

## Introduction

Advanced Seminar is an energetic, integrated project designed to showcase the knowledge, skills, and creativity developed as a result of twelve years of education. The idea for Advanced Seminar as a way to broaden and measure these skills and knowledge was initially created over fifteen years ago by high schools in all areas of the country. Since that time, the concept of Advanced Seminar has proven increasingly valuable as an assessment tool for schools desiring a performance-based exit requirement.

Jackson Public School District is committed to the adoption of innovative and successful educational programs. Advanced Seminar allows students of all abilities to focus their talents, skills, creativity, and knowledge acquired over twelve years of study to produce a research paper and a product related to their topics. In addition, they must prepare portfolios to support and highlight their projects and present the results through presentations to panels of faculty and community citizens with expertise in the various subject areas.

Advanced Seminar's purpose is to provide students the opportunity to become accountable for their own learning and to explore career opportunities affiliated with their projects. Students do this through the following:

- Exploring their own thoughts in selecting topics that are meaningful to them
- Demonstrating information literacy in outlining effective research strategies
- Making meaningful decisions and choices of their own
- Facing consequences of these decisions in relation to long-term academic goals
- Using real-world materials/experiences (i.e., experts in their chosen areas, observations of events related to their chosen areas, and primary documentation of their participation in their chosen areas)
- Monitoring their own progress, setting goals, and meeting deadlines
- Working (i.e., communicating) with their peers, faculty, community/subject experts, and others in professional ways
- Producing written, oral, and hands-on evidences of learning
- Demonstrating evidence of active learning
- Modeling independent learning
- Shadowing and/or volunteering with mentors from the local business community

Advanced Seminar is designed to be a yearlong effort. This guide describes the specific requirements and expectations for each component of the project. A faculty committee and advisor will be assigned to monitor and document each student's progress and provide guidance as he/she works through the project during the year.

As Walt Whitman wrote in *Leaves of Grass* (1855), "All I mark as my own you shall offset it with your own, Else it were time lost listening to me." Jackson Public School District encourages each senior to take this project and "make it his own."

## Advanced Seminar Guidelines

Advanced Seminar integrates knowledge, skills and concepts from the student's program of study into one culminating project. Advanced Seminar consists of a written research paper, a major product, a portfolio, and an oral presentation.

### **Phase I: The Research Paper (1<sup>st</sup> semester exam)**

(Four to six pages plus Works Cited and cover sheet)

All seniors must write a research paper as part of Advanced Seminar. This is a practical application of research and should be a growth experience for the student. The Advanced Seminar research paper is considered as a semester exam grade; therefore, students who do not complete and turn in their research papers in the allotted time frame will receive an "F" and no credit for the course (see Student Handbook and Code of Conduct, High Schools, Academic Information, Determining Student Progress, Number 5).

1. The paper must follow the predetermined guidelines of MLA.
2. The topic of the research paper is critical to Advanced Seminar.
3. The student must apply this knowledge in the product, portfolio, and presentation aspects of Advanced Seminar.
4. The student must follow the guidelines for primary and secondary sources for research.

### **Phase II: The Product**

Students, with the help of the School Advanced Seminar Committee, will choose a product that will showcase their knowledge, skills and creativity. The product should be an extension of the research paper.

1. The product is an application of the knowledge gained through demonstration of a produced commodity of a community contribution.
2. The product will be done on the student's time outside of regular school hours with a minimum of fifteen hours of documented time completed.
3. The product will provide a challenge that is not a regular practice for the student.

### **Phase III: Portfolio** **(A professional scrapbook)**

The portfolio is a developmental representation of the student's progress throughout Advanced Seminar. The portfolio will include a variety of narrative journal entries in the form of documentation and self-evaluation. It should begin when the student interviews community experts during the search for a mentor. The portfolio will be turned in prior to the presentation and returned to the student for use during the presentation. Some of the items to be in the portfolio include the following (a complete list is found in the Portfolio section of this Guide):

1. Letter to the judges
2. Project overview
3. Reflection
4. Research paper
5. Visual timeline (a photographic record showing evidence of progress on product/project at various stages of completion)
6. Journal entries
7. Mentoring log

### **Phase IV: Presentation (2<sup>nd</sup> semester exam)** **(Eight to Ten minutes)**

This portion of Advanced Seminar is the culminating activity and will take place at the end of the second semester. Students dressed in appropriate business attire will present their projects to panels. The Advanced Seminar presentation is considered as a semester exam grade; therefore, students who do not complete and present during the allotted time frame will receive an "F" and no credit for the course (see Student Handbook and Code of Conduct, High Schools, Academic Information, Determining Student Progress, Number 5).

1. The student will have eight to ten minutes to present the research paper, portfolio, and product. Use of a computer multimedia presentation using Microsoft PowerPoint is required.
2. The student will have five minutes after the presentation to answer questions from the panel.
3. The panel will be made up of faculty, administrators, and community volunteers knowledgeable in the area of the student's product.