



**Transylvania
County Schools**

GRADUATION PROJECT

Class of 2021 & Beyond

http://bit.ly/tcs_graduation_portfolios

Graduation Project Coordinators

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Why a Graduation Project?

Beginning with the class of 2021 all Transylvania County students will complete a Graduation Portfolio consisting of 5 components, where proficiency is to be demonstrated. This will be completed throughout the student's 4 years of high school.

Goal 1: Refine the project to include career and college readiness, improved communication skills, and infuse digital learning to ensure that all students in Transylvania County are guided in exploring possibilities beyond high school, can communicate effectively both orally and in writing, and graduate with the digital skills they will need to be globally competitive in their future endeavors.

Goal 2: Change the long-standing mentality that the project is the sole responsibility of English teachers and must be completed entirely during one semester of the senior year. Rather, the Graduation Project should reflect the growth and development of a student over all four years of high school and therefore should be the responsibility of the entire staff. Additionally, seniors in high school have a lot going on with college and career planning, and completing the whole project during one semester of senior year has been a source of tremendous stress and anxiety.

Graduation Project Components

- I. Research Paper
- II. Project Proposal
- III. Project
- IV. Project Presentation
- V. Graduation Portfolio

Research Paper

Research Based Paper:

- ❖ Completed in Junior English
- ❖ Evaluated by Junior English teacher
- ❖ Paper topic must relate to Graduation Project

Project Proposal

Graduation Project Proposal

- ❖ Topic is proposed for the project, derived from the student's own interest and demonstrates global readiness/21st century skills
- ❖ Completion of the [Project Proposal Template](#)
- ❖ Proposal to be presented to a panel of teachers, students, and a member of the graduation portfolio committee
 - Must be presented and approved prior to beginning the project & prior to senior year
- ❖ Specific dates throughout the year will be available for the project proposal

Project

Research-Based Product

- ❖ Tangible or Intangible
- ❖ Completed prior to graduation, typically during senior year
- ❖ Maintain a visual journal documenting progress, involvement, and growth while completing the project
- ❖ Students must find a mentor who has expertise in the field and must make a minimum of 3 contacts throughout the project
 - Contacts may be face to face and/or virtual

Project Presentation

Presentation to a Panel

- ❖ Seniors will present projects to juniors, teachers, administrators, district leaders, and/or community members
- ❖ Designated early release days and/or during the school day

Graduation Portfolio

Digital Portfolio

- ❖ Contain elements of career and college readiness for all 4 years of high school, as well as the proposal, visual journal documenting project completion, and a presentation aid to be used during the presentation
- ❖ Must NOT contain permission forms or other documents with addresses and phone numbers as the portfolio will be published
- ❖ Devil's Den/Supervised Study teachers will oversee the portfolio completion

Pacing/ Planning of the Graduation Portfolio

- Freshmen:
 - ◆ Begin Graduation Project Portfolio and learn about project components
- Sophomores:
 - ◆ Explore options for the project and research paper
- Juniors:
 - ◆ Complete project proposal, defend proposal to panel, complete research paper (Eng 11)
- Seniors:
 - ◆ Complete project, present project to panel, and submit Digital Portfolio/ Google Site

Grading/ Evaluating

- The graduation project will be a 'stand-alone' graduation requirement
- Graduation project portfolio will be developed over all 4 years of high school, time will be allotted for this purpose (DD/SS) under supervision of a teacher
- Ongoing and yearly progress checks by DD/SS teachers
- Proposal, Project, Presentation & Portfolio will be evaluated holistically via simple 4 point rubric for each requirement with mastery, proficient, developing, incomplete
 - ◆ **At a minimum students must complete each component, demonstrating proficiency, prior to graduation**
- Project presentation evaluated on an early release day and/or during school
- Paper evaluated solely by Eng. 11 teachers and part of Eng. 11 grade
- Portfolio evaluation by faculty members and administration
 - ◆ Grading of portfolios completed during PLCs, planning periods, and faculty meetings by multiple graders
 - ◆ Complete evaluations early enough to allow for revision for incomplete and/or developing projects, extended time, etc.

Mentors

- Mentors must be approved prior to the project proposal presentation
- Mentors do not have to be residents of Transylvania County.
- Students may reach out to professionals, college professors, etc.
- Students must have a minimum of 3 meetings with mentor. These meetings can take place face to face, virtually, via phone, email, teleconference, etc.
- Mentor will verify that meaningful communication occurred via Mentor Evaluation Form

Staff Roles & Responsibilities

All panels and committees may be composed of a combination of students, staff, administration, district leadership, and/or community members at the school's discretion

- Mentors- see above
- Graduation Project Coordinator-Each school will have a designated coordinator responsible for coordinating the logistics concerning presentations of proposals, projects, and evaluating portfolios.
- Administration-Support and provide professional development to teachers in supporting students & evaluating proposals, presentations, & portfolios.
- Teachers-All teachers serve as advisor to the assigned group of students, monitor progress, and ensure deadlines are being met, as well as actively participate in evaluating proposals, presentations, and portfolios.
- Junior English teachers-Will be responsible for guiding students in writing the research paper and in evaluating the papers.
- Student-Will complete all project components demonstrating proficiency.
- Student panel-Will provide constructive peer feedback only, student feedback will not impact the evaluation.

Graduation Portfolio Handbook & Rubrics for Evaluation

[TCS Student Graduation Portfolio Handbook](#)

Quick Link to Graduation Portfolios

http://bit.ly/tcs_graduation_portfolios