

The Portfolio

Your questions answered

Why am I keeping a portfolio?

Beginning with the class of 2008, students in the state of Washington will have to complete four requirements in order to earn a high school diploma. They are:

1. Complete all required coursework and credits.
2. Pass all required portions of the WASL.
3. Create a high school and beyond plan.
4. Complete a culminating project.

The goal of the culminating project is to draw a connection between the student's high school education and the real world that he or she will be entering upon graduation. This project is to culminate in a presentation to a group of community members- other students, parents, members of the larger community.

Snohomish High School chose, in its School Improvement Plan, to develop a project which would encompass all four years of a student's career and lead toward a final presentation of an educational autobiography presented in the senior year. The goals of the portfolio project are these:

1. To focus your attention on meeting high expectations and on developing habits which result in quality work. These skills are essential to success in post-high school experiences, whether they be in your future work or educational settings.
2. To focus your attention on future goals. The portfolio requires that you identify a career pathway of interest and plan an educational schedule which leads to those goals. This is the third graduation requirement mentioned above.
3. To provide a place to gather information from which you will develop an autobiography and from which you can develop essays for college entrance and resumes for work. (Grades, activities, awards, community service experiences, quality and best work assignments)

The final project will be an oral presentation (accompanied by a visual component- a Power Point or physical display) to a panel of community members which uses the portfolio to address a number of issues including:





1. Where am I going next?
2. How did my high school career help me to identify and build on my strengths and interests?
3. How did my high school career help me to identify my weaknesses and learn to overcome them?
4. Of what work am I particularly proud?
5. What classes were particularly engaging, relevant and challenging?
6. Who was important to me in helping me develop through high school and helping me clarify my future goals?

7. How did my work, athletics, activities, community service, community activities, travel, help me to become a contributing member of a democratic society?

There is a tab in my portfolio which reads "Quality Work?
What goes in that section?

In each of your semester classes, grades 9-12, you will be given one particular assignment which is identified as a "Quality Work" opportunity. This particular assignment has been chosen by your teacher because it is a significant example of what you have learned and are able to do as a result of taking this class. This assignment was selected by all of the teachers in the department and a rubric was developed to assure that all students doing this assignment would be graded on the same criteria. You must "meet standard" in all categories to include this work in your portfolio. The hope is that you will exceed standard in at least some categories.

Each year you must submit at least four pieces of work to your portfolio. It is easiest for you if all of these works meet the quality standard and are put in this section. If you meet standard each assignment throughout your high school career, you could have 48 assignments in this section of your portfolio. All you are **required** to have in this Quality Work section, however, are four! By the time you graduate you must have at least one QW from:

-  an English or Social Studies class
-  a Math, Science or Technology class
-  a Fine Arts, Occupational Education, PE, or World Language class
-  any course of your choosing.

If you do not have four quality works to submit each year, you must have at least one quality work and three Best Efforts.

Just remember that these are **particular assignments**, identified by the teacher and accompanied by a graded rubric. You may have lots of other work that is high quality, but it does not go in the QW section. Some of this work may be best put in the "Personal Achievements" portion of the portfolio

Tell me more about this Best Work section.

Your portfolio has a section labeled Best Work; it would probably have been better labeled "Best Effort" There is one important reason that you would put a piece of work into the Best Works section:

You have not met the "four yearly assignment" requirement in the Quality Work section and believe that the work you did on a Quality Work assignment, even, though it did not meet standard in all categories is one of which you are proud and is of significant enough importance to be added to the portfolio.

In order to submit it to the portfolio, you will need to do two things:

- ✓ Write a brief reflection about why you feel that this is your best work and submit it to the teacher of the course in which it was completed. The statement must include-
 - Specifically explain why you are proud of this work;
 - List what you have learned by completing this work;
 - Tell how you could improve your work if you were to do it again; and
 - Explain how this work is related to your High School and Beyond Plan, why you have an interest in or passion for, or how you see this Best Work connected to your future.

- ✓ Receive a 3.0 or higher on the grading rubric for the reflection paper.

As you can see it is much easier to just meet quality work standards on your assignments and submit them to the quality work section. If, however, you have not done so, this is a good back-up option.

What goes in the tab labeled "Future Goals, Pathways and 13th year plan"?

If you look on the back of your portfolio you will find a "Career Planning Checklist". You will see that in each of your four years of high school you will be provided an opportunity to complete and update a "13th year plan". For the class of 2008, this was done in your history class when you were a freshman. If you do not have a copy of that plan, do not worry about it at this time. You will be completing one in your sophomore health class, again in your junior year in conjunction with your US History class and in meetings with your counselor and again in your senior year in your social studies class and in conjunction with your counselor. Each year, when you complete the form it should be put in your portfolio. If you keep all the forms it will help you see how your thoughts and directions have changed over the years. This is also where you will keep your completed notes from College and Career Fair, write-ups of any job shadows or internships that you do, and copies of the ASVAB and other career interest inventories that you take over the years.

What goes in the section labeled "Benchmark Proficiencies".

This is where you will put a copy of your WASL scores. Your goal should be to pass the Reading, Writing and Math portions of the WASL this spring. If you accomplish this, you will put in a copy of your scores and this section will be finished. You will also have fulfilled graduation requirement #2 above.

If you do not pass a given section of the test you have four more opportunities to take the test. Every time you take a test and get a report, a copy should go in this section. Below is a copy of a WASL report. It is important that look carefully at the section at the bottom which tells you what particular parts of the test you did not do well on. You will want to talk with your teacher and counselor to see what class work or remedial work would be most important for you to take in order to do well on the test the next time you take it.

Please explain what is meant by the section heading "Education and Advanced Training"?

This is where you are going to put a copy of your latest transcript. We will provide you one at the beginning of each year. This is also where you will put evidence of other classes you have taken outside of school- vocational training programs, dance, acting, karate, religious education, CPR training, Food Service handlers licenses-- any specific classes and training that you have taken to increase your opportunities or let you follow your passion.

How about "Personal and Individual Achievement"?

This is the place where you are going to put all of the stuff that you are proud of- or if you are very humble—the kinds of things that your parents would be proud of. Actually, this is the place where you are likely to find good resume building material- which testifies to your hard work and good character.

This is where honor societies, awards from organizations outside of the school- Scouts, YMCA, community organizations, church; Athletic letters, Awards, programs from concerts and plays in which you have been involved.

This is also the place where you want to put photographs of the car you rebuilt, the cabin you helped construct, the poems you submitted for publication, the mountain top you climbed—this is where your interests and passions will be documented.

This is also the place where you can put class work which is neither QW or BW, but of which you are proud and my want to reference in your senior project.

What if I don't have any of this stuff?

Start getting involved in some activities which give you a sense of achievement. These activities may not result in artifacts which can be put in this section, but that does not mean that they are not important. At the end of the year, you should sit down and write a reflection about the things that you have done that have given you a sense of accomplishment. This reflection should be put in the portfolio; it will be good practice for the final project in your senior year.

What about the sections labeled "leadership and work experience"?

You will be provided a sheet to complete for this section at the beginning of second semester. On it you can keep a growing list of activities in which you have taken a leadership position and jobs that you have held. If there is printed material associated with your place of work or the organization, club or team, in which you have provided leadership, this would be a good place to collect that; it can be used in your visual display for your final project. It would be good to get letters of recommendations from employers and statements of support from the adult leaders of organizations in which you are involved.

What is left to put in School and Community Service?

This section is all about service. It is where you will document the ways in which you have made this a better school, a better community, a better world. Your senior community service requirement will be documented here of course; but this is also where you document Panther Pals, LINK leadership, your volunteer tutoring, your volunteer coaching, work at your place of worship, service trips to other communities, the times you helped meet and greet at school, your recycling efforts. You will receive a sheet to complete for this section at the beginning of second semester.

So, what if I didn't meet the requirements for last year?

Because this is a new program, we are going to be liberal on last year's requirements. You can use work from your sophomore year to meet your freshman year requirements. However, if you are not on track by the end of this year, you will have to go through a "plan of action" process with your counselor before starting school in the fall. You want to avoid this process!! Be sure to attempt to meet quality work standards in all your classes. It is the easiest way to meet your portfolio requirements!