

Beacon Charter High School for the Arts

Performance Based Graduation Requirements

Handbook for Parents and Student-Artists

The RI State Board of Regents has mandated that schools graduate students (starting with the class of 2008) using measures that show proficiency. This means that students must be able to demonstrate their skills and academic growth in ways that go beyond traditional courses and grades. Graduating by “seat-time” is no longer allowed by the state.

At Beacon, student-artists will be asked to not only complete all the courses in their program of study, but they will be asked to assemble a portfolio showing their growth over time and student-artists will participate in the school’s senior courses in Film as Literature and Capstone/filmmaking.

Coursework: Student-artists must complete the program of study as approved by the school’s board of trustees. The program of study consists of twenty four academic courses and eight art courses. The total number of credits earned is equal to the total number of credits needed to graduate.

Please see the program of study matrix at the end of this document for further explanation and illustration.

Portfolio: Working with you son or daughter’s Advisor, student-artists will keep and catalog best examples of their work starting in the 9th grade. Evidence of work in both their art classes and their academic classes will have to be retained in school as opposed to going home with them.

At parent/teacher conferences (five times per year) advisors and parents will have a chance to review the work selected by your son or daughter and discuss this growing body of evidence.

Also, as your son or daughter completes their Northwest Evaluation Association test of Measured Academic Progress, those scores (math reasoning, math computation, reading comprehension and writing) will be kept in your son or daughter’s permanent record folder. Also, these scores are mailed home and given to the advisor. Each student will take the NWEA test twice per year and there should be at least eight data points over the four years here at Beacon.

Student-artists are also encouraged to include other materials such as letters of recommendation, documents of industry certification, letters of acceptance from colleges and other documents that showcase their success.

There are four basic tenets of portfolio compilation at Beacon:

1. Portfolios showcase exemplary work collected over time in the practice of one’s art discipline (at least five pieces of original 2D and 3D works). Theater and culinary student-artists may perform or exhibit, either live or electronically, examples of their work.

2. Portfolios contain samples of student-artist academic work collected over time (Student work means assessments corrected, graded and returned, and the eight RI Writing scores earned over the four years)
3. Portfolios show longitudinal assessment data (NWEA MAP) collected over time (as many as eight data points in reading comprehension, math computation, math reasoning and writing)
4. Portfolios are not designed with Beacon personnel being the target audience. Portfolios must be constructed with an audience in mind who is a prospective school, customer or employer. Therefore, deliverables and documents such as resumes, letters of recommendation, industry certificates and the diploma itself will be included.

The model that student-artists will be encouraged to use will be patterned after the portfolio submission requirements of the post-secondary art school to which they are applying.

Evaluation: Every student-artist's portfolio will be reviewed by a panel in the middle of the senior year. Using preexisting rubrics as guidelines, the panel will be able to make recommendations on how to improve the portfolio.

The expectation is that reviewers will see a constant trend of improvement from NWEA assessments. When a student-artist is enrolled in the school a baseline NWEA MAP score is recorded. The school's expectation of the student-artist is that each semester the basic skill level in math reasoning, math computation and reading comprehension will show effort and improvement.

At the end of the senior year and as graduation nears, a sub-committee of the school's board (parents, university admissions officials, past graduates, teachers, business community members, representatives local arts organizations) will review the portfolio with the student walking them through it, offering explanations and reflecting on their academic and artistic growth.

Student-artists who do not receive a proficient rating will have a chance to improve their portfolio and submit the changes to a smaller committee for final approval. Students who do not complete the portfolio segment of the PBGR program will not graduate and will be asked to complete the project during our summer session.

The portfolio is not a senior project. It is project that is started in the 9th grade year and is continued through the senior year. Student-artists who do not keep corrected work, do not save examples of their artwork and do not work with their advisor will be at a great disadvantage in their senior year and will most likely not graduate due to an incomplete portfolio.

Senior Capstone/filmmaking project

In their senior year student-artists will take two courses aimed at giving them the skills and knowledge to complete their senior capstone project. The end goal of the capstone project is that student-artists:

Beacon Charter High School for the Arts has developed an Autobiographical Film Project to meet the Capstone guidelines of the Rhode Island Skills Commission. This project will focus upon a core question identified by the student-artist which should be open-ended and exploratory leading to problem solving. In addition, the Capstone project will meet applied learning standards and content standards for the student-artist's chosen art discipline.

The film project

The four applied learning standards will be met through this project:

1. The student-artist must design a product (both their individual film and the group film) and organize an event (the film's premiere). (A1a, A1c)
2. The student-artist will prepare an oral presentation and formal written components of their film, including a written report, complete script and submit their script to the Writers' Guild of America. In addition, the film itself will serve as a multimedia demonstration of their work. (A2a, A2b)
3. The student-artist will gather information on themselves, their chosen content area (visual, performing or culinary arts), their career goals and filmmaking techniques in order to complete their project. The student-artist will use word processing software to complete all written components of the project. (A3a, A3c)
4. As part of a thorough evaluation process, each student-artist will use journal entries to reflect on their progress throughout the course and will adjust their priorities as needed to meet deadlines. At the conclusion of the project, student-artists will evaluate their own performance. (A4b, A4c)

The following content standards have been adapted from the Rhode Island Department of Education' State Frameworks as well as the Content Standards developed the National Arts and Education Network, a program of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

1. Student-artists will conceive and create a film that demonstrates an understanding of how the communication of their ideas relates to the media techniques and processes they use. (RI Visual Arts 1)
2. Student-artists will write a film script that includes original characters with unique dialog that motivates action. Student-artists will improve their scripts through improvising, writing and refining their scripts. (RI Theatre 1, National 1)

3. Student-artists will integrate other arts and/or media in their film production. (RI Theatre 4, National 6)
4. Student-artists will analyze the effect of their own personal, social and cultural experiences on their film production.(RI Theatre 3, National 8)

Reflective Narrative Components

Each student-artist will include multiple pieces of writing in the capstone filmmaking course. One of the key pieces is the reflective narrative. The reflective narrative affords students the opportunity to reflect upon their experiences. This reflection includes a chance to summarize the project, address problems encountered, analyze problem-solving strategies employed, and describe resulting learning and personal growth. It provides your evaluators with the background and context needed to understand the depth and scope of your project.

The proposal agreement

Proposal Worksheet

Each student-artist will have to plan their project and agree on key issues and timelines. The contents of that proposal are:

I Core Question

Based on your interests, clearly state a question, open-ended and exploratory, related to real-world issues whenever possible, and directed toward a path to knowledge.

The title of my Capstone project is:

II Applied Learning Standards

Select the Applied Learning Standards for the project and describe how you will use the standard and its indicators in your project. Refer to pages 5-7 of this guide.

III Content Standards

Select the Content Standards for the Project.

IV Overview of Proposed Capstone Project

Write a brief description of your Capstone project plan. In your description, include your chosen arts discipline. Based on the indicators of the Applied Learning Problem Solving standard you have chosen (Standard A1); describe the problem that the Capstone Project is trying to solve.

V Explanation of Why You Selected this Project

Write a brief Explanation of why you chose to target your Autobiographical film on these particular topics/areas.

VI Preliminary List of Research Resources

List the books, journals, websites, individuals, industries or organizations that you will need to consult in order to complete this project.

Student-Artist's Signature

date

Advisor's Signature

date

Capstone Process Journal Guidelines

Journaling is an important part of the capstone process. These guidelines will serve as a model.

Your journal is a reflection of your progress in problem solving. It also documents all the work you have accomplished for your project. It should be neat and organized. You may want to type it, especially if your handwriting is not neat. Your journal entries should not summarize your activities in the classroom.

The following are guidelines for what your journal needs to include and what it should look like when it is finished.

Specific criteria to include in each of your entries:

1. Timeline
2. Starting dates for each activity
3. Estimated date of completion
4. Evidence to show that each work activity has been successfully completed
5. Reflection that shows evidence of problem solving.

To document your completion adequately, you must include some entries that reflect the following:

6. Resources to help you complete the activity (materials, individuals to contact, locations to visit, etc.)
7. Planned steps (what you did, what you saw, what you heard)
8. Modifications you made to your original plan
9. Evidence that demonstrates successful completion of activity
10. Specific standards addressed

A non-example would be:

September 16, 1999

I met my mentor and we talked about my project. Worked on my proposal. Made a journal entry.

Total hours: 5

An example of an appropriate journal entry:

September 16, 2004

Today, I met with my mentor for the first time for about an hour. My mentor is a mechanic who specializes in Ford engines. I told him about my plan to rebuild my '67 Mustang engine and put it in my car. I told him what I think the problems are, which are that the block is cracked, the engine needs new heads and pistons, and the carburetor is damaged and needs new parts. My mentor agreed to come take a look at the engine next week on Wednesday so we can determine if there is anything else that is wrong and figure out approximately how much this is going to cost me. The second hour I spent working on my proposal. I'm having trouble deciding how I am going to research engines and exactly what I need to learn to complete this project. I also typed my overview so I can show it to my teacher tomorrow. I hope she approves it! All of my work today related to Applied Learning 1b — I'm improving a system (my car engine).

Student-artists and parents! Communication is a key ingredient to the success of the portfolio and capstone projects. Advisor visits are now scheduled during each of our five parent/teacher conference nights. Also, www.beaconart.org has links to every teacher's email address. Keeping in touch means no surprises!