

Message to Parents of Seniors:

The Senior Independent Projects program at WHS (SIPs) started with the graduating class of 2010 and has grown stronger every year since then. The program's goal is to let motivated seniors create projects of their own design to substitute for some or all of their fourth quarter classes.* This allows them to explore a creative interest and/or a vocational possibility that their previous classroom work has not addressed. We've found that taking responsibility for designing their own projects has been a huge motivating force for the 20-25 students that have participated so far. Parents of these students say that they have never seen their children so excited about what they were doing, nor so dedicated to the work they had set for themselves as they were in their last term at WHS.

If your child is interested in doing an independent project as a senior, he or she should do some brainstorming early in the year about exactly what it might be. Deciding on a field of interest, such as art, music, education, computers, scientific research, a craft, or a form of community service, is the first step. More challenging is coming up with a workable project that will fit into the last six weeks of the school year and then finding an internship or a mentor to help the student accomplish the goal. The initiative for the project needs to come from the student, but parents can suggest people or places to call to set up informational interviews in a field of interest. Research and planning should start before the end of second quarter; the projects themselves take place in April and May, during fourth quarter.

For more information, have your student talk to one of the co-directors of the program, and make sure they come to the mandatory after school informational meetings, usually offered late in January. The application deadline varies from year to year, but is usually early in February. Students should keep this opportunity in mind as they think about their deepest interests and what can be accomplished before the end of senior year.

Barbara Shellito and Barb Wolfson
Senior Project Program Co-directors

* Most students can drop at least two classes, sometimes more, to do a senior project. Classes that cannot be dropped include performing arts classes, A.P. classes, and ones like financial literacy and business that have culminating final projects of their own. The students will be given more information about the program at special informational meetings in January.