

CAPSTONE PRESENTATION DAY 2019



THE CROWNING ACHIEVEMENT



Newark High School seniors reached an important milestone in the waning days of their high school career April 30th when they made the signature presentations of their NHS Capstone Project requirements to graduate.

“I think everything went smoothly. Students seemed to be nervous, but in a positive sense. They seemed very proud of their work. It was nice to see them take pride in something they worked so hard for and seeing them hug each other in the hallways after their presentations. I sat in on a couple of presentations and was happy to see how open and honest they were with the panelists,” said Capstone Coordinator Katie Ganter, who also teaches 10th and 12th grade English and public speaking.

The Capstone Project is made up of several required components and the Class of 2019 was the third class to be required to successfully complete all of them in order to graduate including:

- 20 volunteer community service hours.
- 20 healthy choice journal entries about involvement in various extra-curricular activities and about things they learned in health classes.
- A two-to-three-page paper in 10th grade espousing both sides of an argument and a conclusion.
- A four-to-five page senior research paper.
- And finally, presenting their Capstone project in front of a faculty panel. The 8-12-minute presentation on a smart board typically included pictures of the student; a favorite quote or two; insights about their high school experience; an explanation of and findings of their 12th grade research paper; and discussion about their future plans.

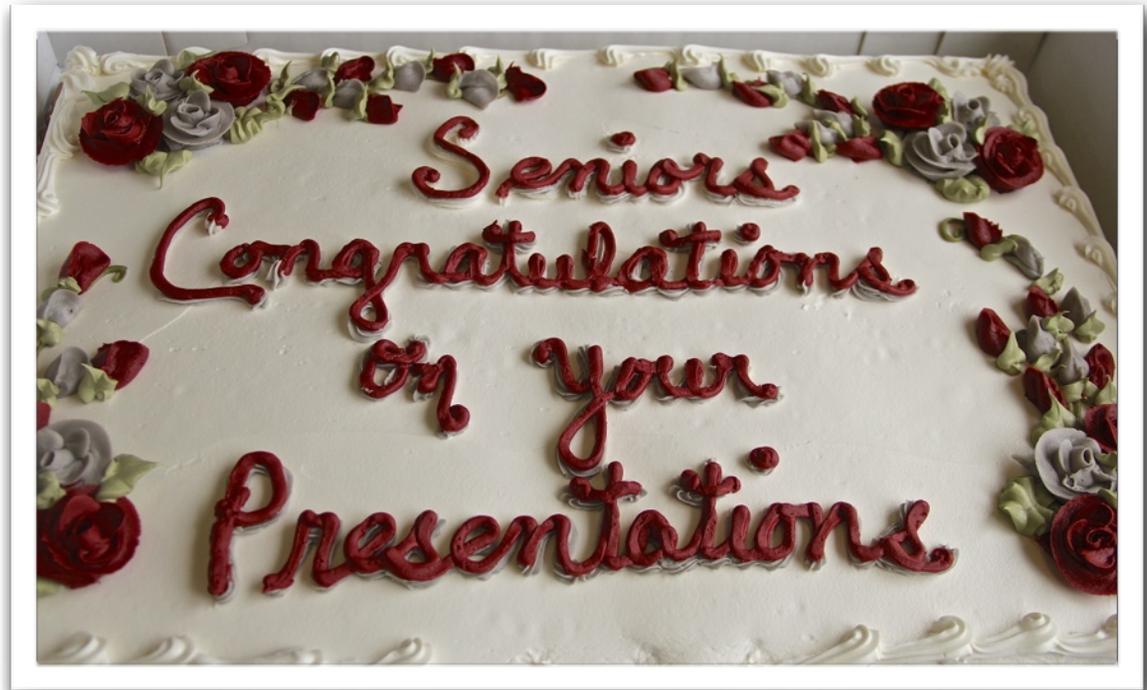
Then members of the panel, made up of NHS and Newark Middle School faculty and staff, asked questions of the student before evaluating their presentation, based on a rubric, in private.

After a few minutes, the presenting student was called back into the classroom and informed by panelists if he or she passed or revisions to their presentations were required to be made that day.

Presentations were made by approximately 165 NHS students during several 30-minute sessions in classrooms throughout the high school. High school and middle school students only had a half-day session April 30th because the entire faculty and staff from both schools served as panelists in the presentations.

Before and after students made their presentations, pizza and snacks were available in the cafeteria.

While it is a whole school effort, much of the credit for the successful completion of the Capstone projects by students and the success of their unveiling is largely due to the ongoing work of Ganter, Amy Lannon, who teaches the Finger Lakes Community College Gemini English 101 and 103 courses at NHS; John Dalton, who teaches AP English and English 11 courses at NHS; Danielle Ohlson who teaches English 9 and 12 courses; and Debora Barry, a teacher assistant who provides support for both the Capstone and NHS work experience programs.



Seniors Bailey McCormick and Connor Robbins both received glowing reviews of their presentations from faculty panelists.

“I believe it went very well,” said McCormick, who will begin her studies in biology at High Point University in North Carolina in the fall. The crux of her research paper concerned the ethical and economic impact of the Olympics on host countries.

“I find presenting to people fairly easy, but I was a bit nervous before I went,” McCormick said. “However, after I started I felt fine and got into a rhythm. I had a great group of panelists so it made presenting super easy and fun!”

And the panelist said of McCormick’s presentation:

- “Appeared very comfortable being in front of group”
- “Nice balance of personal and research paper”
- “Passionate about the topic and direction she is going in the next chapter.”
- “You can be “bigger” in the next chapter. Your dedication and drive will help you.”
- “Thoughtful, intuitive and realistic. Excited for what the future holds for you.”
- “Great topic! Very well organized and easy to follow. Nice to see your personal passion and paper come together.”

“My senior media presentation went as well as I thought possible,” said Robbins, who will begin his studies in either finance or political science in the fall at the University of Kentucky. “My panel of teachers was as invested in my presentation as I was which made it easier to give my presentation. The Capstone presentation has been a project I’ve worked on and dreaded presenting for two months, but at the end of the day, this presentation has allowed me to look back on my proudest moments at Newark High School.”

Robbins’ research paper concerned how the nation’s media outlets inject their political bias into the news.

And the panelists said of Robbins’ presentation:

- “Excellent presentation – we thoroughly enjoyed getting to know you.”
- “Great job! I loved hearing your stories! Great advice to freshmen.”

- “Very reflective. Relaxed, personable. Descriptive.”
- “Insightful, nicely done, very thoughtful.”



NHS Principal Tom Roote said:

“Capstone has quickly become one of my favorite days of the school year. The day, which is a culmination of effort across the span of high school in some key areas that indicate college and career readiness, did not let down. I appreciated students dressing up and working hard to show mastery of the skill of speaking. In fact, I got a sense that all our presenters were being very purposeful in their effort to present clear points on which they were well prepared. I suspect it was the effort of our teachers that contributed to the clarity of the work. I heard dozens of testimonials about the day.

Two of my favorites were:

- Ms. Flock: This is an AMAZING young man who seems to have learned from a somewhat chaotic childhood. I see a bright future ahead of him and I just wanted you both to know how special I found his presentation. Thank you for this opportunity to see kids outside our personal classes!
- From Twitter: Very moving Capstone presentation from Liberty today. She stated, "I am grateful for the chance to grow." [...] Overall, the quality of the presentations ticked up a few notches this year. Good work all!

“Special thanks to Ms. Ganter and Ms. Barry for their Capstone coordination and Ms. Robyn Ross for her leadership.” Roote continued. “Also, thank you Newark Middle School for joining us as panelists.”

Finally, Superintendent Matt Cook joined others in commending the students on their presentations.

“The senior Capstone Day is one of my favorite days of the year. The reflection on their high school experience and the growth that the students show is inspirational. Also, I always learn something about what we should continue to do and what we can change to help create a better experience for every student, every day.”

