



**Passion
Projects**



What is a Passion Project?

At Helios, a Passion Project gives students an opportunity to explore what they are most passionate about while being guided by an experienced research advisor.

A typical day in Condors/Ospreys passion projects finds our students engaged in the process of learning how to conduct independent, high-quality research and produce a high-quality project.

Why are Passion Projects important?

Helios students are introduced to a significant number of research techniques and skills throughout the year, and we feel the best way to engage our students in this learning process is to encourage them to choose a topic they feel passionately about.

Why? Because we feel that learning something difficult is much easier when it is something we are passionate about.

Think of Mary Poppins: “A spoonful of sugar makes the medicine go down.”

What will my student learn through Passion Projects?

The 5/6 grade band is introduced to techniques that will help our students:

- create proposals with high-quality guiding questions
- accept and incorporate feedback
- learn effective executive functioning and time management skills
- learn to identify high-quality and reliable sources
- and conduct high-quality research.

The goal of these individual tools is to give our students the skills they need to organize and create an effective research project, from start to end.

What does my student need from me?

Parents should understand that this is an independent project. There are times when your student will have to discuss a few items with you regarding their proposal, but generally speaking, this is their project and your assistance will only be needed if your student's time management has put them in a bit of a pickle regarding deadlines.

Passion Project Topics

Condors and Ospreys students create 1-2 passion projects per school year.

- Students work independently on topics of their choice to propose, research, and present their findings.
- Some examples of topics include: Medieval Warfare, The Trolley Problem, Water Filtration, The Origins of Mathematics, along with many more creative ideas.



The Passion Project Process

- Each week students work through one of the four main steps of the research process (Proposal, Research Tracker, Notes Organizer, and Presentation Preparation) and receive mini-lessons to learn key research tools based on where they are in the process.
- Some of these weekly mini-lessons include talks on proper citations, the distinction between research/reporting, and the importance of search terms and reliable, high-quality sources.
- Advisors provide extensive feedback and students learn to address the feedback and re-submit their work as needed.



Essential Skills to Bring

- Executive function to work independently with technology and online resources in an appropriate and effective manner.
- Incorporate depth into their research.
- Accept and incorporate feedback into their work to conduct high-quality research and produce a high-quality passion project.

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How We Prepare Students

- Introduction of research questions to develop students' abilities to articulate their perspectives on topics.
- Emphasis on the importance of high quality sources and citations to guide research process and create a reliably sourced product.
- Allow students to have more agency over their projects in preparation for their time as a Heron where they will be asked to incorporate a practical application.
- Initiate ability to make a claim and support said claim with their research.

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