

## Passion Projects: An Overview for Parents

We are about to launch our Passion Projects. A Passion Project is an independent investigation of a subject of the student's choice. The children will have seven weeks to research, write reports (second and third year students only), create a visual display and develop a supplemental sensory-based experience on a subject about which they feel passionate and excited.

In class we discuss options for fulfilling the requirements of this project and field questions from the students. We also pass out a list of sample ideas for the passion project. While the standards are high, the educational goals and expectations differ according to students' levels of expertise and experience. Each student will receive individualized guidance from the teaching staff.

The bulk of the work for the Passion Project will be done in class, ***but you should be prepared to offer extra support and quiet work time as needed.*** Parents may help with planning, research and/or the additional element but the work must be the result of the student's efforts. Parents are invited to attend an informational meeting regarding appropriate levels of help. *The project must be the result of the student's learning, decisions, and work. The projects are to be designed, created and managed by the student. Family and friends may provide support only.*

Over the past several years, we have learned that the most helpful kind of support for most students involves assistance in planning and research. Talk to your kids about what they're doing - what they've accomplished at school, what they're planning for their additional element, what kind of research they need help with, etc. Repeated trips to the library to find good resource books are one of the most essential forms of help! Also, younger students often need help reading their resource books and deciphering valuable/usable information that they encounter.

We are sending home this detailed explanation so that you will know what your child is up to, and be able to provide support and enthusiasm. ***It is extremely important that your child's Passion Project is a direct result of his/her OWN IDEAS, INSPIRATION, PLAN, and WORK. However, please plan on being involved in your child's process. Be ready to help organize, guide, reassure, ask questions, and help keep the project focused.***

Parents will also provide a tri-fold display and any special tools that are necessary for the visual and additional elements (clay, ingredients, special paper, special markers, etc.). When your child develops a plan for creating the visual display and additional element, she/he will need help gathering raw materials to bring to school. When the student is ready to begin constructing his/her Visual Element, a special trip to craft store can inspire and provide unique papers/design elements. Parents are also asked to help the child acquire any images for the poster (except for hand-drawn/painted illustrations) and send them to school in a timely manner.

Each student will maintain a Passion Project Folder. This folder will contain a calendar with due dates, their proposal, outlines, rough drafts of the written report (if applicable) and research. This folder can travel to and from school in the student's tote bag to ensure that parents have an accurate understanding of the work that's happening at school. Any research the student does at home should travel back to school in the folder. Communication between parent and child is essential! Any questions that the child cannot answer should be redirected to Ms. Nicole immediately.

During the first week of June, the children will present their Passion Projects to their classmates. That evening, we will host a Passion Projects Reception at 6:00 pm for families and other community members. At the Reception, students set-up and present their Passion Projects to the larger audience. Extended families and friends are invited. We also extend our invitation to the entire MCH community, with a special focus on Kindergartners and incoming Kindergartners. Individual hand-made invitations will be coming home in several weeks, but please mark your calendars now.

The following schedule has been presented to the students as a guide for their project and research:

Week of April 14	Brainstorming/Selecting Topics and Passion Projects Proposal (to be submitted and approved by Friday)
Week of April 22	Research and Planning
Week of April 28	Research and Written Report Outlines (2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> years - must be turned in by Friday)
Week of May 5	Visual Element (tri-fold must be at school on Monday!) First Draft of Written Report (2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> years - must be turned in by Friday)
Week of May 12	Visual Element, Written Report Revisions - 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> graders only
Week of May 19	Additional Element, Final Draft of Written Report - 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> only, must be turned in by Friday
Week of May 27	Finishing Touches on Project, Final Copy of Written Report - 2 <sup>nd</sup> & 3 <sup>rd</sup> only, must be turned in by Friday
June 2	Final Project Due (Must be turned in by <b>Monday</b> ) Oral Presentation/ Talking Points, Practice for Presentations and Public Speaking
June 4 or 5	Passion Projects Reception, 6-8 pm (location TBA)

# Passion Project Guidelines: *Independent Study*

## Goals:

- Attaining knowledge about a topic that excites and inspires the individual student.
- Developing abilities through research, discovery, and creativity.
- Engaging the emotions in a positive sense, through having a chance to explore something a person really cares about
- Providing information and experience to the class in various forms, e.g., formats that reach out to the five senses: sight, hearing, taste, touch, smell.
- Creating educational experiences for others
- Developing public performance skills through presentations

## Procedure:

- Each student will choose one topic to focus on for a six or seven-week-long study.
- Projects are presented to the community of students and families at a reception.

## Schedule

- Each student chooses a topic, signs the Passion Project Proposal with the teacher and begins working on their project.
- Outlines of the *general* project and plan are submitted with the Proposal.

## Process:

- Each student, working with the teacher, develops a plan of their tasks, projects, written work and any other experience they plan to create (e.g., food).
- Each student is responsible for creating the following elements for their project:
  - First year students: Visual Element, Additional Element and Oral Presentation. Students are also expected to maintain an annotated list of resources (books, websites, interviews, etc.).
  - Second year students: Same as above with the added element of a written report with some revisions/drafts
  - Third year students: Same as above with the added element of multiple drafts/revisions of the written report
- The bulk of the work for the Passion Project will be done at school.
- Family and friends may help with planning, research and/or the additional element but the work must be the result of the student's efforts. Parents are invited to attend an informational meeting regarding appropriate levels of help.
- *The project must be the result of the student's learning, decisions, and work.*
- *The projects are to be designed, created and managed by the student. Family and friends may provide support only.*

**Assessment:**

- Expectations for quality shall be consistently high.
- All work must be done with care and attention to detail.
- Due dates must be met.
- A scoring rubric is used by the student in a self-evaluation. The teacher also prepares a rubric evaluation.

***Teachers will:***

- Have a tracking sheet to follow each student's Passion Project progress.
- Offer support, guidance, reassurance, suggestions, organizational assistance and other assistance as necessary.
- Prepare an assessment of the student's projects.

**Research Sources:**

- Students may use many sources, including books, encyclopedia, websites and interviews.
- We maintain a high standard for research. To be included as verified fact, a piece of information must be encountered in multiple (three or more) reliable sources.
- All sources will be given proper credit in a project bibliography.