



Gwinnett School of Mathematics, Science, and Technology Senior Capstone Experience Executive Summary for Sponsoring Organizations

Gwinnett School of Mathematics, Science, and Technology (GSMST)

GSMST is a charter high school operated by the Gwinnett County Public Schools serving students throughout Gwinnett County in grades nine through twelve. The focus of the curriculum is advanced studies in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. Students complete the majority of their required high school diploma coursework by the end of their sophomore year, and their junior and senior years are focused on intensive studies and experiences in students' selected areas of concentration within three principle pillars: bioscience, engineering, and emerging technologies.

Senior Capstone Experience

All junior and senior students at GSMST are required to participate in an internship, or fellowship, experience during both their junior and senior years. These fellowship experiences allow students to connect with a mentor who is a current practitioner in an applied STEM field. The Senior Capstone Experience is a culminating project that provides students with an opportunity to synthesize previous experiences for an in-depth exploration of an area of interest. The Senior Capstone Experience includes on-site collaboration with a mentor at his/her office and/or lab, as well as virtual or remote contact. The SCE is built around three experiential time frames and two growth pillars. The time frames are used to show students the connections between their past, present and future; whereas, the growth pillars are used to help the students evaluate and synthesize their SCE *as a learning and developmental pathway towards future college and career choices*.

An Internship Coordinator and Faculty Advisor at the school will work with each student and mentor to assure the optimum experience for both and to monitor student progress during the internship. Mentors and students are trained prior to the start of the fellowship in order to develop and assure a meaningful placement.

Types of Senior Experiences:

- **Career Projects** – A twenty to twenty-four week internship with a company or university, averaging five to ten contact hours per week; students are matched with a mentor, or continue work with a previous mentor, and together they develop a proposal, outline the tasks to be accomplished, and complete the culminating deliverable (product, portfolio, or project) and presentation.
- **Independent Research** – A yearlong experience in which students develop in depth knowledge about a topic of his/her choice, such as conducting research in his/her area of interest, designing and developing an experiment, submission to a science fair or similar competition, and culminating presentation; students will be required to work with a mentor as a part of the experience.
- **Curricular Project** – An opportunity for students to enroll in GSMST or university electives in his/her area of interest for an in-depth exploration of the field; students will be required to complete a portfolio demonstrating new knowledge and interest in his/her area of interest.

Sponsoring Organization

The sponsoring organization will provide mentors for the student mentees, allow for the time needed by mentors to attend training and to meet with and host student mentees, support the proposal development, and the ongoing monitoring of the capstone experience. Mentors should have a personal commitment to making the experience a success for both the sponsoring organization and the student mentees. Mentors are not responsible for grading or other academic responsibilities included in the program.

To express an interest in becoming a sponsoring organization, please contact::

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