



Robert F. Kennedy Charter School

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*National Milestones:
The Profile of a Graduate, Capstone, and
Digital Portfolio Alignment*

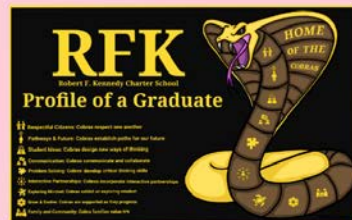
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RFK Charter High School
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ON TRACK FOR OUR FUTURE

Capstones & Digital Portfolios: Elevating Student Relationships, Choice and Voice



Brief Description of RFK Capstone and Digital Portfolio



Profile of a Graduate

At RFK all graduates show respect for each other. They each will establish individual paths to their futures. They will design new ways of thinking. RFK students and graduates communicate and collaborate. They develop critical thinking skills. They incorporate interactive partnerships. They exhibit exploring mindsets. They are supported as they progress and they and their families value RFK.



Proficiency Checklist

▪ Capstone aims to demonstrate a student's mastery of a particular subject or field of study through research and action. It is a culminating course that integrates and applies the knowledge and skills acquired throughout high school and demonstrates career and college readiness completed in their senior year.

▪ A student's capstone pathway determines the type of project they complete. Traditional pathway students design projects based on their interests and are encouraged to incorporate service learning. Bilingual Seal pathway students focus on projects that highlight the value of bilingualism. We will soon add CTE pathways in areas such as welding, child development, and autobody. As our course offerings expand, so do our capstone options.

▪ The Digital Portfolio is being developed as a meaningful way for students to demonstrate their growth and achievements. This hybrid model not only showcases their best work and learning over time but also celebrates their unique voices, experiences, and journeys throughout high school.

▪ Students are introduced to the Digital Portfolio in 8th grade and begin building it in 9th grade through advisory, core classes, and capstone. It tells the story of their high school journey—highlighting meaningful moments, showcasing their learning, reflecting on their growth, and mapping their path toward the future.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



I was helping with the food drive at RFK High School



Me and classmates went to UNM University to get an idea of what their campus looked like.



I went to protest Feb 3, 2025, to support Immigrants and my culture in Downtown Albuquerque

Mindfulness, Self-Advocacy, Reflection, Resiliency, and Conflict Resolution

Social Emotional Learning



Connecting Students to Key Social Emotional Learning Competencies

- Within Capstone, Students are:

- Setting goals and working toward them.
- Engaging in school and seeing the relevance of education to their future.
- Become resilient in facing and solving real-life problems.
- Given opportunities to showcase their work to their families and community.
- Practicing public presentation skills in an authentic setting.



- Within Digital Portfolio, Students Are:

- Reflecting on how they contribute to their school community.
- Reflecting on their personal and academic growth over time.
- Articulating in their own words how they met the expectations set for them for graduation.
- Demonstrating strong communication skills.
- Measuring their success not just one accomplishment at a time, but as a body of work.
- Constructing a growing portfolio that showcases who they are and





Relationships, Internships, Careers

Community Partnerships

Community Partnerships include work based learning, internships, volunteer work, and community presenters and career design and service learning collaborators. Through them:

- Students are encouraged to build mentor/mentee relationships.
- Students engage in community issues.
- Students were guided through conversations with caring adults that support them through self-reflection, setting goals, working toward those goals and pointing out the relevance in attending school and engaging in their course work.
- Through these partnerships and their projects students built resilience in the face of obstacles and utilized problem solving skills.



Student Voice and Choice


- To create programs that truly engage and inspire, we focus on student voice and choice. In Capstone, students lead their own learning—selecting passion projects, partnering with their communities, and designing meaningful final projects.
- We listen to our students through discussions, surveys, and collaborative activities to understand their needs and aspirations. Their voices guide us as we continually refine our curriculum and inspire more meaningful learning experiences.
- Our Digital Portfolio is a true collaboration between students, staff, and the community. Students help shape its foundation—designing our Profile of a Graduate and reflection questions—and bring it to life through their own voice, choice, and creativity.

Dylan Barrera


Secondary Effects Of Gun Violence

What support is there to combat secondary gun violence effects?


I chose this issue because it is something that I want to learn about, I personally know people who have been affected by this issue. I have never asked how this affects them, I want to know how this impacts their daily lives and the struggles they go through every day.



Statistical information states, that the consequences of gun violence are more pervasive and affect entire communities, families, and children. With more than 25% of children witnessing an act



This is related to youth health and well being because teens are a big part of gun violence. There are many deaths due to this. People in not just my community but in other communities have these issues as well. They are scared and don't feel safe.



Barrera, Dylan
December 3, 2024
HONOLULU, HAWAII

Introduction

Gun violence is a big issue that affects not just the youth but everyone who forms part of a community. Gun violence is when people are affected by a firearm left with nothing to do or anyone. It can have a big impact on mental or physical health. One of the main issues is lack of resources and money so you can't get the help and support they need usually or physically. The purpose of this paper is to bring more attention to this issue and the secondary effects gun violence has, so that this issue that continues to grow within our communities. The paper presents research from three different articles, an abstract on this issue explaining the help that is needed and the struggles and challenges of a victim experiencing gun violence.

The Impact of Gun Violence on Children, Families, & Communities

Effects on Child Development

The article "The Impact Of Gun Violence On Children, Families, & Communities" by Julie Collins and Emily Silverthorn explains the impact of gun violence affecting youth, families, and communities. Starting off with children who suffer the exposure to gun violence which can delay a child's brain development. This causes negative effects later on in their life. Children in high crime neighborhoods often suffer and struggle emotionally which can lead to aggressive behavior. These challenges are causes of stress and trauma due to so much exposure to violence.

Community Culture

Communities express a concern about the culture and fire of violence in their community. This is where guns are often seen as a response to fear. Children and youth in these areas without an ability to solve a conflict may turn to violence and with exposure to gun violence reducing them to its effects.

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LITERATURE REVIEW



I am set to graduate in May 2025, after a senior year schedule full of college courses. My teachers and I have decided that my capability to graduate early is better focused on completing as many pre-required college classes as possible before my intended graduation. The header image is a picture of a mural I painted between my junior and senior year inside of my schools front office.

Connecting Academic Success to Earning Credits and Pathways to Postsecondary Choices


Academic Development



Challenging the Mind to Build Lifelong Learners



- In engaging in a year-long Capstone project addressing a local challenge students:
 - Met with community leaders about challenges in our community.
 - Picked a passion project and a community partner.
 - Conducted research and wrote a college entry level literature review.
 - Presented their research to staff and peers.
 - Created a direct or indirect service project that took them into the community to serve or build awareness.
 - Participated in a Senior Showcase of their work.
- In constructing a growing portfolio documenting their academic, career-related and personal work and growth students:
 - Wrote a personal narrative.
 - Created a resume.
 - Collected and showcased artifacts as evidence of their learning journey.
 - Showcased their community involvement.
 - Reflected on how they met the 9 indicators of our school's student created profile of a graduate as well as their academic and personal growth in high school.
 - Outlined their next steps for career or college.
 - Defended their portfolio to a panel of staff and community members.
 - Engaged in an exit interview with question built from indicators in JHU's National Milestones.



Trying out new roles to build new knowledge

Community Connections

- Ongoing career exploration begins in 9th grade through advisory with Monday Career Exploration Days and culminates with students identifying their dream career and steps they need to take to reach their dream career in their digital portfolio.
- Students begin taking dual enrollment courses taught by staff from our local community college and university at age 16 through CNM and UNM and in some cases work on courses where they earn certificates that can be used to secure future jobs.
- Beginning in 10th grade, students are encouraged to tour colleges and trade schools as they explore different career pathways.
- Through Design Team, students build leadership skills, communication skills and critical thinking skills to address issues at the school level and bring student-centered solutions.

In their own words: What students are saying...



"Every class I'm taking at UNM requires a digital portfolio. I'm so glad we did one or I would not have known what to do."
Mikey Montoya

"Most of the students in my college class didn't know how to write a research paper. I did because of the Literature Review Paper in Capstone. I was like the only one who had written one." Angelica Sanchez



"I've never written a paper this long. I didn't think I could do it, but I'm proud that I finished it."
Adamaris Martinez

"I was so nervous. I hate presenting. I'm glad it's over and I think I did a pretty good job. I think I can present at the showcase, it isn't as hard as I thought." Melanie Rodriguez



Understanding The Whole Student to Promote Success

Relationship-Driven Pathway Supports



Digital Portfolio: A Celebration and Assessment of the Whole Student



Creating a digital portfolio empowers students to celebrate their whole selves—academically, socially, and personally—while building the skills and mindsets that prepare them for life beyond high school. By curating and reflecting on their work, students develop self-advocacy, goal-setting, and resiliency, learning to articulate where they are in relation to graduation milestones and future aspirations. Portfolios offer space to showcase academic achievements, service learning projects, career exploration, and personal growth, honoring both their strengths and their learning journeys. Through yearly reflections with caring adults, peer mentorship, and authentic opportunities to present their work to families and communities, students build confidence, agency, and leadership. This ongoing, student-driven process ensures that their unique voices, interests, and aspirations are at the center of their education—creating a pathway where every student is seen, valued, and celebrated.



Shifting Power Dynamics

Student Design Team

- Student Design Team is a student led, staff supported group who come together to tackle issues that exist at their high school.
- Students are **nominated collaboratively** by teachers and administrators.
Selection is based on **academic performance, communication, and leadership** skills.
The process is grounded in **knowing each student individually**.
- Selected students **build cohesion** through intentional, team-based activities.
These activities help students **develop trust, collaboration, and shared purpose**.
- The team addresses school challenges using the **Libratory Process** — a framework combining **human-centered design, equity, and systemic thinking**.
It focuses on **shifting power dynamics** and **building student agency**.
Students design **with those most affected by inequities**, ensuring solutions are authentic and sustainable.

Capstone Class: Personal Relationships Equal Deeper Reflections and More Thoughtful Projects



- **Relationships with Staff:** Throughout the process of completing a capstone students are encouraged to work with staff and community members to build understanding of their topics, refine their thinking and make real-world connections beyond the classroom. These relationships go beyond the projects into the students' adult lives.
- **Relationships with Community:** Many of the projects ask students to gain a deeper connection and understanding of the community they live in to effect change in that community. This helps students build community and cultural awareness and pride and to look beyond problems into people and the unique things that shape their community.
- **Relationships with Peers:** Through the process of capstone students build long lasting bonds with one another. They have traveled this journey of discovery and action together. They have helped one another through the rough parts, helped each other think deeper, challenged one another to do more and aim higher. This has a profound impact on the students as they finish one part of life and begin the journey into the next part. They are stronger for their bonds with one another.



This promotes agency, belonging and connectedness within themselves and their community.