least 20 and no longer than 25 minutes long
- ☐ Thank yous are **not** part of the 20-25 minutes
- ☐ Audio/Video clips must not exceed 3 minutes – total running time
- ☐ Successfully address audience questions
- ☐ Your attire should be appropriate for the occasion
- ☐ Not include a slide of your Works Consulted
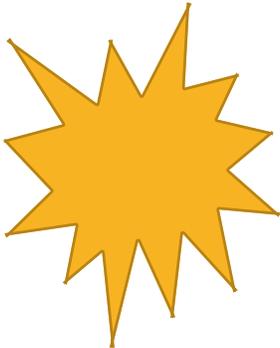
You need to practice your presentation with your mentor <u>at least once more than 24 hours prior to your presentation</u> in order to be able to present

DUE: Thurs., May 19 – Fri, May 20

Checkpoint #5: Presentation

Grad. Comps.: EC	Meets Competency *(Pass)*	Approaches Competency *(Provisional Pass; Follow-up Required)*	Below Competency *(Does Not Pass; Re-do Required)*
Physical Presence	• Keeps eye contact with audience most of the time; only glances at notes or slides • Uses natural gestures and movements • Wears clothing appropriate for the occasion	• Makes infrequent eye contact; reads notes or slides most of the time • Uses a few gestures or movements • Shows some poise and confidence, (only a little fidgeting or nervous movement) • Makes some attempt to wear clothing appropriate for the occasion	• Does not look at audience; only reads notes or slides • Wears clothing inappropriate for the occasion
Pacing, Volume, Tone	• Speaks clearly; not too quickly or slowly • Speaks loudly enough for everyone to hear; • Changes tone and pace to maintain interest • Rarely uses filler words • Speaks at appropriate volume and pace	• Speaks clearly most of the time • Speaks loudly enough for the audience to hear most of the time, but may speak in a monotone • Occasionally uses filler words • Mumbles or speaks too quickly or slowly	• Speaks too softly or quickly to be understood
Content	• Answers EQ • Shows research • Mentions role of outside expert • Discusses applied piece	• Minimally answers EQ • Shows minimal evidence of research • Minimally discusses applied piece	• Does not answer EQ • Does not show research • Does not mention outside expert • Does not discuss applied piece
Organization	• Follows a logical format. • Logical transitions connect ideas. • Uses time well; devotes enough time to each key point and section. The end of the presentation is not rushed. • Presentation is between 20 and 25 minutes	• Presentation is disorganized • Transitions are used inconsistently or ineffectively • Presentation is less than 20 but more than 18 minutes • Parts may be rushed or slightly too long.	• Presentation does not follow a logical organization, making the presentation nearly impossible to follow • Presentation is less than 18 minutes or needs to be cut off at 25 minutes.

Audience Rapport	• Addresses audience questions confidently, clearly and completely.	• Addresses audience questions, but not always confidently, clearly, or completely.	• Does not address audience questions (goes off topic or misunderstands without seeking clarification) • Responds inappropriately.
Support-ing Materials	• Text and graphics are clear and understandable. • Audio/Visual or other materials support the main points of the talk. • Technical difficulties are managed efficiently and calmly. • Audio or video clip is less than three minutes long.	• Uses visual aids or but they may sometimes distract from the presentation. • Lack of technical preparation detracts from presentation. • Audio or video clip is more than three minutes long.	• Does not use visual aids • Attempts to use one or a few audio/visual aids or media, but they do not add to or may distract from the presentation. • Little or no technical preparation impedes presentation • Audio or video clip is significantly more than three minutes long

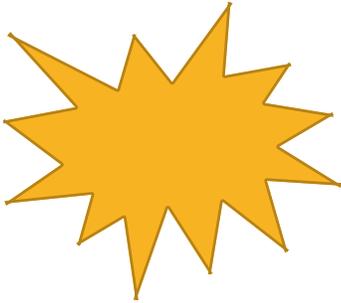❑ Complete   ❑ Incomplete

If incomplete, please outline a specific action plan:

Final Reflection

To successfully finish your Senior Project, your Final Reflection must include:

- ✪ Reflection on your Essential Question
- ✪ Reflection on what you have learned and how you will APPLY your learning in your FUTURE.

This essay will be read by your mentor and the Senior Project Coordinators.

Excerpts of your class's reflections will be read aloud at your graduation ceremony.

Things to Think About

- ✪ **You may want to consider the following questions as you respond to the above prompt.**
- ✪ **Do NOT simply answer these questions one by one!**

- ▪ We aspire to be a community of learners born of respect, trust, and courage. How has your work on this senior project helped you better understand the tenets of our Mission Statement?
- ▪ What was your most effective method of research?
- ▪ What piece of your research did you find the most interesting?
- ▪ What did you learn about your ability to research? (Consider navigation and organization of material; analysis and synthesis of that content.)
- ▪ In what ways did you find meeting with the mentor and panel helpful?
- ▪ What approaches that you took to the completion of this project were you most pleased with? Which caused you to struggle?
- ▪ If you could go back in time and give yourself advice, what would you say?
- ▪ What parts of your presentation were you most happy with? Are there different methods and/or processes that you might have employed to make your presentation even better?
- ▪ What should we know about your experience that we haven't yet asked about?

DUE: Wed., May 25th

Appendix

Appendix I: Essential Question & Sub-EQs

An Essential Question provides meaningful direction and helps you design clear learning goals.

➤ A good EQ requires SIGNIFICANT thinking and research to answer.

Sub-EQs help you explore your Essential Questions and reach your learning goals.

➤ You should have 3 or 4 sub EQs.

Good EQS

✪ Cannot be answered with yes, no, or a list.
✪ Generate a list of relevant "sub questions" that direct and give substance to your Essential Question.
✪ Stem from natural inquiry; they are translated from a "wonder" statement to a question.

EQ Examples

Essential Question: **Why do people look at the night sky?**
Sub EQs: How are astronomical images produced?
How is magnification used in astronomical photography?
What equipment is readily available to an amateur night photographer?
When are different objects visible for photographing in the night sky?

Essential Question: **Why do people like to be scared?**
Sub EQs: What causes fear?
How does fear affect the body?
What do humans find scary?

Essential Question: **What is life like through the eyes of a child with autism?**
Sub EQs: What is autism?
What causes autism?
What does a child with autism's day look like?
How does a child with autism communicate his experience?

Essential Question: **How can I design the most compelling roller coaster possible?**
Sub EQs: What are the physics of a roller coaster & why does it stay on the tracks?
What makes a roller coaster work?
What are the ideal materials and costs?
What makes one roller coaster more fun/popular than another?

Appendix II: Applied Piece Requirements & Guidelines

Publishing ~ ANY Digital Media

Remember, when we say "publish" we mean ANY type of media in ANY publishing format – social media (Tik Tok, IG, Twitter or FB posts, etc.) YouTube videos, blog posts, articles for The Claw, Podcasts, Amherst Citizen, Yankee Magazine… you get the idea.

*If you are sharing digital content -- **text, video, or audio** -- with an audience outside of school, which can be reproduced, re-posted, copied or distributed in any digital media format, then listen up!*

REQUIREMENTS:

1. **ALL digital media products intended for publication must be approved prior to publication by Jeanne Sturges, Writing Center Coordinator.**

2. **If you are posting to Social Media platforms** (TikTok, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, etc.) as a way of sharing your Applied Piece with an authentic audience:
   - ✓ You must review the "Guidelines for Social Media" with your mentor.
   - ✓ You and your parent must sign the "Acknowledgement of Responsibility and Risk" form.

SM Example

Check out Julia Breckenridge's SP Instagram Posts with links to her TikTok videos about her Applied Piece process.

GENERAL GUIDELINES:

- ✪ **Meet with your mentor to discuss your project ideas. Consider the following questions when planning to publish –** *text, audio, video:*

  - ✓ **PURPOSE:** What is my Intent? Mission? Purpose?
  - ✓ **AUDIENCE**: Who might care about or have an interest in my topic, mission, or purpose? Who needs to hear what I have to say?
  - ✓ **FORMAT:** What media format will work best for my purpose and audience? What genre of writing (e.g., journalism, creative writing, researched writing) matches my purpose and audience? What platform or publication will help me reach my intended audience?
  - ✓ **STYLE:** How will I communicate so that I connect well with my audience to inform, persuade, or entertain?
- ✪ **It goes without saying**…when you publish your Senior Project, you are representing Souhegan to the world. Any Souhegan publication should reflect the Souhegan Six, the Mission Statement, and our motto, "Respect, Trust & Courage."

Guidelines for publishing text (on any digital platform):

- **Academic Honesty**: Make sure you have correctly cited all your sources and that none of your work is plagiarized.
- **Brochures and Letters to the Editor**: <u>not acceptable</u> projects for an Applied Piece.
- **Check submission guidelines and deadlines**: for any publication to which you intend to submit your work. Make sure that your intended product meets the submission guidelines for length, content, and deadlines!

Resources - People who may serve as a resource for media publication include:

- Jeanne Sturges and the Writing Center for guidance, support and feedback at any stage of the writing process (brainstorming, getting started, developing, refining, proofreading, publishing.)
- Adam Theriault for multi-media publishing to the Claw and video production
- Sarah Kunyosying for research & social media
- John Ranta for video and game production

Teaching a Class or Conducting a Workshop/Clinic

While you may not have researched how to be a good teacher as part of your Senior Project, if you are presenting a lesson, workshop, or clinic, it is your responsibility to develop a thoughtful plan with your mentor and an appropriate teacher, staff or coach (who have a background in teaching, learning, and your topic).

REQUIREMENTS

You must:
- Work with your mentor to determine where your content fits best in the curriculum. Which course? Which grade level?
- Identify a teacher or staff member who teaches a course/coaches the sport that is appropriate for your content.
- Ask the teacher/staff member if they would be willing to share their class/team with you.
- Get a formal commitment from this teacher/staff member!
- Create a LESSON PLAN (using this template).
- Get the teacher/staff member/coach to approve your Lesson Plan.

LINK to Sample Lesson

For Sensitive Topics

- If your topic is related to any mental health or a potentially "triggering" issue, Sheelu Joshi Flegal, Social Worker, must also approve your Lesson Plan (SJoshiFlegal@sau39.org).
- If your topic is related to a sensitive or potentially volatile social issue, Jon Berry, Dean of Students, must also approve your Lesson Plan (JBerry@sau39.org).

For Athletic Clinics

- If you are designing an athletic workshop where participants will be actively involved in a physical activity, Kelli Braley, Athletic Director, must also approve your Lesson Plan (kBraley@sau39.org).

General Guidelines for Designing a Lesson

There are three keys to planning a successful workshop or lesson:
- Know your learning goals: What big ideas, knowledge, and skills do I want students to leave with?
- Make it active: How will I hook and engage students in the learning?
- Know your stuff: How can I use my expertise to design a meaningful experience?

Remember, **you must submit your Lesson Plan for approval to the host teacher/staff member/coach whose class you are teaching.** This lesson plan will give the teacher clarity on your ideas and give you an opportunity to gain helpful feedback.

Creating a Music or Theater Performance

Organizing a music or theater performance requires a great deal of advanced planning and coordination with a variety of people.

REQUIREMENTS

- Create a Music or Theater Performance Plan (using this TEMPLATE)
- Submit and **receive approval** from Kerri MacLennan for your Music or Theater Performance Plan.
- Book the theater by contacting Kerri MacLennan.
- Your event plan must include the following components:
  - Purpose & Goals
  - Proposed Date of Event
  - Venue and Location (including insurance certificate, if required)
  - Size of event/number of participants expected
  - Technology, Permits & Staffing needs (Sound/Light, Fire, Police, School, other)
  - Ticketing Plan
  - Fee or Funds Collection Plan
  - Budget Plan
  - Marketing & PR Plan

Organizing an Athletic Event

Organizing an athletic event such as a Fun Run, sporting competition, or other public event requires a great deal of advanced planning and coordination with a variety of people.

REQUIREMENTS

- Complete, and **receive approval** from Athletics Director, Kelli Braley for your plan using the Athletic Event Plan (using this template).
- Your event plan must include the following components:

  - ☐ Title, Purpose & Goals
  - ☐ Proposed Date
  - ☐ Venue and Location (including insurance certificate, if required)
  - ☐ Size of event/number of participants expected
  - ☐ Technology, Permits & Staffing needs (Sound/Light, Fire, Police, School, other)
  - ☐ Participant Registration Plan
  - ☐ Fee or Funds Collection Plan
  - ☐ Budget Plan
  - ☐ Marketing & PR Plan

Presenting to the School Board

Many Souhegan students develop Applied Pieces for their Senior Projects that include either informing the Souhegan Board of their research or making recommendations to the Board for some action. Students contemplating using the school board as a component of their Applied Piece should know what the board does, and how it functions within the school system, to best decide how to approach the board.

While the duties are numerous, the bulk of the board's direct ability to impact school operations falls in two areas:

- Creating policies

- Developing the annual budget

These are the actions most often taken by the board. (Most meetings of the board have these as the action items, and the remainder of the meetings are informational.) In addition, some policies require board approval, so discussions at board meetings work to gain consensus among the responsible parties. (The role of the school board is defined in the NH Department of Education Rules (Ed 303). See also the roles of Superintendents and Principals, in the same section of the Rules).

Boards do not:

1. Directly hire, assign duties to, discipline, or fire employees (except for the Superintendent).

2. Spend budgeted funds – school administrators do that. The board may, however, decide to re-allocate unexpended funds to initiatives different than originally planned. This is particularly relevant at the end of the school year if excess funds remain. Boards typically act in May or

June to determine if there are pressing uses for unexpended funds by June 30, balanced against the alternative to return those funds to the taxpayers.

3. Approve school budgets – the board proposes a budget, and the voters decide once a year how much money is available in the budget, based on the board's proposal. Once a budget is approved, the board may move money around for different purposes, but no new spending can be done beyond the approved budget.

4. Create or terminate positions within the school, except as part of the annual budget.

5. Create, modify, or terminate classes, except as part of the annual budget, or as part of a complete curriculum revision (with supporting budget modifications).

This means that most of the operational aspects of the school as seen by students are in the purview of school administrators (Superintendent and SAU staff, or Principal, Deans, and Directors).

Changes in the school operations come in two ways:

1. Ideas originating from the Board, after dialogue with the administration to determine systemic impacts beyond the obvious change, short- and long-term costs, operational feasibility, and consistency with the mission, strategic plan, and other initiatives.

2. Ideas originating from the Administration, after dialogue with the board to review budget impacts, consistency with community values and priorities, cost/benefit analysis, and consistency with the mission, strategic plan, and other initiatives.

The board is intended to be a thoughtful and deliberative body. Board processes and mindsets are focused on careful research, analysis, collaboration, and consensus. **The board normally does not want to hear a new proposed action and act on it in the same meeting unless there are overwhelming reasons for immediate action. This has an impact on Seniors proposing actions for the board.**

If a Senior intends to recommend an action to the board, then the following steps will maximize the likelihood of success:

1. Start early. Meeting with key stakeholders should occur as soon as possible, and no later than early February.

2. The board will be most likely to act if key stakeholders are aware of the proposal, have reviewed it and can support it (or suggest modifications) at the board meeting. This may mean a principal, dean, or department head (such as the Athletic Director or Facilities Director), or subject matter expert from the faculty or staff will need to be in the loop and agreeable to the proposal. **Expect the board to ALWAYS ask the Superintendent and Principal if they support the proposal**; if they have not been briefed and thought out the ramifications, they can at best give conceptual support, which means no immediate action until the details are worked out.

3. The board cannot make cost commitments for the next school year once the budget is set (early February) and approved (early March). New spending to implement a proposal must wait for the next budget cycle, starting in September and culminating in March with voter approval. Some limited one-time spending opportunities may exist in May and June if there

are unexpended funds available and the board determines the value of the proposal outweighs returning funds to the taxpayers.

4. Change is hard. Once a senior graduates they are rarely around to champion their proposal to the board and administration. Make realistic proposals that can be acted on by the board in the time available before graduation or identify a successor champion to continue the process through to completion by the board.

5. The Board meets once a month. Agendas are long and complex. Proposals must be clear and succinct. Proposers rarely get a second bite at the apple to work with the board at a meeting to iron out issues and advocate to the whole board. Be prepared to work in committee with board members, administrators, and staff if extended work is required before a proposal can be approved.

These guidelines have been written from the perspective of the Souhegan Board, but the general concepts apply to any SAU 39 Board, or any other elected board, such as the Selectmen.

If you would like further information or support including the school board in your Applied Piece, you may contact Souhegan Board member, Steve Coughlan, scoughlan@sau39.org.