

Big Sky High School CAS Project

(Creativity, Activity, and Service)

2021 - 2022



“Learning is not attained by chance, it must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence.”

-Abigail Adams

Table of Contents

Senior Project Overview

➤ Why CAS and Learning Targets	3
➤ Learning Outcomes	4
➤ Components of the CAS Project	5
➤ Examples of CAS projects	7
➤ What is NOT CAS	9
➤ Learner Profile and VIPs	10
➤ FAQs	12
➤ Due Dates and Timeline	14

Forms

➤ Parent/Guardian Consent Form	15
➤ Verification Form	16
➤ Time Log	17
➤ Reflections	19

Didn't CAS used to be called Senior Project?

Why yes, yes it did 😊 However, our school has been an International Baccalaureate (IB) World School for several years now and in a desire to align all of our goals for our students into a simpler model (and with a little assist from almost two years of Covid-19 upheaval) the time was right to make a shift that does a better job of meeting the needs of our students, supporting our school goals and retaining the best aspects of the old Senior Project.

Why Our Seniors do a CAS project

Big Sky wants its students to leave here excited and able to determine what they want from their lives; whether that is a career, skill, or experience, and feel confident that they have the ability to achieve their goals. Students must be able to foster connections and create professional relationships outside the classroom, and have tools to expand their personal growth and curiosity. In order to do this, students need practice and guidance in creating plans, managing roadblocks, setbacks and deadlines, exploring ideas and activities, and being a meaningful member of a community. The CAS project is an opportunity for students to experience managing responsibilities and priorities predominantly on their own. We want our students to feel that when they are confronted with stress and uncertainty after high school, Big Sky has given them the tools to move forward.

Pro tip! – A great tool for success is to read the handbook 😊

Pretty much all of your questions can be answered in this handbook – but if you require extra assistance that is where Mrs. Helmer comes in. She is the CAS project guru and you can email her at: mbhelmer@mcpsmt.org

She spends most of her time lurking in rm 42 and she will be managing the CAS Project Google Classroom.

Big Sky Mission Statement:

To inspire and educate students to be curious, critical thinkers who strengthen our communities.

Why CAS?

CAS is meant to be an enjoyable extension of academics that encourages students to become good citizens. Students learn and practice new skills and discover new interests. CAS requires students to take risks, interact with the world around them, and consider the ethical implications of their actions. Students will compile a portfolio of their activities with reflections, evidence, and best student work. They will present their personal growth on Presentation Day in the Spring.

What is CAS? (This is just a brief overview – more details deeper in the handbook!)

CAS is an acronym for Creativity, Activity and Service. Students will engage in each category for 10 hours, for 30 hours total.

Creativity: the arts and other experiences involving creative thinking.

Activity: physical exertion contributing to a healthy lifestyle.

Service: an unpaid and voluntary exchange that has a learning benefit for the student. The rights, dignity and autonomy of all those involved are respected.

Each category is very broad and there is a lot of room for students to tailor their time working in CAS to benefit their goals.

Students will need to verify they have completed work in each category, so they will upload the following to their digital portfolio:

- Evidence of their work (pictures, videos, any materials they gather (pamphlets, paperwork, etc.)
- Verification form - completed by the supervising adult to verify the student completed their stated hours (This form CANNOT be completed by a family member)
- Reflection for each activity.

Four criteria that must be met for each CAS Activity:

- Activities should be real and purposeful with significant outcomes.
- Tasks should involve personal challenge and be achievable in scope.
- Activities should involve thoughtful consideration: planning, reviewing progress, reporting, etc.
- Students should reflect on outcomes of the activity and on personal learning.

Who completes a CAS project?

Everyone!*

*Some sort of exceptions:

- Diploma Candidates have more extensive requirements for their CAS project and should refer to the CAS handbook specifically for Diploma Candidates.
- Students in the Health Science Academy who will be completing their BI project as part of their coursework.
- Students in Special Education or with accommodations through an IEP will be reviewed on a case by case basis for the CAS project to be waived or modified accordingly.

ALL other students will complete a CAS Project as an expectation for graduation. Students who complete their CAS project will receive a credit on their transcript.

Learning Outcomes of CAS are:

- ❑ I can choose a project that excites me and shows a learning stretch, which is the process of gathering new information or skills above and beyond what I already know.
- ❑ I can approach other adults I may or may not know and maintain professional communication in person, on the phone, and through email and collaborate with various individuals while completing my CAS project.
- ❑ I can create a realistic time table, and think ahead in order to complete all components of my senior project.
- ❑ I can complete a lengthy project that is outside of my regular coursework, has multiple stages and requirements, and either furthers my own post-secondary goals or gives back to my community.
- ❑ I can complete post-secondary worthy pieces of writing, through revision and editing to hone good communication skills.
- ❑ I can learn to organize, plan and complete necessary steps (forms, paperwork, etc.) to meet my goals and keep all necessary documentation in a professional portfolio.
- ❑ I can learn valuable skills for managing setbacks and how to ask for help in a timely manner.
- ❑ I can present my project in a confident, clear and engaging presentation to an audience.

Components of the CAS Project

Student Archives

- We want our students to leave Big Sky with tangible items that will impress gatekeepers (university advisors, employers, etc.) so we ask them to keep and assemble a track record of their best achievements in their last two years of High school as a section of their portfolio.
- Students must include a minimum of two pieces of their best work. One must be written, and the other may be written or a product. Students may of course submit more than two.
- Students will also include other artifacts from the designated list.

CAS

- The process of planning, setting up, executing, recording and writing reflections for your hours in each category.
- Three categories (Creativity, Activity, Service) - 10 hours each, for 30 hours total.

**PLAN
COMPLETE
EVALUATE
REFLECT**



Portfolio

- A digital and/or physical record of ALL your documentation for CAS
- KEEP EVERYTHING (receipts, pictures of progress or events, forms, timelines, communication, etc.)
- Student Archives are included in your portfolio.
- A requirement for your presentation.

Presentation

- Culmination of your last two years as a student presented to a panel of judges and peers. You will present how you determined what you wanted to do, how you planned out each category, and what you learned through the entire process.

Examples of what you could do for your CAS Project

This is not an exhaustive list, but simply a way to help you start to think of ideas.

Creativity	Activity	Service
Participating in a school play Singing (music competitions, choirs outside of school) Painting Photography Literary magazine submission Dance Choreography Music lessons & performance Film club or Production Dance classes & performances Sculpting (clay, stone, welding, wood, etc.) Writing (script, novel, book of poetry, short stories, etc.) Mural painting Architectural design DJ at a dance Building a Website Making a detailed Map Stand-up Comedy Writing and Performing music Video Editing (not for Social Media) Creating and Recording a Pod Cast Designing and implementing House Décor or Landscaping	School Sports Intramural or Club Sports Ice Skating Skiing and Snowboarding Rock Climbing Yoga Hiking Learning a new sport Martial Arts Marathons/5Ks Group Fitness Classes (Yoga, Pilates, Spinning, Oula, Dance Classes like Western Swing or Salsa, Body Pump, etc.) Boxing/KickBoxing Mountain/Dirt Biking Kayaking/Canoeing Snowshoeing	Tutoring Nursing Home Visits Service-Oriented Clubs (Key Club, NHS, Student Government) Helping Elderly Neighbors Missoula Food Bank Poverello Big Brother/Big Sister Raising Awareness and funds for Service organizations (Wounded Warrior Project, AniMeals, Parks Project, etc.) Community and St. Pat's Hospital Habitat for Humanity Missoula Senior Citizen Center Montana Conservation Corps Special Olympics Watsons Children Center Humane Society United Way Big Sky High School (help clean up your school!) Church/Youth Groups

Other Requirements and Considerations:

- For each category, whatever you decide to do, there must be a product or outcome. This could be a performance, games, exhibition, formal event, a completed product that is complex and took time. So for example, if you are performing service for the Veterans Cemetery the outcome of your work are clearing a section of the ground of debris. If you are learning how to rock climb, an outcome might be finally finishing a challenging route after practicing on smaller less technical routes. For Creativity you have taken a pottery class and produce two-three pieces that you are proud of – maybe you enter them in a contest, or have them displayed somewhere.
- You can combine two categories into one activity as long as you can get 10 hours for each out of the same activity. So for example if you are choreographing a dance for a contest, the hours spent designing the dance, picking the music, lighting etc. would count towards the Creativity category, and the actually practice and performance could count towards Activity. If you design a fund raiser, the designing of the flyers and decorating the event space, etc. would count towards creativity, and the event itself could count towards service.
- You do not have to spend the whole 10 hours doing the same thing, although you certainly may. You may split your activities in each category.
 - So for service, you may pick up garbage, serve meals, help out the food bank and spend time at Animeals.
 - For Activity you may spend five hours hiking and then a couple hour mountain biking and another taking a Yoga class.
 - For Creativity you may take two to three art classes, spend time playing an instrument or leaning a new dance routine.

MAIN THING: Make sure that what you choose to fulfill your CAS project is a range of things that help you be a well-rounded person.

One of the categories might be familiar and comfortable. *You have been playing soccer, dancing, or hiking your whole life so covering your **Activity** portion is a piece of cake.*

Another might be something you have done before but you want to try a new direction. *You have always shoveled your neighbors sidewalk but for **Service** you want to do more so you volunteer to spend time in the kitchen at the Poverllo Center.*

Perhaps one of the categories is something completely outside of your comfort zone. *You have never tried to paint with any medium so you take a watercolor class, you try out for the school play, you join a sports team, or learn a new sport you have never played.*

This is an opportunity to try to experiences, hone your skills in a familiar area, and learn new things. So look for ways to do something that you've always wanted to try!

What is NOT CAS – or what does not qualify

CAS should be an interesting variety of activities that you find worthwhile and rewarding, and that are mutually beneficial to you and to your community. Generally, CAS is active and involves interaction with others. IN addition, CAS activities allow for personal growth. The following examples and scenarios are to help you understand what does NOT qualify as an activity in any CAS category.

- any class, activity or project that is already a part of your regular school day. For example, if you are in choir, you may not count time in that class, or the performances – however if you are in a specialized choir that meets outside of class time, you may count those hours and performances.
- simple, tedious and repetitive work.
- a passive pursuit, e.g., museum, theatre, exhibition, concert visits.
- family or religious duties (you cannot count cleaning out your family garage as an act of service. You may however, clean out an elderly neighbor’s garage.)
- work experience that only benefits the student, or that involves financial gain (you cannot be paid for completing CAS)
- fundraising with no clearly defined end in sight (You can certainly put on a fundraiser, but the goal needs to be clear and the funds need to be dispersed before Presentation day)
- an activity where there is no responsible adult on site to evaluate your performance.
 - once again, family members are NOT allowed to sign the verification form.
- activities that cause division amongst different groups in the community such as political activities or religious proselytizing.
- Working in any environment when you:
 - have no understanding of how it operates.
 - have no contact with those in charge or people who are working that is meaningful.
 - do not perform a service for other people

The Learner Profile and VIPs

Big Sky is an IB World School and committed to providing a well-rounded education for our students. The **IB Learner Profile** is a part of this process. The four components of the Senior Project meet the learner profile in several ways:

Student Archives encourages students to be **inquirers** by determining topics that are of interest to them, and use written **communication** to grow as **thinkers** critically and creatively.

CAS asks that students be **open-minded** to new possibilities and avenues, **balance** their work loads and schedules and interact with the community through professional, **principled communication**. Learning to work with others, and be active members in the community also expands students understanding of what it means to be a **caring** member of a community and encourages them to be **risk-takers** by trying something new, going outside of their comfort zone and engaging with people they do not know.

The Portfolio and Reflections ask that students be **reflective** of a long and involved process so they can evaluate their strengths moving forward. It asks students to be organized and provide physical evidence of their best attributes as a student; something they can use after graduation in their future endeavors.

The Presentation asks that students present to the public and their peers. This final piece also ties in **communication, reflection**, and a chance to share the students' **inquiry** process with others.

VIPs

SOAR Time on Thursdays: SOAR time on Thursdays from 9:40 to 10:25 is built into the schedule. It is very important to attend this time to check your grades, receive important updates about all things Senior year as well as your CAS project. The teacher you are assigned to for your SOAR time will be the one evaluating your Portfolio at the end of the year.

Google Classroom: The CAS Project Google Classroom is an **essential** aspect of the CAS Project. The code to join is:

Make **SURE** you are entered into the Google Classroom as this is where you will get updates about deadlines, can ask questions, and submit your evidence, verification forms, and reflections (which will be assignments in the classroom) to compile your digital portfolio. You will also submit your portfolio for grading through the google classroom. **Once you have completed and passed your portfolio you will be scheduled to present in order to earn your credit.**

- You should also regularly check your email for communications from Mrs. Courtney and Mrs. Helmer
- **You can also follow @bigskyCASprojects on Instagram for updates and information throughout the year.**

CAS Project Advisor – The teacher you are assigned for your SOAR period on Thursday is also your CAS Project Advisor. They will:

- *Assist you in your project, provide encouragement and answer questions, and provide information throughout the year.
- *Grade your Portfolio

CAS Project Coordinator – The Senior Project coordinator works with seniors, the advisors, the BSHS staff members, the parents, the community, and the administration to guide each senior toward a successful Senior Project. The coordinator is also responsible for organizing and scheduling the presentations. She will collect all forms and maintain the Google Classroom. This person will also approve your plans for your CAS project.

This person is Meleina Helmer, found in room 42. ☺

English Teacher – Senior English teachers at Big Sky will guide you through several different types of writing and critical analysis. You will use your skills learned in your English class in many other classes and aspects of your project. They will assist you in writing your reflections, as well as other more extensive pieces for your Student Archives. **You will pick what you feel is the best substantial paper you produced to put into your portfolio. The paper must have received a C or higher.**

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can I start my project during the summer of my Junior year?

A: Yes – however the 10 hour minimum requirement for each category must happen during your Senior year. You must fill out a form and get your plan for each category approved by the CAS Coordinator before you can continue. You must also complete the Student Archives, Portfolio, and Presentation during your Senior year.

Q: How will the CAS Project be evaluated?

A: You must have a passing Portfolio in order to be scheduled for Presentation Day.

You must pass your Presentation and Portfolio (and all prior components) to meet expected requirements for Senior year and to receive credit on your transcript.

Q: What if I am a student with special circumstances?

A: Special circumstances and modifications will be handled as follows:

- a. *Students with an IEP or 504:* If you are a student who has an IEP/504, you are required to complete a CAS Project. Accommodations needed to complete the CAS Project will be addressed through your IEP/504 process.
- b. *Transfer students:* If you are a transfer student to Big Sky before or during your senior year, you are required to complete a CAS Project. You will work with the CAS Project coordinator to plan and implement a CAS Project which can be successfully completed in the given time frame.
- c. *Extenuating circumstances:* If unusual circumstances should arise, they will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis by the CAS coordinator, counselor and administration.
- d. *Early graduates:* If you are planning to graduate early, you are required to complete a CAS Project. You should also meet with the CAS Project Coordinator early in your senior year so that you can set up a plan to complete all components by early graduation in January.

Q: Who pays for costs associated with my CAS Project?

A: You do – though it is possible that you may not have many, or any costs. It depends what you want to pursue in each category. This is one of the things you must consider during planning. Try not to let cost restrict your ideas for your CAS Project. Instead, use your imagination and discover a way to do your ideal CAS Project with minimal expense. Discuss your project budget with your parents and advisor.

Q: Can two or more students work together on a CAS Project?

A: At this time students need to complete their own projects and may not work together. If, you feel you have a compelling case for working with someone you need to make an appointment with Mrs. Helmer to present your case, and she will decide if you may proceed.

Q: I am a Diploma Candidate, in BI, or APS – do I need to do a CAS project as well?

A: No – DP candidates are doing CAS but it is more involved and starts in the Junior year – These students will follow the requirements outlined by IB.
Students in APS and BI are already completing extensive projects for their coursework and do not need to also complete a CAS project.

Q: Can I leave school to work on my CAS project?

A: You can, providing you follow these rules:

- ✓ You may leave campus only if your parent or guardian communicates with the attendance office.
- ✓ Use your free period time wisely: schedule meetings, volunteer hours, or work time during this time when possible.
- ✓ You may leave school to work on your CAS Project during lunch or study hall period. Have a parent make arrangements with the attendance office to do so.
- ✓ **You may not miss a class to work on your CAS Project.**

Q: What happens if my initial plans are derailed by forces outside my control, or does not go as planned?

A: That is okay! First thing to do is meet with your SOAR Advisor and make a plan to move past the setback. Don't give up! The goal is to get the experience and practice going through this process.

Q: How do I keep track of everything and how do I submit it?

A: Your portfolio is digital and it is through Google Classroom. You are welcome to create a physical portfolio with a three-ring binder if you wish. Any item for your portfolio that is physical (papers you print out, forms signed, materials obtained through your process, pictures and videos of your activities, etc.) can all be uploaded into your space in the Google Classroom. There will be specific assignments that you will submit to. Once those have been recorded Mrs. Helmer will return those documents to you and will put them into a folder to submit in May to your SOAR Advisor for marking.

Helpful tips:

1. **SAVE EVERYTHING** – every scrap of paper, napkin, picture, receipt, email etc. Anything that is even remotely connected to your CAS project should be saved.
2. Update time logs frequently so you can keep track of your work. **TAKE PICTURES AND VIDEOS! SAVE ANYTHING THAT VERIFIES YOUR PROCESS!!!!**
3. Keep all of your work for your portfolio in **ONE** place so you don't lose any of it. Whether a physical place or a digital one in your Google drive – one place, always.

Due Dates and Timeline

FORMS - DUE: OCTOBER 1st

- ❑ Parent/Guardian form: Paper form, that you will need to have your parents/guardians sign. This is the only physical form you will need to turn in to Mrs. Helmer in RM 42.
- ❑ Proposal Form: Completed by the student – this will be your first ‘assignment’ in the CAS Project Google Classroom. This is a Google form you will complete that simply asks you what you are thinking about doing for each category (Creativity, Action and Service) of your CAS project. Mrs. Helmer will review and approve your plan.

EVIDENCE, VERIFICATION FORMS, TIMELOGS, AND REFLECTIONS – DUE between October 1st and April 29th

Students have the entire year to complete their hours in each category. You can upload your evidence of activity (pictures, video, scans of paperwork, etc.) as you go, or when you have finished an activity. You may finish your entire project in one month, or take your time and space it out throughout the year. After finishing an activity (whether it is a portion of the 10 hours or the whole 10 hours) you should get your verification form in, and complete your reflection.

STUDENT ARCHIVES: DUE MAY 2nd (Part of the Portfolio)

The student archives section of your portfolio is something you should work on throughout the year. This section is about showing off your life as a student so you can use these pieces once you graduate. As you get awards, finish a project or paper, apply for schools, etc. be continually working on these pieces.

Remember you need 6 artifacts: 1 of them is a best piece of written academic work, another best piece of academic work (written or not), and four more artifacts that show off your skills, achievements, etc. from your time in high school.

PORTFOLIOS: DUE MAY 2nd

The portfolios are available through google classroom for you to update throughout the year, but before May 2nd it will be up to you put everything together into one digital folder (in an organized way so it is easy to access) to be submitted to your SOAR advisor. **Mrs. Helmer will provide templates for how your folder should be organized as this date gets closer.**

PRESENTATIONS: Date and format TBD in the Spring – End of May.

Parent/Guardian Consent Form

Complete this form in September. Once your parent/guardian has signed, upload a digital copy to your portfolio and turn in the hard copy to Mrs. Helmer in room 42 (DUE October 1st)

- I understand that completion of a CAS Project is an expected requirement of the Senior year, and my student will receive credit for completion.
- I have read and understand the CAS Project Handbook.
- I have discussed the CAS Project with my son/daughter and believe that he or she understands the requirements of the project.
- I understand that there may be costs associated with this project and that the student is responsible for these costs.
- I understand that my son/daughter may need to go off campus during the school day to work on this project. If he/she is under 18, I understand that I have to make arrangements with the attendance office. Note: Off-campus work during the school day for the CAS Project is not required and should be respected in lieu of the requirements for other school work.

Parent/Guardian Name (please print) _____

Signature: _____ Date _____ Telephone _____

Public Relations Release

I give my permission for a photograph or video of my son/ daughter/ ward/ self (circle all that apply) to be used in the media, including newsletters, newspapers, magazines, future handbooks, etc. His / her / my name may also be used. I also give permission for any or all parts of his/her project to be used for either teaching or public relations purposes.

Date _____ X _____
Signature of student

Date _____ X _____
Signature of parent/ guardian

Verification for Each Category

This form will be submitted after you have completed your hours for an activity in all three categories. The advisor, manager or person in charge that can verify your time and participation should fill out this form.

- When you are ready to have this form filled out you will go to the Google Classroom and the assignment for the category you are verifying. (So for example, Creativity Verification Form) and you will fill out brief google form explaining who is verifying your time. Through that form you will supply Mrs. Helmer with an email address. You can also print the form, have them fill it out and bring the paper copy to Mrs. Helmer, after you upload it to your portfolio.
- Mrs. Helmer will email that individual the following form to verify your time and participation. Once that individual completes the form and emails it back to Mrs. Helmer, she will mark your grade as complete for that form and provide you with a copy.

Verification Form

Student's Name _____

Since most of the student's time spent on the activity component of this assignment has been outside of class, verification of the student's efforts is necessary. Please answer the following questions to help us evaluate the student's participation.

Please describe your role/expertise/experience/etc. as it pertains to supervising the student in their activity.

Please describe what the student accomplished and what you observed during your time with the student.

Please indicate the number of hours you observed the student performing this activity (hours do not need to be consecutive)

Were there any specific problems did this student encounter and overcome?

Additional Comments or Observations:

Evaluator's Signature _____

We may contact you to verify the student's experience. Please give us your best contact information on the line below.

Telephone _____ email: _____

Date _____

CAS Project Time Log

Use this form for documenting your hours for each category experience. Make duplicate copies of the first page as needed, but make sure to total hours for each page, and have a final total. You can opt to not use this form, but you must keep track of your time in some way to verify your work. You may keep track of your time digitally, or physically and then upload it.

Date- write clearly the date you worked on your activity field experience



Date

Category and Activity- Write clearly the Category (Creativity, Activity, or Service) and a detailed description of what you did.



Activity/Evidence

Time- write clearly the amount of time you spent on your activity field experience



Time

Date

Activity/Evidence

Time

Date

Activity/Evidence

Time

Date

Activity/Evidence

Time

Date

Activity/Evidence

Time

Total Hours this page: _____

Date

Activity/Evidence

Time

--

--

--

Date

Activity/Evidence

Time

--

--

--

Date

Activity/Evidence

Time

--

--

--

Date

Activity/Evidence

Time

--

--

--

Date

Activity/Evidence

Time

--

--

--

Date

Activity/Evidence

Time

--

--

--

TOTAL HOURS FOR CAS PROJECT: _____

Reflections

Reflection is an integral part of your CAS experience. The Reflections are a great way to help you plan for your presentation, as your Presentation in the spring covers your growth as a student as you engaged with each category.

- Reflections should be a minimum of 1000 words but can and should be lengthier.
- They do not have to be strictly formal, and can be written in first person. However, they should be thoughtful, free from error and polished.
- You will complete 1 reflection for each Category – so three Reflections total. If you choose to do multiple activities for a Category make sure to discuss each activity you engaged in for that category in your reflection.

To develop a valuable reflection that illustrates personal growth start simply with the following questions:

General Reflections: at the end of each activity you will need to spend time considering the following guiding questions:

1. Describe the activity. Summarize what you did in this activity and how you interacted with others. What did you do at each stage?
2. Explain what you hoped to accomplish through this experience.
3. What did you hope to accomplish? What did you actually accomplish?
4. How successful were you in achieving your goals?
5. What difficulties did you encounter and how did you overcome them? Did you feel at any stage that you were failing to achieve what you wanted?
6. What did you learn about yourself and others through this experience?
7. Did anyone help you to think about your learning during this experience? If so, who helped and how did they help?
8. How can you apply what you have learned in other life situations?

Information about Rubrics, Presentations and Portfolio layout and Rubric are forthcoming, but for now GOOD LUCK and I hope you find activities that you will enjoy, will challenge you, and will give you new skills or perspectives.

