

SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE

Since the adoption of the new Illinois Learning standards, we've talked a lot about enhancing our curriculum to focus on the development of critical thinking skills; providing continuous opportunities to apply those skills to real-world problem solving; and teaching our kids how to effectively communicate and collaborate with others to problem solve. As a result of those discussions, Palos South launched a new program in 2015; Capstone.

Our Capstone program focuses on developing those important skills discussed above as well as those skills all too often ignored in school – creativity, ingenuity, and perseverance. The program affords students the opportunity to work in small teams to select and explore a problem of local or regional significance, spending the entire year working with their team and outside experts to develop a solution to their identified problem. Each team is assigned a faculty advisor who serves as a co-learner, co-planner, co-producer and co-evaluator. At the end of the semester, our eighth grade Capstone teams present their findings and proposed solutions using a multimedia platform to the fellow Capstone teams, faculty, parents, and community members in a celebration of their successes.

The program is built on the premise that our kids can do amazing things if just given the opportunity to do so in an environment that champions creativity and not test scores. Capstone is not intended to make our students' eighth grade experience overwhelming, as we are cognizant of the academic demands already placed on them. In order to incorporate this program into each eighth grade student's schedule, those electing to participate in Capstone are required to attend one day of Zero Hour per week for a year, or two days for one semester. Capstone schedules are coordinated with Zero Hour band schedules, and students may utilize Zero Hour bus transportation on Capstone days.

We're excited about the continued development of the program, and the opportunities and experiences it affords our Palos South Students.

Sincerely,

Anthony M. Scarsella
Superintendent of Schools