Simpson County Schools Early Graduation Program

KRS 158.142 establishes the Early Graduation Program (EGP), an optional program in which a Simpson County Schools' student may receive a high school diploma, Early Graduation Certificate, and a scholarship award from the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority (KHEAA) upon successful completion of all EGP requirements provided in 704 KAR 3:305, Section 5 in three (3) academic years or less.

Any SCS student who chooses to enroll in the EGP for the 2024-2025 academic year and beyond must meet all state and local graduation requirements specified under 704 KAR 3:305, Section 5, including the successful completion of a performance-based project, portfolio, or capstone, which shall be required of all EGP students, beginning July 1, 2024.

Simpson County Schools Early Graduation Program
Capstone Rubric Descriptors and Evaluation Procedures

This document provides performance descriptors and the evaluation procedures for the Early Graduation Program (EGP) performance-based project, portfolio, or capstone, required of all program participants beginning in the 2024-2025 academic year and beyond.

Required Capstone Elements

Simpson County Schools Early Graduation Program (EGP) performance descriptors and evaluation procedures **shall provide an opportunity for the student to demonstrate attainment of critical skills required for postsecondary and career success.**

A project, portfolio, or capstone (hereby referred to as "capstone"), is a multifaceted assignment that serves as a culminating academic and intellectual experience for students, typically during their final year of high school or at the end of an academic program or learning-pathway experience. Capstone projects may take a wide variety of forms, but most are long-term investigative projects that culminate in a final product, presentation, or performance.

For EGP students to have adequate opportunities to practice, grow, and demonstrate the attainment of critical skills required for postsecondary success, Simpson County Schools' capstone will contain the following:

1. **Attainment of essential workplace ethics program components as established by the board of education pursuant to KRS 158.1413;**
2. **Demonstration of an ability to apply the Kentucky Academic Standards, established in 704**

KAR 3:303 and 704 KAR Chapter 8, as a life-long learner and contributing member of society;

3. Demonstration of written and verbal communication skills needed for postsecondary success; and

4. Demonstration of an ability to think critically, synthesize information, and draw conclusions.

Characteristics of High-Quality Performance-Based Experiences

Elicits evidence of learning that matters:

- The critical skills being demonstrated are in high demand and/or are highly transferable to the real world.
- The capstone aligns with the Kentucky Academic Standards so that the student may demonstrate the acquisition of knowledge.
- The capstone is cognitively complex and challenges students to apply higher-order thinking skills while navigating and adjusting to novel experiences.

Criteria are specific:

- It is clear to students what skills and knowledge are required to complete the capstone.
- Students know what learning is expected of them to demonstrate the requirements of the capstone, at a developmentally appropriate level.

Student-led:

- Students are expected to take charge of their capstone experience.
- The capstone experience is personalized by allowing students to:
  - Choose and design their process and product;
  - Express their views; and
  - Access personal strengths, interests, passions, backgrounds, and cultures.

Authentic:

- The capstone is driven by a clear purpose and offers solutions to real-world problems that directly impact the community and world around them.
- Provides opportunities for the student to engage with people of influence.
- The capstone allows the student to take intellectual risks.

A learning experience in and of itself:

- Students learn through the capstone experience itself.
- Learners can see how they have been challenged to think differently.
- Students understand the importance of their ability to effectively apply critical skills needed for postsecondary success.

Example Capstone Types

As a student-led experience, capstones can take many forms, and 704 KAR 3:305, Section 5 does not limit students in their design. Some examples may include, but are not limited to:

Action Research Project	Co-Curricular Experience	Community Engagement Experience
Portfolio	Design/Prototype	Independent Research Project
Oral/Visual Presentation	Experience-based Reflection	Argument or Informational Text

Early Graduation Program - Design Element 1	Attainment of essential workplace ethics program components as established by the board of education pursuant to KRS 158.1413.

Productive Collaborator

Engages with others to achieve a common goal through building positive relationships, actively listening, showing empathy, and making individual contributions to a larger group.

- Uses cooperative processes to make decisions and achieve desired outcomes.
- Recognizes individual contributions and the contributions of others.
- Engages with different perspectives/ideas to develop empathy and resolve conflicts.
- Gives, receives, and implements constructive feedback.

Performance Descriptors	Mastery

Evaluate and strategically implement cooperative processes to make decisions, solve problems, and/or achieve desired outcomes.

Evaluate the impact of individual contributions and contributions of others towards desired outcomes, including completed community service opportunities.

Analyzes their own and others' perspectives, and synthesizes varying perspectives/ideas to understand others and resolve conflicts.

Evaluate and select appropriate processes for providing and receiving constructive feedback, and synthesize and incorporate feedback from various perspectives to improve.

Creative Contributor

Interprets experiences, imagines and plays with new possibilities with curiosity, and creates novel, useful, and valued approaches by the world around them.

- Analyzes situations and notices unique connections to generate ideas for solving a problem, addressing an issue, or making something new.
- Explores new learning and insights and experiments with multiple relevant and viable possibilities.
- Creates original products and processes that contribute to positive and authentic change.

Performance Descriptors	Mastery

Examines, analyzes, and makes connections between multiple perspectives and applies learning across disciplines to contribute meaningful ideas to an authentic topic or problem.

Refines and applies curiosities to determine opportunities for meaningful contributions.

Evaluate existing knowledge and synthesize connections between ideas to test their utility to generate clear and purposeful next steps.

Constructs products and processes that demonstrate creative solutions and evaluates the impact on self and community.

Contributes to the creation of a culture of creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurial thinking.

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Early Graduation Program - Design Element 2	Demonstration of an ability to apply the Kentucky Academic Standards, established in 704 KAR 3:303 and 704 KAR Chapter 8, as a life-long learner and contributing member of society.

Empowered Learner

Demonstrates mastery and application of academic competencies. Develops the skills and dispositions to persist through difficulties and plan for a future of self-improvement.

• Connects and applies knowledge and skills across disciplines and to authentic contexts.
• Identifies learning needs and preferences; uses a set of strategies to master academic and personal goals.
• Uses challenges and mistakes as opportunities to learn and improve.

Performance Descriptors	Mastery

Analyzes how they acquired new knowledge and skills, connects and applies knowledge and skills across disciplines, to authentic/practical contexts, and to personal plans/goals for the future.

Develop realistic academic and personal goals for the future, strategically implement adapted strategies to master them, evaluate their effectiveness, and analyze their application to future endeavors.

Analyzes learning task/situation and conditions, strengths, and challenges, and analyzes how they synthesized, implemented, and adapted strategies until they completed the task or goal.

Engaged Citizen

Shows respect and empathy across differences, embraces diversity of opinion, seeks cultural understanding, participates in the democratic process to challenge the status quo, and makes a positive impact on their community and the world.

• Demonstrates empathy and respect for diversity, culture, and opinions of others through responsible actions.
• Actively utilizes democratic processes to impact change in the community.
• Recognizes, plans, and engages in civic opportunities to impact the community in a positive, productive way.
• Demonstrates safe, legal, and ethical behavior.

Performance Descriptors	Mastery

Analyzes root causes and various responses to an authentic and relevant community issue, and evaluates the impact of those responses from the perspective of those most impacted.

Facilitates and evaluates democratic decision-making processes to plan and execute individual or collective civic action, and analyzes the impact civic action has on the self, community, and those most impacted by the issue.

Analyzes the ethics of laws, civic actions, and behaviors, and demonstrates ethical behavior when interacting with others across differences (including online).

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Early Graduation Program - Design Element 3	Demonstration of written and verbal communication skills needed for postsecondary success.

Effective Communicator

Engages diverse audiences respectfully by exchanging ideas and information responsibly, listening actively, speaking and writing clearly, and using print and digital media appropriately.

- Conveys the message clearly and coherently according to the purpose, task, and audience.
- Uses relevant details, organization, and conventions to develop ideas coherently.
- Assesses the needs of the audience and purpose of communication to adapt word choice, tone, style, and body language to a variety of contexts and tasks.
- Demonstrates the use of multiple media and technologies to present clear and coherent ideas in a variety of forms of communication.
- Demonstrates active listening to analyze messages from discussions, presentations, and audio-visual sources to determine and evaluate meaning.

Performance Descriptors	Mastery

Develops and presents clear and coherent ideas using relevant and accurate details, anticipates and addresses counterclaims, and applies appropriate organizational structures and conventions to convey a message.

Creates and/or strategically utilizes multimedia and/or digital tools to enhance the audience's understanding of ideas, and evaluates the impact and effectiveness of their choices.

Anticipates audience needs and adapts language, tone, style, and format to the context, purpose, and task in ways that support audience understanding and engagement.

Demonstrates appropriate volume, pace, tone, eye contact, body language, and gestures to support audience understanding and engagement.

Demonstrates active listening by analyzing the speaker's ideas, asking relevant and clarifying questions to deepen understanding and surface counterclaims, and making relevant connections to extend knowledge.

Early Graduation Program - Design Element 4	Demonstration of an ability to think critically, synthesize information, and draw conclusions.

Critical Thinker

Thinks deeply and makes informed decisions to create solutions or new understanding supported by relevant and reliable evidence.

- Generates relevant questions or problems based on research, observations, and personal experiences.
- Identifies reliable evidence and evaluates information from a variety of sources with multiple perspectives to draw conclusions; and to construct explanations.
- Analyzes complex problems and designs multiple and/or original solutions, testing (evaluating) them against relevant criteria.
- Constructs work that demonstrates thoughtful, creative approaches and evaluates the impact.

Performance Descriptors	Mastery

Generates clear and precise questions to investigate a complex and authentic topic, problem, issue, experience, need, etc.

Analyzes and synthesizes information from a variety of sources, evaluates for credibility, and analyzes counterarguments/information to draw reasonable conclusions and explanations.

Synthesizes information from a variety of disciplines to develop creative and realistic approaches, solutions, products or unique work; intentionally collects and strategically implements feedback; and evaluates the impact of approaches on the potential or actual outcome of the work.