**Purpose:**

**As a Newton High School graduation requirement the Senior Exit Portfolio is the culmination of the students' reflections on their high school experience. In the portfolio and the interview, the students communicate--in a positive, professional manner--who they are, where they have been, and where they are going.**

**Required Portfolio Components:**

**Senior Essay: (see attachment)** Designed by the senior English teachers

**Resume:** (no change)

**Transcript/List of Classes** (no change)

**Service Learning:** 20 hours (no change)

**3 Reference Letters:** 1 required from their service to the community (no change)

**Process:**

**Two Versions:** NHS Honors Diploma and NHS Regular Diploma

**NHS Honors Diploma**: Students will sign up for this at the beginning of the year, attend a meeting for directions and be given a hard due date. Community members who have attended training will interview them. Guidance will be available as needed for these students.

**NHS Regular Diploma**: Students will be given dates during the year for each component. All seminar teachers will be given those dates and a reference point on the lan for associated materials.

Resume assistance will be provided in voluntary group settings by the SEP coordinators (Attendance will not be required.) Along with a colleague, seminar teachers will either interview their own seniors independently or panel style. All graduate candidates will attend an introductory assembly in September.

Special assistance will be given to the vocational seminar students.

**Two Formats:** Students will choose between the digital format and the binder version

**S Drive Folder:** Each student will have an S drive where work in progress will be stored along with their final senior essay and resume. If the portfolio is digital the entire portfolio will be placed in the S-drive. Those items will be emailed in pdf format to the interviewer prior to the interview.

**Interviews:** Honors diploma candidates will be interviewed beginning during the day and extending into the evening to accommodate student and interviewer schedules. They will be completed in one day (approx 60 anticipated). Other students who wish to be interviewed in this manner may sign up to participate.

**Hard Due Date:** Students who turn in portfolios by their due date will be released from seminar after successfully completing the interview.

Continued ↓

**Erica and I met with English teachers, Helberg, Jaso, Bergman and Otter, during a department meeting. Here are some of the points of discussion:**

Here is the vision for the new-and-improved Senior Exit Portfolio essay.

The essay would encompass the students' reflections on their high school experience. Rather than separate personal essays (summarizing their high school experience) and reflection essays (explaining the chosen work samples) students write one essay and choose three work samples (from any courses) as evidence of their essay's thesis.

For example, if a student writes an essay around the thesis "In high school, I often took a risk and tried something new, and each time I achieved more than I ever thought possible," he/she would choose three work samples to show these successful risks. In his/her essay, he/she would explain these three work samples and how they support the thesis.

Senior English teachers will continue to assign the essay in class and give students a short list of sample thesis statements or topics to prompt their thinking. To standardize our expectations across the department, we decided on a 2-page minimum for the essay with the caveat that an English teacher may approve a shorter essay if he/she feels it meets the SEP requirements.

Summary of our Discussion on 4/15/11:

---currently, the two essays become repetitive, with students struggling to say something different

---the personal essay often becomes a biography with no real thesis or directions

---in the reflection essay, students often just list the assignment for each work sample, without truly reflecting on what the work sample shows about them

---teachers and interviewers report the more interesting reflection essays in the past focused on one interest (art, welding, music, history, etc.)

---work samples can be from any courses---no restrictions based on core subjects or electives

---English teachers will give students some sample thesis/topics to prompt their thinking (examples, "an interest I never thought I'd develop," "study habits that worked for me," "the most important thing I learned in high school," etc.)

---essay will be a minimum of 2-pages, unless read and approved by an English teacher

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Thanks

Ronda and Erica