



CAPITALCITY

PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

Lower School Family Handbook

2017-2018

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CONTENTS

I. Introduction	Page 2
Mission	
History	
Governance	
School Organization	
School Philosophy and Approach	
 II. Lower School Handbook	 Page 6
Admissions	Illness
After School	Internet Access
Arrival and Dismissal	Lunch
Attendance	Medications
Bathroom Policy	No Smoking/Drug-Free School
Birthdays	Parent Involvement
Breakfast	Parent-Teacher Conferences
Cell Phones	Parking
Communications	Pick-Up Procedures
Contact Numbers	Portfolios
Curriculum	Promotion/Retention
Discipline	School Closings
Dress	School Records
Elevators	Security
Extended Day Programs	Specials Classes
Fare Cards/Student Transit	Snacks
Fieldwork	Special Education Referrals
Food and Drink	Student Progress Reports
Gum and Candy	Testing
Head Lice	Toys, Electronics and Other
Health and Safety	Personal Items
Holidays	Transit
Homework	Visitors
Hours of Operation	
 III. Program Terms	 Page 24

Introduction

Mission

Capital City enables a diverse group of students to meet high expectations; develop creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills; achieve deep understanding of complex subjects; and acquire a love of learning along with a strong sense of community and character. We will graduate young adults who are self-directed, intellectually engaged, and possess a commitment to personal and civic responsibility.

History

Capital City Public Charter School was founded in 2000 by a group of parents and teachers from Phoebe Hearst Elementary School, a small, diverse, high-performing school in Northwest Washington that despite its well-documented success was repeatedly threatened with closure. In September of 1999, the District of Columbia Public Charter School Board approved the initial charter application, making Capital City the first parent-founded charter school in Washington, DC.

On September 5, 2000, Capital City Public Charter School opened with 135 students in grades Pre-Kindergarten through 5th grade in commercial space at the corner of 14th and Irving Streets. In 2004, the school renovated and relocated to the National Capital Presbyterian Church building at 15th and Irving Streets where we served 244 children in grades Pre-K through 8 until 2012.

Capital City successfully amended its charter in 2006 to expand our educational program through grade 12 by adding an Upper School. The Upper School opened in the fall of 2008 at the original Capital City site in Columbia Heights with 129 students in 6th through 9th grades. The Upper School added a grade each year until reaching 12th grade and graduated its first senior class in 2012.

In 2012 Capital City relocated all grades to a single site, the former Rabaut School Building at 100 Peabody Street, NW. Capital City completely renovated the building and designed the space to fulfill our mission and support our program. With this move, Capital City expanded from two campuses to three to have a separate middle school program designed to meet the unique needs of this age group.

Capital City has been an Expeditionary Learning school since its inception. Expeditionary Learning emphasizes project-based instruction to help students meet rigorous academic and character standards. Capital City has been recognized as a demonstration site and mentor school for Expeditionary Learning and hosts many visitors annually. Two local

expeditionary learning schools, Two Rivers and E.L Haynes, were intentionally modeled after Capital City.

Capital City has compiled track record of obtaining excellent student outcomes with urban children. We have received many awards and acknowledgements for our work. A highlight was a visit from President and First Lady Obama in 2009 where the **president** stated, “This kind of innovative school, the outstanding work that is being done here by the entire staff, and the parents who are so active and involved, is an example of how all our schools should be.”

Governance

The DC Public Charter School Board granted the charter to operate Capital City and continues to monitor our activities. The school’s charter agreement and DC Charter Law set forth all of the legal obligations of the school.

Capital City is one of 52 charter schools in Washington, D.C. As a charter school, we have a great deal of autonomy. We develop our own curriculum, manage our own budget, secure and manage our own facility, and determine our own staffing model and personnel policies. We welcome the accountability that comes with our autonomy: we believe it is important that publicly funded schools demonstrate compliance and results. Capital City is not managed or governed by the District of Columbia Public School system and is not bound by most of its regulations.

Capital City is governed by a Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees is comprised of no more than 13 people, two of whom are current parents. Our volunteer Board provides oversight, support and expertise for the successful operation of the school. The Board of Trustees meets bi-monthly. While meetings are public, the Board reserves the right to hold closed executive sessions when dealing with confidential matters like personnel issues. A list of current board members and approved minutes are available on our website.

School Organization

As defined by our charter agreement, Capital City is one school with three campuses: a Lower School, a Middle School and a High School. Each campus is led by a principal who supervises the majority of the campus instructional staff and is the point of contact for parents for most issues. Additional campus administrators include a Director of Student Services, an Instructional Coach and an Office Manager.

Capital City (and most charter schools) functions as our own Local Educational Agency (LEA), which means that we have most of the responsibilities of a school district. We have a Head of School who serves as the leader of the LEA and a central office staff that handles most of the LEA operations and duties.

As a school we believe in shared leadership and in modeling democratic practices that involve all who are directly affected by the school, most importantly the students. There are many opportunities for parents, staff and students to participate on leadership and planning teams.

School Philosophy and Approach

At Capital City we believe that school should prepare students to participate in society by offering a challenging academic program based on active learning through real-world experience. We also believe that schools should foster healthy social development, character building, and the acquisition of life skills. At Capital City, the core elements of the instructional approach are consistent across the grades of our Pre-K – 12 program. These core elements include:

Deeper Learning: Much research and evidence show that there is a critical set of skills that students will need to succeed in a changing world. These deeper learning skills of critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, communication and learning how to learn are the core focus of instruction at Capital City. Through these deeper learning skills, we build a foundation in traditional academic subjects and foster an understanding of grade level content and skills.

Authentic Experiences: At Capital City we believe that learning should be compelling for students and connected to the real world while fostering the deeper learning skills described above. Students in all grades engage in-depth studies called learning expeditions. Through expeditions students participate in fieldwork, meet with experts, engage in research and in turn become experts themselves. Students share their expertise with others through projects and by presenting their work to a real audience.

Personalized Instruction: At Capital City every student is well known by their teachers and peers and challenged and supported in their learning. Intentional structures support our approach to personalization including low student:teacher ratios, daily advisory or class meetings, on-going assessment of progress and strong parent-school collaboration. Instead of traditional instruction centered on teacher lectures and a passive role for students, Capital City classes use the workshop model to tailor instruction for individual students. A class typically begins with a whole-class mini-lesson in which new material is introduced. The bulk of the period is devoted to working on assignments and projects where students work independently or in small groups while teachers circulate to provide targeted assistance and assess student progress. At the end of the period, the entire class reconvenes to debrief the day's work, communicate about the new learning, and raise questions or topics for further investigation.

A Whole Child Approach: We believe in educating the whole child at Capital City. We focus on a strong social curriculum where students develop social skills within the context of a nurturing community. We also believe the arts are vital to our whole child approach and support creative expression in all grades. Beginning in Pre-K, all students are provided instruction in visual arts, music and drama and arts are integrated in the core curriculum. We also support the health and wellness of students through a comprehensive sports/fitness program, health education and building a healthy environment.

Family Engagement: We believe that parents are our partners and are our students first and best teachers. We actively engage families through parent-teacher conferences, school events and volunteering. We have an open door policy and invite parents to visit at any time. We want all parents to feel welcome and connected to the school. We know that parent engagement is a big contributor to student success.

Lower School Family Handbook

Admissions

Parents of current students must notify the school, in writing, by early March each school year, of their intention to re-enroll for the following school year. A reminder and form will go home in student folders before the deadline. Parents who miss the deadline, but later notify the school of their desire to have their child attend next year will be placed on the waiting list. Note that these procedures also apply to 8th graders wishing to continue on to Capital City's 9th grade and 4th graders wishing to continue in the Middle School program. Capital City students are guaranteed admission, but must comply with all registration requirements. The first requirement is written notification of intent to return.

Parents who wish to enroll a new sibling for the following year must complete the application process through *My School DC*. Siblings will get preference in admissions, but only if they apply. Information about the application and deadlines will be sent by the school and also will be available in the school office and on the website. Sibling preference applies to brothers and sisters of students currently enrolled at Capital City who live in the same household. It does not apply to cousins and other relatives unless they live in the same household and are cared for by the same guardian. Please e-mail admissions@ccpcs.org with questions about sibling preference or speak with our Enrollment Specialist.

After School

Capital City offers an aftercare program for students in grades PK-8. Students must be registered for this program and a fee must be paid to cover the cost of childcare and related activities. To encourage use of aftercare, Capital City offers reduced fees on a sliding scale, as well as partial week plans and drop-in options tailored to each family's specific needs.

Any student not participating in aftercare, or clubs must exit the building upon dismissal. This means no later than 3:40 pm Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, and 1:40 pm on Wednesdays. Students are expected to be picked up by an authorized adult or, with guardian permission for older students, to walk or Metro home.

We understand that unforeseen situations may occur throughout the year that may cause a student to be picked up late. We ask that parents be in contact with the school to ensure good communication when emergencies arise.

Being late to pick-up students poses a serious problem as designated staff are not on duty to supervise students who are not participating in school activities. The following

steps will be taken if you are repeatedly late in picking up your child:

1. Capital City will contact you via email and/or by phone to reiterate the policy and ask for your cooperation.
2. Capital City will issue a written warning and require a meeting with the principal.
3. Capital City, by law, will refer the situation to the Department of Child and Family Services.

Please look for additional information in other communications from Capital City for information on Before-Care, After-Care, athletics and other after school programs. We are eager to work with families to ensure students are engaged and cared for after school within the various programs offered.

Arrival and Dismissal

Arrival and Dismissal procedures are designed to keep students safer and make for a smoother, quicker, less congested arrival and dismissal process for all. The main student entrances to Capital City Public Charter School are accessed from the front of the building on Peabody Street. Lower School and Middle School students enter and exit through the main entrance and High School students enter and exit through the side entrance closest to the athletic fields. The District of Columbia will provide a DDOT crossing guard at both corners in front of the school (at Blair Road and at 2nd Street). The school is accessible by Metro train and bus.

Arrival: School doors open at 8:15 am each morning. Students should wait outside until then unless attending an official before school activity. In inclement weather including precipitation and temperatures below 32°F students will be permitted to enter the building at 8:00 am.

Parking: We ask that parents who wish to park for drop-off or pick-up avoid parking in either the 100-block of Peabody Street or the block of 2nd Street between Peabody and Oglethorpe. Parking a block away and walking to the front of the school to pick up your student is good exercise and helps to minimize traffic congestion in front of the school and in front of our neighbor's homes.

ADA-Accessible Parking: For students or adults with mobility concerns, parking spaces are available in the staff parking lot, accessible from 2nd Street through the parking gate nearest the blacktop courts. If the gates are closed, drivers can contact the front desk via an intercom at this entrance to gain access. Another intercom provides access to the school building via a staff entrance from the parking lot.

Drop-Off: We also ask that older students who are comfortable walking be dropped off a block from the school to minimize traffic on the 100-block of Peabody Street. Other students can be dropped off directly in front of the school on the south side of Peabody

Street. There is no parking allowed on the south side of Peabody Street, in front of the school, Monday-Friday 8am-4pm, which includes the times of arrival and dismissal of all three schools.

During arrival, drivers are asked to pull forward on the south side of Peabody (in front of the school) to drop off their students. Please do not drop off students directly across the street from the school, as they will need to walk to the corners to cross anyway – no jaywalking. Once students have safely unloaded, drivers must continue forward on Peabody towards North Dakota and Kansas Avenues. Please do not attempt to turn around on Peabody Street as this blocks traffic and creates a danger for students and other drivers.

Dismissal: All LS students must be picked up in the classrooms by an authorized adult or older sibling. Capital City requires authorization on file for anyone picking up a student. The school will not release a student to anyone else, even “someone the student knows” unless the person is on the list of approved adults who can pick up the student. This list can be revised at any time at the lower school front office. School staff reserves the right to request personal identification for anyone picking up a student. Students in Grade 5 will be escorted out of the building by teachers. Parents are to check in with teachers once classes are outside to sign their child out. Students in grades 6-12 will be dismissed directly from their last class period. Students are expected to exit the building soon after being dismissed with all student not in after school activities vacating the building by 3:40. Capital City cannot ensure the safety of unsupervised students waiting outside of the building before the building opens or after dismissal.

Drivers picking up students must stay in the car in the pick-up line on Peabody Street. There is NO PARKING on Peabody during arrival or dismissal. Drivers in line will be asked to pull forward as other vehicles leave the line. Once students have safely loaded into the waiting car, drivers must continue forward on Peabody towards North Dakota and Kansas Avenues. Please do not attempt to turn around on Peabody Street as this blocks traffic and creates a danger for students and other drivers.

Assessment

Assessment plays an important role in instructing, planning and supporting students. In addition to the PARCC, which is administered in third and fourth grades in the lower school, Capital City administers several additional internal assessments with students each year. The *Fountas and Pinnell* is a reading assessment that gives teachers important information about student reading levels and strategies to support reading growth. We also assess student writing three times each year, using *In Common* writing assessments and rubrics. Finally, students are assessed on their mathematical knowledge and concept development through our internally developed Math Benchmark and Unit Assessments. These assessments are designed to assess the

Common Core Math standards that Capital City has identified as most essential to continued success in the area of Mathematics.

Teachers share information gathered from these assessments at each parent conference. You will have the opportunity to see your child's work and ask questions about the results of these assessments. Please always feel free, at any time, to inquire with your child's teacher about his or her academic progress and development.

Attendance

Regular attendance is critical to a child's learning. Unnecessary absences and tardiness should be avoided. Examples of valid reasons for an absence are set forth in the School Policies included at the end of this guide. Parents should notify the school in writing, the reason for each absence and are requested to call the school by 9:00 a.m. if their child will be absent for the day. If the school does not hear from a family, school staff will call home to alert parents that a child is not in school. Parents will be contacted if their child is absent or tardy repeatedly without explanation, or if absences are excessive. Failure to improve attendance may jeopardize the child's academic progress, possibly causing the need for a child to be retained at grade level. ***Please see the Student Policies section of this booklet for a more detailed description of the school's attendance policy.***

Bathroom Policy

Having safe access to restroom facilities is important to the health and wellbeing of all people, including those who identify as transgender and gender-non-conforming. Students are permitted to use the same bathrooms as their peers. This means that transgender and gender-nonconforming students are entitled to use the bathroom that matches their gender identity. Any student, transgender or otherwise, who has a need or desire for increased privacy, regardless of underlying reasons, also has the right to access a single-user bathroom. These restrooms are available on the second floor near the gym.

Birthdays

Birthdays are very special events in the lives of our children. Birthdays in each classroom are celebrated monthly, typically on the last Friday of each month. Parents should coordinate with their the child's teacher, respecting both our healthy schools policy and any rules a teacher has established regarding celebrations during class time. Please remember that the school has a limited amount of extra supplies, so any birthday treat should come complete with all necessary paper products and utensils.

Invitations for any party held outside of school should be mailed to children rather than distributed through school unless the entire class is invited. Parents are also encouraged to avoid any hurt feelings by not shepherding a party group directly from school, for the sake of those not included.

Breakfast

Breakfast, catered by Revolution Foods, is available everyday during the school year. Breakfast is free for all students. Lower school breakfast is served from 8:15 - 8:30 via food carts in the LS Commons for grades 2-4, and in classrooms for PK-1st grade students. Students in grades 2-12 must enter their four-digit personal identification number (PIN) into a touch pad on the cart in order to receive their breakfast. This allows Capital City to verify which students are eating school breakfast and to claim reimbursement for the cost of the meal. For this reason, parents, siblings and staff are not permitted to take breakfast from the carts.

Cell Phones

Cell phones and pagers may only be brought to school with permission from the teacher or principal and proper notification by the parent. Please ask the front desk for the authorization form if you wish for your child to bring a cell phone to school. These items must be turned off during the day and kept in a backpack or by the teacher or front office staff.

Communications

Each student will have an individually labeled folder that will come home on weekly, with information from the school's front office for that week. The folder should be checked and emptied each week, and returned to school the following day. Parents are expected to read all communications that come home with their children. The Weekly Folder will be the primary method for home-school communication throughout the year. Although information will often be communicated using additional means such as email, text message or robocalls, checking your Weekly Folder regularly is the best way for you to stay informed about school activities.

It is very difficult for Capital City teachers and administrators to address problems and concerns unless they hear about them directly. We urge you to communicate questions and concerns as soon as they arise. You do not need to wait for designated conference times.

Questions or concerns specific to your child or to the classroom instruction should be addressed directly with your child's teacher. Classroom teachers will communicate the best times and methods of communicating with them at Back-to-School Night, and that information will be printed monthly in classroom newsletters as a reminder. The principal is available to meet with parents whenever the need arises. You can schedule an appointment in person, by phone or by email. We ask that you schedule an appointment with a teacher to have your questions or concerns addressed rather than

trying to communicate during drop-off or pick-up times. The attention of all school staff must be to supervising children at these times.

Questions and suggestions about school policy and procedures may be raised with the principal. Questions the principal cannot address may be brought to the Head of School. Suggestions may be made in person by scheduling an appointment. The yearly school survey is another important, but less immediate way to express your suggestions. You can also submit questions or ideas that are not related to school policies to the Parent-School Association (PSA). We are open to ideas about other ways to get feedback and input from parents. All parent suggestions are taken seriously and considered, although it would be impossible for the school to implement all ideas and suggestions. When possible, a school representative will follow up with parents about their questions and suggestions.

When raising concerns we ask that parents be direct, specific, and respectful. Parents should communicate directly with the teacher or administrative staff member. Be specific about the concern and any desired outcomes, and be respectful, with an assumption that everyone cares about what is best for children.

Everyone should leave a conference or meeting with a clear understanding of what the next steps will be, if any. If you are unclear about the follow-up steps or resolution, please ask questions before leaving the meeting. If you think of things after leaving a meeting that seem unclear or that you do not understand, do not hesitate to schedule a follow-up meeting.

If you are unhappy with the answer you have received when raising a concern or issue, you are encouraged to pursue the matter further. This usually would involve raising an issue with an individual's supervisor. To address a concern effectively, it is important to use proper procedures. Please see the School Policies directly following the Family Handbook for detailed information on grievance procedures.

Contact Information

It is imperative that the school be able to reach parents in the case of an emergency. Parents are asked to notify classroom teachers and the school office immediately if home, work, cell phone, or emergency contact numbers change. The more working numbers the school has to reach a parent, the more likely it is that we will be able to reach you quickly in an emergency.

Curriculum

Capital City fully implements the Common Core State Standards for Mathematics and English Language Arts (ELA). Standards are taught in an inquiry-based approach, and often within the context of the Expedition. Teachers develop curriculum maps that

outline the content and skills to be taught over the course of the year and resources that will support instruction.

Much of the curriculum is taught through learning expeditions. Expedition plans are developed or revised by teachers each year. They are designed to incorporate standards and focus on local and compelling topics. Every year there are two learning expeditions in each grade level, typically with one focusing on science content and the other on social studies content. Curriculum maps and expedition plans are available to all interested parents. Please inquire with the principal or lower school office manager if you wish to obtain copies of the curriculum maps.

Discipline

Capital City's approach to discipline is derived from the Responsive Classroom→ model, which incorporates social learning into the daily program. The use of positive discipline is an expectation at Capital City. Staff members will treat students respectfully in all situations. Children will be involved in making classroom rules and are expected to follow all classroom and school rules. Rules and expectations will be clearly communicated to students and consequences for breaking rules will be administered calmly and fairly. While on school property, parents are expected to discipline their child in a positive manner consistent with the Responsive Classroom model. Parents who physically discipline their child at school may be prohibited from participating in fieldwork and may be asked to wait for their child outside the building. The school's complete discipline, suspension and expulsion policy is included in the School Policies section of this Handbook.

Dress

Capital City does not have uniforms and dress is casual, but we do have a dress code to insure that students dress appropriately for the active nature of our program and in ways that do not distract others. Clothing should not restrict students from sitting on the floor, going on walking trips, and participating in adventure, dance, drama, and art activities. Students are encouraged to celebrate their sense of style and individuality, but to follow the guidelines outlined below. Students who come to school dressed inappropriately will be given alternate clothing to wear or will be sent home to change.

- **Shirts** must cover the chest, stomach, and back and not contain any negative images or writing.
- **Skirts** must extend to at least the top of the knees and be loose enough to allow movement and not restrict students from sitting on the floor.
- **Shorts** should extend to at least the mid-thigh.
- **Pants** should allow for comfortable movement and cover undergarments.
- **Hats** can be worn to school, but not in classrooms. Hats should be kept in lockers or backpacks.

- **Footwear** should be comfortable and safe for running and long walks. Sneakers are recommended. Slippers, flip flops, and high heels are not appropriate.
- **Purses** must be kept in lockers or left at home.
- **Jewelry** is welcome as long as it is not a distraction.

Students should wear or have available clothing suitable for both our air-conditioned and heated building and the outdoors. Because children will go outdoors for play every day, except in pouring rain, they should arrive on days of cooler weather with coat, hat, gloves and, if necessary, boots so that they can fully participate in outdoor play. Parents should understand that children will get their clothes dirty from time to time and dress children accordingly. All clothing should be labeled. All Pre-K and Kindergarten students need to keep a complete change of clothing at school that is appropriate for the season.

Elevators

Students are not permitted to use the elevator unless accompanied by an adult. Parents are welcome to use the elevator as needed.

Extended Day Programs

After School Care is geared for Pre-K3 through 8th grade students at Capital City. The purpose of the program is to provide a safe and nurturing educational environment for our students while their parents are working. The program supports the physical, intellectual, emotional and social development of each child; and is designed to be consistent in philosophy and structure with the school day program. The aim is an intellectually stimulating environment that is also relaxing and fun for students.

The After Care Program will run during the school year and is open on all regular school days. Hours of operation are 3:30-6pm with an optional extension until 6:30 for an additional fee. After Care will begin at 1:30 on Wednesdays and run until 6pm with the 6:30 extension option. In addition, the After Care Program will be open during most teacher planning days and parent conference days. Participation on these extra days will be limited to students who sign up in advance and there will be an additional fee for participation.

Please contact Program Director, Aisha Hassan, with questions. Aisha can be reached by e-mail at ahassan@ccpcs.org or by phone at (202) 808-9800.

Fare Cards/Student Transit

Capital City students are eligible for free metro fares by securing a DC ONE Card through the school. Families can request a DC ONE card from either the campus office manager or our front desk staff. Capital City will order the card and deliver it to the student when it arrives. Staff can also help to register the card and determine the Student Transit Subsidy via the www.dconecard.dc.gov website. The DC ONE Card will serve as a

SmarTrip card for Metrobus, Metrorail or the DC Circulator; Capital City staff can help to register a student's card with WMATA.

Food and Drink

Capital City maintains a nut-free campus. This includes all tree nut and peanut products and is necessary to accommodate student and staff allergies.

Students are not permitted to eat in the hallways, the lobby, or the Commons before, during, or after school. Students who arrive at school with open food will be asked to promptly put the food away or dispose of it.

Students may only have and drink non-carbonated, non-flavored water in class. The following foods are not allowed in the school or on school-sponsored fieldwork or activities - candy, flavored drinks (including sodas and energy drinks), and gum.

These guidelines are necessary to support healthy eating habits for our students, to keep the building clean and sanitary, and for Capital City to be compliant with the federal Healthy Schools Act.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork is an integral part of the Expeditionary Learning program. General permission slips for students to walk to the local public library and nearby playgrounds and parks were collected with registration materials and are already on file in the office. Teachers will send home additional permission slips for any trips outside the neighborhood. Children who do not have written permission from their parent/guardian will not be allowed to participate in fieldwork. Permission will not be accepted over the telephone. Capital City allots fieldwork funds to each class to defray the cost of fieldwork for families, but for most fieldwork there is a fee (usually for transportation). Please notify the teacher if you are unable to afford the charge, because financial assistance is available.

Excellent behavior is expected during fieldwork. If the teacher feels that a student's behavior would compromise their safety or the safety of others, the teacher may ask that the child not go on the fieldwork unless accompanied by a parent. Parents are encouraged to assist students during fieldwork, and fieldwork often requires parents to serve as chaperones, but teachers reserve the right to limit the number of parents who may attend.

Gum and Candy

Gum and candy are not permitted on campus or during school-sponsored fieldwork or activities. This includes Crew time. If a staff member or teacher notices a student chewing gum, the student will be asked to throw it away. If the student is repeatedly

chews gum, they will incur additional consequences such as being asked to perform school service.

Head Lice

Cases of head lice are extremely common in schools, especially during the fall and early winter months. Parents are asked to be aware of the symptoms of a head lice infestation and to alert the school if any of your children develop the condition. The school will send home information to all families about head lice, how to identify them, and how to treat them. Head lice are not dangerous and do not cause disease. They can be difficult to eliminate, and parental cooperation is essential to preventing the problem from spreading.

Capital City's policy is that a child identified with an active case of head lice, that is, live lice on the head or the presence of viable nits (eggs), must be treated before he or she can return to school. If your child is identified with head lice, the school will call you and send a letter home with your child. You will be responsible for documenting that you have treated the problem. The school will conduct follow-up checks to make sure treatment was effective. When lice is reported in a classroom, the school will generally inspect all students in that classroom and advise parents to continue monitoring at home.

Health & Safety

Capital City currently has a full-time school nurse. Nevertheless, the first-aid care the school can provide is limited. Should your child have a temperature or vomit, you will be contacted to pick your child up from school as soon as possible. The nurse or the office will call the parent in the event of an injury or illness and the student will be kept in the office until the parent arrives to get the child. **It is essential that the school have up-to-date contact information at all times for each parent.**

In the event of a medical emergency, the school will call an ambulance before calling the parents. Emergency medical forms for each student are on file in the office to guide school officials in the event of an emergency. Parents should ask to review their child's medical forms if they have questions or need to make changes. Students' medical needs, including those that may arise on school grounds, must be covered by parents' insurance. Parents should notify the office if they do not have insurance for their child or if they have any questions about their child's insurance coverage. The school may be able to provide information to parents interested in obtaining sufficient health insurance.

Holidays

Out of respect for the wonderful diversity of our school community, Capital City does not celebrate holidays of a religious nature including Halloween, Christmas, Hanukkah, and Easter. Families are invited to share their cultural traditions around holidays with

their children's classes and should talk to teachers directly to discuss an appropriate time and the content of such sharing.

Capital City has established some special traditions to recognize some holidays like Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday and Earth Day and parents will receive information about how they can help with these celebrations. We also have traditions to recognize other important days like the 100th day of school.

Homework

Capital City Lower School is doing some work this year to revise our homework policies. Parents can expect all students to be asked to read every night (this can include reading to your child, with your child, and listening to your child read to you). In addition to reading, there may sometimes be required math practice sheets and activities to promote academic vocabulary. More information will be provided at a later date.

Hours of Operation/School Day

Mon./Tues./Thurs./Fri.: 8:15 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Wed.: 8:15 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Illness

Please do not send your child to school with any contagious disease or condition such as the flu, strep throat, chicken pox, measles, conjunctivitis (pink eye), ringworm, scabies or head lice (see separate entry on head lice). Students found to have any of these conditions are required to remain home until they are no longer contagious. Parents may be requested to provide a doctor's note showing that their child is no longer contagious. Please notify the school nurse or Front Office if you discover that your child may have exposed students to any contagious disease. If your child is not feeling well in the morning, particularly if he or she has a fever, please do not send him or her to school. Parents should not send their child to school within 24 hours of vomiting or having a fever. Students receiving antibiotics for an illness should not return to school until 24-36 hours after beginning the course of antibiotics.

Internet access

All classrooms have Internet access and students in grades 3 and above will have individual student accounts. Students will not be able to access the Internet until they and their parents have reviewed and signed the school's Internet Use policy and student contract.

Lunch

Lunch is catered by Revolution Foods, and is available from the first day of school through the end of summer school. Menus are sent home monthly. Revolution Foods provides healthy meals with regular and vegetarian meal options. The cost is \$3.30/day regular price or free for students who have qualified for Free or Reduced Meals and

have turned in a completed Free and Reduced School Meals Family Application (FARM application). The FARM application is made available to parents and guardians in August and is sent to each student's home by the school. Please fill out this application as soon as you receive it and return it to the school. Families are also able to fill out a Refusal of Benefits form that acknowledges the FARM application was received, but that the family does not wish to apply for the free and reduced meal benefits. Capital City relies on 100% of families to complete either the FARM application or the Refusal of Benefits form and a student is not fully registered if neither of these forms are on file at the school.

Medications

Children are not permitted to take any medication in school without parent and doctor permission. No medications, including over-the-counter medications, can be administered to your child without a completed authorization form. If your child needs to be given medication at school, please request this form from the nurse or Front Desk **before you visit the doctor**. A parent, or designated adult, must bring the medication to the Front Desk with the completed form with proper signatures. Medication will be checked in and counted by certified personnel. If it is an ongoing prescription, each new bottle must be checked in. Our school nurse, or certified school personnel, will administer medication.

Alternatively, parents and guardians may come to school to administer medication to their child. **In the event of severe asthma or allergies, students may self-administer with parent permission via a “medication action plan”**. As of October 2007, an act of the District of Columbia allows students with severe allergies or asthma to have their medication accessible to them at all times for their use. If your child has severe allergies or asthma, you should contact the school to develop a medication action plan. This plan will allow students to self-administer “epi-pens” and “inhalers” in the case of emergencies. See the Director of Student Services in order to develop this plan.

No Smoking Building/Drug-Free School

Capital City is a non-smoking building. Parents, students, and staff are prohibited from using or possessing any tobacco products in the building or on school grounds at any time. Student use or possession of tobacco products is considered a serious disciplinary infraction. Please see the discipline policy in the Appendix of this handbook

Capital City is also a Drug-Free School. Parents and other visitors whom we suspect may be under the influence of alcohol or drugs will be asked to leave the building immediately. Students will not be released to caregivers we suspect of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs. If such a situation arises, we will first seek to contact an authorized family member to pick up the student, and if unsuccessful, we will contact Child Protective Services. Alcohol and drug use or possession by students is considered a serious disciplinary infraction.

Parent Involvement

Capital City is a parent-founded school. As such, our school not only welcomes, but requires a high level of parent/guardian involvement. Parents and guardians are encouraged to both support and advise the Principal/Head of School and collaborate closely with teachers to provide the best educational experience possible for all children. Parents are welcome to visit the school at any time. In fact, we would love to see every parent come in and visit your child's classroom at least once during the school year, just to see what your child's experience is like.

Each family is expected to contribute at least 20 hours of volunteer time to the school over the course of the year in activities that suit individual interests and schedules. Single-parent families are expected to contribute 10 hours a year. Parents are provided with a volunteer card to record volunteer activities.

Additional cards are available at the front desk. Activities performed both in school and outside of school should be recorded on this card. Cards should be submitted in February and June at Parent-Teacher Conference times.

Capital City has a Parent-School Association (PSA). Every parent of a Capital City student is automatically a member of the PSA. The focus of the PSA is to support the mission of the school and build community within our school through social and academic events.

Parents interested in leadership roles are encouraged to serve on a planning committee (as a committee chair or as a member), or to take on a coordinating role for a specific event or project (Family Fall Camping Retreat, Book Fair, or Back-to-School and End-of-Year Picnics). Parent leadership is strongly encouraged. Parent leaders are needed to coordinate volunteers, organize events, and lead committees. Parents and guardians are also needed to serve as room parents, help out at the front desk, participate in building clean-up days, or help in other ways during the school year. Teachers can use volunteers in classrooms, on fieldwork, and to help with special projects. Start volunteering early to complete your hours by the end of the school year. Parent ideas about parent involvement are welcome at any time and may be shared with the teachers, our School Counselor, the PSA, or the Principal.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parents are required to attend parent-teacher conferences in November, February, and June. Check the school calendar for specific days designated for conferences. A few weeks before conference days, teachers will begin signing parents up for conferences. You will receive information about sign-up procedures in your child's classroom newsletter. You will be expected to sign-up for a conference time in advance and teachers will most likely not be able to meet with parents that show up on conference day without a scheduled time. Parents requiring Spanish interpretation at conferences

will indicate their need when they submit their conference time preferences. Parents who require interpretation in a language other than Spanish should speak with their child's teacher so arrangements can be made.

The goal of the November conference is to share with parents their initial assessments and to discuss the student's particular strengths and weaknesses. No written assessments will be distributed at the November conference. Portfolios and additional assessments will be shared at February and June conferences and progress reports will be distributed.

All students will present their portfolios at the June conference (in many grades students also present their portfolios in February). Plan to bring your child with you to a portfolio conference, because they will present and explain their work. If you require additional time to meet privately with your child's teacher, that can be arranged either after your child presents his/her work or in a separate conference, depending on the teacher's schedule.

It is essential that parents be on time for all conferences. Teachers have an extremely tight schedule on conference days and being late could cause you to miss your conference. Teachers will not keep other parents waiting to meet with parents who have arrived after their scheduled appointment time.

Parking

There is ample street parking around the Manor Park neighborhood. We ask that parents do not park on the school side of Peabody Street during arrival and dismissal times. The parking lot is for staff only, with the exception of families in need of handicapped parking, for which there are several spots.

Pick-up Procedures

Unless your child is participating in aftercare or enrolled in an after-school activity, all students must be picked up from their classrooms at 3:30 pm (1:30 pm on Wednesdays). Parents needing to pick their children up early must sign the log at the front desk and are asked to let teachers know in advance, whenever possible, that their child will be picked up early.

Capital City requires authorization on file for anyone picking up a student. The school will not release a student to anyone else -- even someone the child knows -- unless the person is on the list of approved people who can pick up the student. This list can be revised at any time in the office. School staff reserves the right to request personal identification for anyone picking up a student.

Parents must make adequate arrangements to regularly pick up their child on time. Picking up children late is an imposition on school staff and may frighten young children.

If an unavoidable delay occurs, parents should contact the school immediately to notify that they will be late. It is extremely disruptive to our program, inconsiderate of teachers, and unsettling to children when parents are late to pick up their child. Parents who pick their children up late more than three times during the course of a school year jeopardize their child's readmission for the following school year. If parents are more than 45 minutes late to pick-up children without explanation, the school may contact the Department of Child and Family Services for support.

Capital City encourages parents to make pick-up arrangements clear to their children before school each morning. Children and teachers should always know who will be picking children up, when children will be going to aftercare, and which days they will be walking home (5th grade and above). It is best that communication with teachers about dismissal plans be made in writing. We ask parents not to call during the instructional day to make these arrangements with their child or expect children to call at the end of the day unless it is a real emergency.

Parents who suspect they may run late occasionally are advised to purchase after care "drop-in coupons" from our after care program. More information is available in the "Extended Day Programs" section of this handbook.

Portfolios

Students in pre-kindergarten through fourth grade create a portfolio of work each year. Portfolio work represents deeper learning toward high quality work, along with reflections on the process of creating that work. Students present portfolios to their parents at January and June parent-teacher conferences.

Promotion/Retention

Parents will be advised during the January parent-teacher conference if their child is experiencing academic and/or social emotional challenges that might warrant consideration of retention. If retention is a possibility, parents will be requested to attend an additional conference in April where this will be discussed. Though not a common practice in the lower school, mastery of grade level skills, social and emotional development, and work completion may all be factors in a decision to retain a child. The child's teacher, the principal and other school staff are available to discuss any barriers to promotion and welcome parent input about their child's progress, but the decision to promote or retain a student is solely that of the school.

School Closings

In the event of snow or other severe weather, Capital City will usually (but not always, see below) follow what DC Public Schools (DCPS) does. We will always try to announce Capital City's status through major news outlets even when the decision is the same as the District's. Currently Capital City closing announcements can be heard on WTOP (107.7 FM, 1500 AM, 820 AM, and WTOPnews.com). You can also check TV channels

4,5, or 9. School closing information will also be posted on our school's web-site www.ccpcs.org. You can call the main school number for a recorded update.

Situations where Capital City might differ from DCPS include times when DCPS closes because of conditions affecting only certain buildings, rather than citywide weather conditions, for example, power outages, heat emergencies, or unshoveled sidewalks. In cases like this, Capital City will make a decision based on conditions affecting our location. There is also the possibility that Capital City would close even if DCPS announces it is open (if our power is out, or if we are uncomfortable with their decision).

Capital City will typically not second-guess a DCPS decision to close during an active storm. If snow is actively falling and DCPS is closed, Capital City will be closed, even if the conditions seem mild. If there is any doubt, call the school, check the website, or look for confirmation on the news.

In the event of a weather situation or site-specific issue, Capital City may need to cancel After-School activities (After Care, sports practices or games, clubs). Capital City will attempt to notify parents and guardians as early in the day as possible using the automated calling system.

School Records

Parents can review their child's school records and request a copy if desired. To view records, students should contact our registrar to schedule an appointment by e-mail at registrar@ccpcs.org or by calling the school. To obtain copies of school records or transcripts, parents/guardians should complete a Records Release Form. Forms are available in the school office. Requests generally take one week to process. Because certain times of the year are especially busy for our office, we encourage parents to submit requests with as much time as possible before deadlines. Special education records are filed separately from the cumulative student files. Requests to view special education records should be made to the Director of Student Services. To respect student privacy, records are not shared with entities or individuals outside of Capital City without the written consent of a parent or guardian. When a student transfers from Capital City, his or her cumulative file is kept by the school for an indefinite period of time.

Security

The security of our school is everyone's responsibility. Please be aware of who you let into the school and only let in individuals you are sure have a reason to be here. Never prop open the front or back door. Parents and students are asked not to buzz people into the building without permission of a staff member. Everyone must announce themselves before being buzzed into the building. Children must not be left unattended

in the lobby or front plaza. It is also advised that bicycles and scooters not be left unattended in this area.

Specials Classes

Pre K-4th grade students attend weekly specials classes taught by the FLAMETH (Fitness, Library, Art, Music, Espanol, Theatre) team. In their specials classes, students have multiple learning experiences that are creative, kinesthetic and allow them to become experts in a variety of subjects. The FLAMETH team creates curriculum informed by national standards and best practices in their different domains. Specials classes tend to be small to ensure differentiated instruction and deeper learning. Specials teachers balance supporting classroom expeditions with creating and implementing their own specials-specific expeditions.

Snacks

Capital City will offer a daily snack catered by Revolution Foods. Standard and vegetarian snacks are offered and some allergy-restricted diets may be accommodated.

Students are not permitted to eat snacks outside of scheduled lunch or snack times. We ask that students not eat in the hallways, the lobby, or the Commons before, during, or after school. Students who arrive at school with open food will be asked to promptly put the food away or dispose of it.

We are conscious of the health of our students and ask that candy or soda never be sent as a snack or in children's lunches.

Special Education Referrals

Capital City is designed and staffed to meet the individual needs of its students. Special Education services and adaptations are provided within the classroom through the coordination and teamwork of the teacher, teaching fellow, inclusion teachers and Director of Student Services. The Capital City Inclusion Staff includes Inclusion Teachers, a Speech and Language Pathologist, an Occupational Therapist, a School Psychologist, a School Counselor, and an Inclusion Coordinator (Director of Student Services). This team helps families learn more about their student's abilities and learning style and coordinates services and accommodations for students with special needs. The Director of Student Services oversees formal and informal student assessments and the development and implementation of Individualized Education Plans (IEP).

The Inclusion Teachers provide bi-weekly consults to teachers to assist them in meeting the needs of students with disabilities. Each student with an identified need has an Inclusion Teacher that serves as the student's case manager. Parents will be contacted by this teacher at the beginning of the school year and can expect on-going communication and regular updates. Parents of students with IEPs should contact their

child's Inclusion Teacher or the Director of Student Services if they have questions about their child's IEP or the services their child is receiving.

Inclusion is meant to support and "include" students with special needs within a regular education setting. Our teachers provide a structured learning environment and hands on learning opportunities for 20-25 students. All students benefit from having students with special needs included in the classroom, aided as necessary by curricular adaptations and specialized accommodations.

If you think that your child may have a special need, you should contact your child's teacher or the Director of Student Services to share your concerns. If appropriate, an intervention plan will be created to address your child's academic needs. No formal testing will be conducted without parental notice and consent.

Student Progress Reports

Students will receive progress reports twice during the year, at the parent-teacher conferences in February and in June. Reports will include a narrative analysis and some evaluative component. A description of the progress report format will be distributed at the November parent-teacher conference.

Testing

As a public school in the District of Columbia, Capital City is required to administer all District-wide standardized assessments. Students in third grade and above will take the PARCC each spring. Students in first and second grades may take an alternative assessment. Parents will be notified in advance of testing days. This test can be a helpful indicator, among many other indicators, of a child's learning strengths and weaknesses. Children will be given some instruction on how to take this test, but teachers will not organize lesson plans or limit studies to suit the test. Parents will receive a copy of test results after they are received and processed by the school. Parents may make an appointment to discuss test results with teachers or the Principal.

Toys, Electronics, and Other Personal Items

Personal toys are not permitted in school unless approved in advance by the teacher. Children are strongly discouraged from sharing toys on sharing days. Any toys brought from home without permission will be taken and held by classroom teacher. Toys will be returned after communication with the parent.

Radios and personal stereos, video games, and other electronics are not permitted in school. Items brought by students will be taken and held by the classroom teacher. For the first instance, the item will be returned to the student at the end of the day; for the second instance, the item will be returned only to a parent or authorized adult; and for the third instance, the item will be kept until the end of the school year.

Cell phones and pagers may only be brought to school with permission from the teacher or principal and proper notification by the parent. These items must be turned off during the day and kept in a backpack or by the teacher or principal.

Transit

Students are eligible for discounted metro fares. This year families have the opportunity to order student farecards and tokens for the month and pick them up at school. Look for transit forms in the Thursday folder, or see our Front Office Manager for more information.

Visitors

Parents are an integral part of the school. Parents are encouraged to visit the school because it is one of the best ways to understand your child's school experience. Parents should discuss with their child's teacher and/or room parent ways in which they can assist with and participate in class activities. However, parents are discouraged from visiting their child's classroom for at least the first two weeks or until the teacher confirms that it is ok to visit. It is very important that teachers have the opportunity to establish routines and structures in the first few weeks of school. The presence of parents in the classroom can be confusing for many children as they adjust to school routines. Teachers reserve the right at all times to ask parents to leave a classroom.

After the first weeks of school, parents should arrange visits with their child's teacher. Visits are most productive when the time and purpose of the visit are discussed in advance. Typical visit purposes include: observing the classroom instruction or activities, observing or "shadowing" your own child, volunteering to help with a project or work with a small group, or presenting or sharing information or reading to the class.

All visitors, including parents, are asked to enter the building through the front entrance and sign in with the Main Desk Receptionist. Upon signing in, visitors will be given a visitor pass to the campus office or their respective destination.

Parents who are volunteering at the school are also asked to fill out their volunteer card so that the school can recognize their work and track the level of volunteerism at our school.

Program Terms and Acronyms

Adventure education: Supervised by trained staff, and chaperoned by teachers and parents, adventure education is designed to build community and teach important lessons related to the school's character traits. Adventure activities could include rock climbing, hiking, swimming, and ice-skating. Each grade participates in one full-day adventure trip per quarter, and the 9th grade also goes on a three-day camping trip each October.

Advisor: A Capital City teacher who serves as a mentor and supporter of 12-15 students in their advisory. Every student in grades 5-12 has an advisor (called crew leader in middle school). The advisor is the main point of contact with the parents of all students in his/her advisory group.

Advisory: A group of 12-15 students that meets daily with their advisor to discuss academic issues, share accomplishments, problem-solve individual or school dilemmas, and organize student work for portfolios and exhibitions. Critical to the school's goal of knowing all students well, advisory is designed both to care for students and to hold them accountable.

All-School Meeting (ASM): A gathering of the entire school in order to build community, share accomplishments and performances, and hear news and announcements of concern to all.

CES: Coalition of Essential Schools. Capital City's Upper School was founded by a grant from the Coalition of Essential Schools making it the first CES school in DC. CES is a network of hundreds of personalized, equitable, and intellectually challenging schools around the country. There are a set of Common Principles that guide the school's priorities and structures.

Celebration of Learning: Expeditions typically culminate with a celebration of learning where students present their work to an audience that typically includes parents and community members. Celebrations of Learning (COLs) are usually held by grade in the Lower School and are campus-wide celebrations in middle and high school.

Community Values: Capital City emphasizes five community values: compassion, contribution, courage, integrity and self-discipline. Students explore the meaning of these community values and are held accountable for living them throughout their time at Capital City.

Crew: A group of 12-15 students that meets daily with their crew leader to discuss academic issues, share accomplishments, problem-solve individual or school dilemmas, and organize student work for portfolios and exhibitions. Crew is derived from the EL

saying, “We are crew, not passengers” to show the importance of everyone’s leadership. Critical to the school’s goal of knowing all students well, crew is designed both to care for students and to hold them accountable.

Crew Leader: A Capital City teacher who serves as a mentor and supporter of 12-15 students middle school students. Every middle school student has a crew leaders who serves as their advisor. The crew leader is the main point of contact with the parents of all students in his/her advisory group.

Deeper Learning: There is a set of skills that students need to be prepared for success in college and careers. These skills include critical thinking, problem-solving, communication, collaboration, and metacognition. These skills are at the central to the learning at Capital City along with rigorous academic content.

Developmental Designs: Developmental Designs is the middle school version of Responsive Classroom. The model is the framework for our middle school social curriculum and teachers are trained to implement the model with fidelity. The model includes an array of strategies designed to foster safe and positive learning communities where students are connected, responsible and engaged in learning.

EL: Expeditionary Learning. Capital City has implemented this comprehensive school reform model since the school’s founding in 2000. Expeditionary Learning, which is used by more than 150 schools nationwide, emphasizes project-based instruction to help students meet rigorous academic and character standards. Across all content areas, learning expeditions make challenging material relevant and engaging for students and heavily emphasize community service and fieldwork, in order to expand the walls of the classroom and take advantage of students’ growing interest in social and political issues.

Exhibitions: Public presentations of student work. Exhibitions occur at the end of each learning expedition, when families and community members are invited to view projects and hear students describe the process and reflect on the end result. Students are also required to present their portfolios to a faculty panel at the conclusion of 8th, 10th and 12th grades.

Expeditions: Expeditions are the core experience within the Capital City academic program. Expeditions explore content and skills within at least two academic subjects during an in-depth study of a topic or theme. Often the expedition will begin with issues or events of local interest that relate to larger areas of study. Using case studies and investigations, expeditions help students see the relevance of material with which they might otherwise fail to connect. Expeditions usually include fieldwork, presentations by guest experts, community service, and technology integration.

Fieldwork: Trips outside Capital City that have a clear purpose that furthers the work of the learning expedition (e.g., students collect data, conduct interviews, or do structured observations). In some cases, fieldwork takes place over an extended period of time with several visits to the same site.

Habits of Mind: The habits of mind of reflection, revision, and communication are emphasized throughout the curriculum. Students assess themselves on these habits and present evidence of them at student-led conferences and passages.

Habits of Work: Capital City emphasizes four habits of work: organization, timeliness, quality, and accountability. Students routinely reflect on and are evaluated on these habits of work.

Inclusion: Capital City classes support and “include” students with special needs within a regular education setting. Students are expected to learn together and work towards mastery of the same set of learning targets. Inclusion teachers, who are certified to work with students with special needs and English Language Learners, are present in nearly all core classes and serve as case managers to communicate with the parents of these students. The Director of Student Services, the School Psychologist, and School Social Worker also provide weekly consults to teachers to assist them in meeting the needs of all learners. Specific attention is given to monitoring the implementation of IEPs and individual literacy plans.

I.E.P.: Individualized Education Plan, developed for eligible students with diagnosed special learning needs.

I.L.P.: Individual Literacy Plan, developed for students who are identified as English Language Learners. Each plan includes individual goals for reading, writing, speaking and listening, which direct and support the student’s learning in all classes. Inclusion teachers monitor the implementation of these plans and keep parents apprised of student progress.

ILT: Instructional Leadership Team, group comprised of an experienced teacher from each grade cluster that meets bi-weekly to set plan professional development, advise the principal, and help mentor new teachers.

Learning Targets: Clear statements of the intended learning in a particular course, based on curriculum standards but written in student-friendly terms. Learning targets are written by teachers and made public to students, so that students understand what is expected of them and can be a more active participants in their own learning. Students must demonstrate mastery of core learning targets in order to pass each course.

Portfolio: Collection of work samples from a student's courses, accompanied by pieces of self-assessment and reflection. Students maintain a portfolio each year and present this portfolio to their parents at the end of each semester. To achieve promotion at the end of grades 8, 10 and 12, each student must successfully present their portfolio of work to a panel comprised of faculty and community members.

Responsive Classroom: The Responsive Classroom model is the social curriculum used at Capital City. The model includes an array of strategies designed to foster safe and positive learning communities where students are connected, responsible and engaged in learning.

Rubric: A guide detailing the expectations for a specific assignment or project. Rubrics are used by teachers and students to assess student work.

SGA: Student Government Association.

Senior Expedition: Each High School student designs his/her own "senior expedition to facilitate the exploration of academic interests, future opportunities, and/or advanced study. Students begin planning their expeditions in spring of their junior year. They hone their research questions in fall of their senior year and then engage in their research and complete their projects in the spring semester. Graduating seniors present their work to a panel.

Service Learning: This term refers to work done for others or for the environment that meets an authentic community need and is integrated into the curriculum, usually as part of an expedition. This work emphasizes the social and academic benefits for the worker as well as for those being helped.