



Dallas School District Completion Project

Parent's Assurance Form

Dear Parent:

In order for a student to graduate from high school, the Pennsylvania State Board Regulations require each student in Pennsylvania to complete a project in one or more areas of concentrated study. The purpose of the project, which may include research, writing or some other appropriate form of demonstration, is “to assure that the student is able to apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information and communicate significant knowledge and understanding.”(Pa. Chapter 4 Title 22)

The Dallas School District chose the Completion Project as the vehicle to meet this requirement. The most important rewards are the skills and new knowledge that students will acquire as they move through the Completion Project program. Research, writing, and communication skills will help no matter what direction life takes students and will be especially important if they plan to go to college.

This handbook explains the procedures required to successfully complete the project. This written assurance form is to confirm that your child has received a copy of this handbook and has shared the contents with you. Please take the time to review the contents of the handbook. Please also sign and return the bottom portion of this page to signify that you have reviewed the material with your child.



School Year: _____

Student Name: _____

My child has received a copy of the Dallas School District Completion Project Handbook and has shared the contents with me. As the parent/guardian, I recognize the importance of the project as a requirement for graduation from the Dallas School District.

Parent Signature

Date

A Letter from the Principal's Office

Dear Student:

Beginning with the class of 2000, all students who intend to graduate from Dallas Senior High School must undertake and complete a graduation project which meets the standards and provisions stated by the Pennsylvania State Board of Education and the Dallas School District Board of Directors. This manual is written with the intent of providing you with very specific guidelines and procedures that will help you meet that responsibility.

Please share this document with your parents and review its contents with them. It is very important that they have a complete and thorough understanding of the importance of your project and the seriousness with which our faculty views the requirement.

As your principal, I encourage you to select a project that is both challenging and significantly meaningful to you. Our staff will provide you with the direction and guidance necessary to help you with this endeavor, but you must clearly recognize that the primary focus of this assignment rests with you, the student.

**Mr. Frank Galicki,
Principal**

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The Vision of the Completion Project

The Completion Project Curriculum at the Dallas School District is focused on all students. It lays the foundation for a basic education program that will be reinforced in the major program areas. The Project course comprises a common educational experience that seeks to develop the learners' opportunities for broadening and enriching the classroom experience through the sharing of viewpoints and ideas. It also encourages a spirit of collegiality in the pursuit, discovery and transmission of knowledge and truth, which are essential elements to intellectual growth, maturity and personal fulfillment.

Project components are fundamentally based so that human issues and problems are approached from diverse viewpoints represented by a variety of disciplines. This emphasis on breadth offers students the opportunity to become familiar with differing methodologies, visualizing the unity of knowledge rather than viewing it as non-related bits of information.

The coherence and integrity of knowledge is also made evident by the structure of the Completion Project Curriculum. Each has clear and specific learning goals and objectives for the course. The goals and objectives include integral connections among subjects.

The Completion Project Curriculum focuses in a deliberate and systematic manner on the following learning skills: Critical Thinking, Effective Writing, Effective Oral Communication, Library and Information Literacy, Computer Competence, Creative Thinking/ Problem Solving and Quantitative Reasoning. Project components initiate the development of these skills, while major discipline areas further refine the skills. The completion project program works with the major curricular areas to encourage students to see learning as cumulative, transferable, integrated and practical.

As affirmed in its Mission Statement, the Dallas School District is committed to offering its students an education which prepares them for a purposeful life, as well as personal and social development.

More specifically, the district seeks:

- to develop in students the fundamental thinking and communication skills required of every community member;
- to convey to students knowledge of the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences
- to give students an understanding of how the various disciplines differ, how they are related and how their distinct perspectives enrich our lives
- to endow students with a respect for their culture and that of others
- to provide students with academic and pre-vocational major programs of study that build upon the foundational courses of the Completion Project Curriculum
- to engage students in the philosophical dimensions of life
- to cultivate students' capacity and desire for independent and lifelong learning
- to help students recognize their personal worth



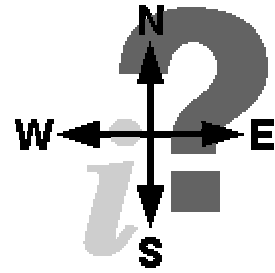
- to develop in students a sense of purpose and willingness
- to encourage students to assume responsibility for their own decisions

The following factors contribute to the attainment of these goals: the explicit and implicit content of components, the various teaching/learning strategies employed by instructors, the effectiveness of advisement and counseling, the impact of co-curricular activities, the quality of facilities, and the intellectual and social climate of the school.

The Dallas School District recognizes that the student is the most important ingredient in the educational process. His talents, experience and aspirations influence a student's educational experience at Dallas. In light of the intensely personal nature of education, Dallas strives to give each student the kind of individual attention needed to provide the student with the opportunity for positive growth.

Why a Completion Project?

The foundation for the Completion Project may be found in Chapter 4 of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania State Board of Education Regulations. Specifically, in order for a student to graduate from high school, the regulations require each student in Pennsylvania to complete a project in one or more areas of concentrated study. The purpose of the project, which may include research, writing or some other appropriate form of demonstration, is to “assure that the student is able to apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information and communicate significant knowledge and understanding.”



The Dallas School District chose the Completion Project as the vehicle to meet this requirement. The most important rewards are the skills and new knowledge that students will acquire as they move through the Completion Project program. Research, writing, and communication skills will help no matter what direction life takes students and will be especially important if they plan to go to college.

The Completion Project will also give students the opportunity to maintain a portfolio of related work, beginning with the freshman seminar and carrying through to project termination. The portfolio will serve as a means of evaluating the student’s progress, but will serve a dual purpose as students may submit the information to prospective colleges or places of employment.

Project Description

The purpose of the project is to assure that the student is able to apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information and communicate significant knowledge and understanding. The project may take the form of a comprehensive research paper, a demonstration such as a play or musical performance, a constructed project, a service activity, or some original endeavor that is committee-approved. **Each student** will submit to his advisor a detailed Proposal Statement, a research paper, and a written Self-Evaluation. Sources of information may include scholarly research, personal interviews, surveys, and any other appropriate sources. All written materials including the Sources Consulted list must use standard MLA format.

Completion Project Timeline

In the freshman year:

- students are enrolled in a course which is geared toward skills in word processing and research, both of which are necessary components of the project

In the second semester of the sophomore year and beginning of junior year:

- students participate in the advisor selection process
- students must meet with their advisor prior to the end of their sophomore year to discuss the project
- students will submit a project choice to their advisors. This decision must be approved no later than the third Monday of September of the junior year; (students may opt to complete this component in their sophomore year after they have been assigned an advisor)
- once the project choice has been approved by the faculty advisor, the students then complete the formal written project proposal and submit it to their advisors by the last school day of September of the junior year. **Failure to submit a formal proposal on time will result in notification of parents by the student's advisor concerning reassignment to the senior year for project preparation and presentation. The student will be maintained in a junior homeroom**
- once the formal proposal has been accepted and approved by the advisor, students begin working on the project by implementing the steps outlined in the proposal, meeting with advisors to review progress

In the junior year:

- **any changes made in topic must be approved by the advisor and made prior to the last school day of September**
- students are responsible for meeting regularly with their advisors to review progress and update activity logs
- project completion should be accomplished by mid-way through the second semester
- students submit a formal, written, self-evaluation to the advisor
- the advisor in concert with the students determines that the project is ready to be submitted to the review panel. The review panel consists of two faculty members and may also include a community member as a third evaluator
- the review panel evaluates the project and issues a pass/fail grade

Transfer students:

- a student who transfers to Dallas prior to October 1st of his junior year (according to the credit requirements of the district) will be mandated to immediately assume all responsibilities of the completion project
- a student who transfers to Dallas after October 1st of his junior year will complete project responsibilities before graduation

In the senior year:

- **any student who does not fulfill the requirements of the completion project by the end of his senior year will not graduate**

Completion Project Overview

A. Project Choice

A student selects a topic that is of interest to him, completes a pre-proposal application and submits it to his/her advisor for approval. Students should be careful to limit the scope of the topic to make the project and associated research manageable. Regardless of the topic chosen, the presentation of the research and conclusions must clearly meet those objectives and goals set forth for the Completion Project. The advisor is responsible for reviewing the project choice. If the advisor approves the project, the student moves to the next step, which is the formal written proposal.

B: The Formal Written Proposal



Using the Formal Written Proposal Guidelines, students must complete a formal written proposal that outlines the title of the project, the type of product that will result from the project, and the steps that will be taken to complete the project.

If students will be working in a group, each student must complete his or her own written proposal. In it, each student identifies the title and the end product which typically will be similar for all students in the group. However, in the individual proposals, students must outline the general responsibilities that they will assume in implementing the project. Advisors will be looking for an even distribution of workload among group members. The Formal Written Proposal is submitted to the advisor for approval.

C. The Project Implementation and Activity Log

Once the advisor has approved a proposal, students will begin working on the project. **Students** are responsible for meeting regularly with advisors to discuss progress. The advisor uses the student activity log to chart progress toward project goals. Students should pay close attention to this process since continuous demonstrable progress is part of the overall evaluation of the project. **Submission of an activity log is mandatory at the time of the project presentation.**

D. Research Paper

Each student must submit an **individualized** research paper as part of the completion project. **Group papers are not acceptable.** This paper, 750 – 1250 words in length, must follow MLA format for documentation and mechanics. Students must use a minimum of three sources, including two different types. (example: books, periodicals, Internet-accessed information, personal interviews, technical manuals, etc.) General encyclopedias are **not** acceptable. All papers must use internal citation and include an Outline page and a Works Cited page. The paper will be assessed for originality, focus, accuracy, and technical adherence. Rules governing plagiarism are outlined in the student handbook.

The due date for the paper will be determined by the advisor and the student. However, all papers must be submitted by **the end of the first semester**. Papers that do not meet the defined standards will be returned. Students will have one week from the date of returning to make revisions. **Failure to make the necessary corrections in that time period will result in rescheduling of the presentation to the following year and reassignment to a junior homeroom for the senior year.**

E. The Self-Evaluation

All students are responsible for submitting a formally written, self-evaluation that addresses the questions listed in the self-evaluation guidelines. The self-evaluation must be written in MLA format. It will be submitted to the advisor **one week prior** to the date of the project presentation.

In the event that students are working in groups, each student must submit his own self-evaluation. Also, each student must specifically identify his individual responsibilities for carrying out the project. A group's evaluations must therefore clearly delineate the division of work.

F. The Final Project Evaluation

Once a project has been completed and the students submit the formal written self-evaluation, the students, in conjunction with their advisors, determine that the project is ready for final evaluation. This evaluation will occur in the spring of the junior year. The evaluation panel consists of two teachers (the student's advisor cannot be member of the evaluation team) and, if possible, one community member (not the mentor).

At the final evaluation, the students make a formal verbal presentation of their projects, delineating the proposal, the actual implementation process, the findings or resultant products, and highlights of the self-evaluation. Visual and/or audio aids are **required** to help clearly communicate with the audience.

When students opt to work in a group, **each student is responsible to conduct part of the final presentation.**

At the conclusion of the presentation, the panel will convene to complete the final project evaluation. Evaluators will use the rubrics designed for various project components. The grade awarded by the committee is either pass or fail. The final grade is based on a combination of the formal written proposal, the research paper, the project itself, the oral presentation, and the written self-evaluation. All parts must be passed in order for the student to receive an overall passing grade on the project. Supporting data such as the student's activity log are also submitted with the student's portfolio for consideration in the grading process. When a student or group is unsuccessful, the evaluation material is submitted to an Administrative Advisor Council for review and action. The Advisory Council may allow students to improve their projects or require students to initiate a new project in the senior year.

- **ANY STUDENT WHO DOES NOT FULFILL THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE COMPLETION PROJECT BY THE END OF HIS SENIOR YEAR WILL NOT GRADUATE**

Role of Faculty Advisor

The overriding theme for the Completion Project is that **it is the students' responsibility to complete the application, implement the project, and perform a self-evaluation as outlined in the project guidelines.** The onus must be placed squarely on the shoulders of the students. The faculty advisor's role is to monitor student progress in adhering to the timelines and meeting the benchmarks of the project. The advisor must approve the project choice and the Formal Written Proposal. Any irregularities will be addressed by an Administrative Advisor Council.

Faculty advisors are not mentors and do not necessarily serve as content experts in the field of the projects.

Advisors will keep folders on each advisee to insure continuity in the rare event that advisors are changed due to unforeseen circumstances.

The Role of the Mentor

Mentors are best described as content experts in the field of study the student has chosen for his/her project. Mentors lend their experience and knowledge in helping students reach their project goals. It must be clearly understood that a mentor only serves as a consultant. It is the student's responsibility to actually "do all of the work." **Mentors, not faculty advisors, help students conduct research, seek out information, and provide expertise**



**Dallas School District
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Project Choice Guidelines

Date: _____

Name: _____ Homeroom: _____

Additional Group Members: _____

Advisor: _____

Project Title: _____

Student Signature: _____

Advisor Signature: _____

**Dallas School District
Completion Project**

Formal Written Proposal Guidelines

Use the following sample heading for your proposal:

Arthur 1

Jennifer Arthur

Mrs. Redmond

Senior Completion Project

27 September 2002

Anorexia Nervosa – Clarks Summit State Hospital

Using MLA format, prepare a written proposal that addresses the following:

- Describe the project.
- Describe the project goals.
- Describe the strategies and steps that you will take in completing the project.
- Discuss the resources and materials that you will need to complete the project.
- Explain how you propose to present the final product to the evaluation panel (i.e. self-made videotape, Power Point, posters/visual aids, etc.)
- What prompted you to select this project?

**Dallas School District
Completion Project**

Self-Evaluation Guidelines

Use the following sample heading for your proposal:

Arthur 1

Jennifer Arthur

Mrs. Redmond

Senior Completion Project

30 April 2003

Anorexia Nervosa – Clarks Summit State Hospital

Using MLA format, prepare a self-evaluation that addresses the following:

- What knowledge or skills, developed in your high school experience, did you need to complete this project?
- What new skills, knowledge, or abilities did you gain from this experience?
- Discuss how you might be able to apply the knowledge you have gained in your plans for the future.
- Indicate what you think are some of the strong points of your project.
- Discuss some of the areas in the project that you feel could be improved.

**Dallas School District
Completion Project**

Formal Proposal Evaluation Rubric

The following items describe standards that are applied to the Formal Written Proposal. Evaluators should check the appropriate box for each criterion. The student must have a minimum of 13 satisfactory ratings for the paper to be judged acceptable.	S	U
MLA Heading (4 lines)		
Title		
Double spacing		
Standard margins (1 inch x 1.25 inches)		
Appropriate font (12)		
Right corner last name/numbering		
Neatness		
Punctuation		
Capitalization		
Spelling		
Sentence structure (no fragments, etc.)		
Appropriate paragraphing including transitions		
Clear introduction including project description and goals		
Section describing process of project		
Section describing resources and materials		
Section describing final project presentation		
Conclusion including personal reasons for project selection		

Total number of satisfactory ratings: _____

**Dallas School District
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Research Paper Evaluation Rubric

The following items describe standards that are applied to the Research Paper. Evaluators should check the appropriate box for each criterion. The student must have a minimum of 17 satisfactory ratings for the paper to be acceptable. (The items in bold print must receive a satisfactory rating for the paper to be judged acceptable.)	S	U
750 - 1250 words (approximately 3-5 pages)		
Appropriate number of sources (minimum of 3 sources, 2 types)		
MLA Heading (4 lines)		
Title		
Double spacing		
Standard margins (1 inch x 1.25 inches)		
Appropriate font (12)		
Right corner last name/numbering		
Neatness		
Punctuation		
Capitalization		
Spelling		
Sentence structure (no fragments, etc.)		
Appropriate paragraphing including transitions		
Standard outline – MLA format		
Attractive introduction		
Clear thesis statement		
Sufficient coverage of main points		
Correct source usage		
MLA format for internal citations		
Logical conclusion		
MLA format for Works Cited page		

Total number of satisfactory ratings: _____

**Dallas School District
Completion Project**

Self-Evaluation Evaluation Rubric

The following items describe standards that are applied to the Self-Evaluation. Evaluators should check the appropriate box for each criterion. The student must have a minimum of 13 satisfactory ratings for the paper to be judged acceptable.	S	U
MLA Heading (4 lines)		
Title		
Double spacing		
Standard margins (1 inch x 1.25 inches)		
Appropriate font (12)		
Right corner last name/numbering		
Neatness		
Punctuation		
Capitalization		
Spelling		
Sentence structure (no fragments, etc.)		
Appropriate paragraphing including transitions		
Clear introduction focusing on knowledge/skills needed for project		
Description of knowledge/skills gained from project experience		
Description of strengths/most enjoyable features of project		
Description of areas that could be improved upon or changed within project		
Conclusion explaining how project experience will help in plans for future		

Total number of satisfactory ratings: _____

**Dallas School District
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Project Presentation Evaluation Rubric

The following items describe standards that are applied to the Project Presentation. Evaluators should check the appropriate box for each criterion. The student must have a minimum of 13 satisfactory ratings for the paper to be judged acceptable.	S	U
Clear introduction		
Logical organization		
Key concepts highlighted		
Use of appropriate vocabulary		
Citation of sources if necessary		
Appropriate division of time among speakers if applicable		
Effective conclusion		
Consistent eye contact		
Clear enunciation		
Appropriate volume/tone/pace		
Natural posture/gestures		
Appropriate dress		
Effective use of visual aids		
Attractive, appealing features of visual aids		
Neatness of visual media		
Effective communication of information		
Appropriate response to questions from judging panel		

Total number of satisfactory ratings: _____