

SHS Senior ECHO Project

2025-2026
SY Pilot
Program

Somerville High School Mission

Somerville High School is a place where we value educating the whole student. **We aspire to help each student find and explore their passions.** We have high expectations and provide individualized supports for all students. Our vision of the high school graduate is one where students have developed not just content knowledge, **but life skills** - what we call the **Highlander Habits** - that will help them succeed on whatever path they choose.

ECHO Project Vision

- ECHO is an opportunity for seniors to pursue their passion beyond the classroom without the restrictions of the schedule in their final 5 weeks of high school
- Students will put their Highlander Habits into practice and gain confidence before they leave high school and embark on their life adventures

What is the Senior ECHO Project?

- **Experiential Culminating Hands-on Opportunity (ECHO)**
- Students to explore skills and passions in a real-world setting - beyond the classroom - with the support of their school community
- The Senior ECHO project will culminate in a presentation at the Senior Showcase where students will share their experiences

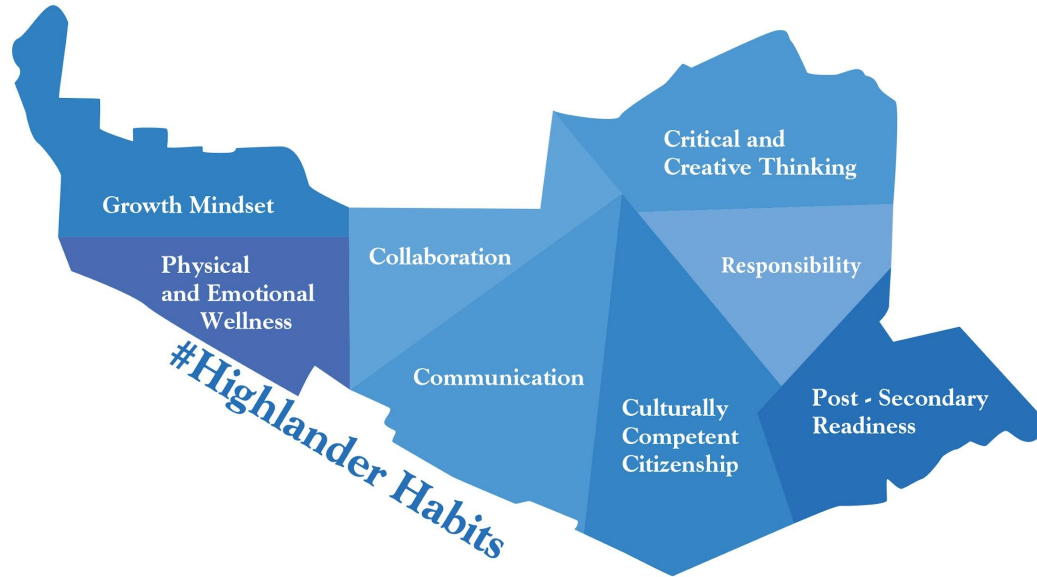
Why ECHO?

SHS ECHO Project can help remove structural and systemic barriers that limit students from accessing opportunities to explore their passions and gain extended learning experiences

ECHO Goals

- Develop confidence with soft skills
- Exposure to careers and work force
- Build independence and responsibility
- Portfolio and resume experience
- Hone and develop passions and interests

ECHO is rooted in SHS Highlander Habits



ECHO Options

Externship

Work under the supervision of an employee for that business and will learn on-the-job skills. Natural transition for many CTE students, or students doing Worked Based Learning (WBL)

Independent Project

Students will do independent research on their chosen topic or idea and translate that into a tangible final product (essay, art, music, athletic performance etc)



Volunteer

Community Service requires students perform a needed service to a community or work with a non-profit or volunteer organization

College Course

Continuing education opportunities such as post-high school credit classes, certification programs, and formalized education opportunities.

Massachusetts Public School Districts with a similar Senior Project model

- Danvers
- Wilmington
- Reading
- North Reading
- Chelmsford
- Tewksbury
- Weston
- Holliston
- Norwell
- Shrewsbury
- Windsor
- Newton
- Wellesley
- Brookline
- Beverly
- Westford
- Concord-Carlisle
- Canton
- Dedham

Community Communication and Input

Opportunities for feedback:

- October presentation to students via X-block
- November Focus Groups for students
- November School Improvement Council Presentation
- February presentations to all juniors in English classes
- Continued input as we build out the program

Several adjustments have already been based on input

SY 2025-2026 Pilot

- All seniors will complete a capstone project in their English classes (pre-Covid model)
- Students may choose to apply for an ECHO project as their capstone project (not mandatory next year)
- All seniors will present their Capstone or ECHO projects in a Senior Showcase at the end of the year
- For 2025-2026 pilot, the ECHO project will be supported by English Department Chair Meagan Spinelli and Director of Cooperative Education and Work-Based Learning Meaghan McDevitt

ECHO Components



Application

Students must be on-track to graduate



Secure Placement or Project

Students will have support from SHS, if needed, through MassHire, Work-Based Learning and College and Career Readiness departments.



Time Sheets & Weekly Journals

Students will complete weekly time sheets and journals, documenting their 30 hours and experience

Advisor



Meetings

Students will meet with their advisor weekly, ensuring they're on pace

ECHO

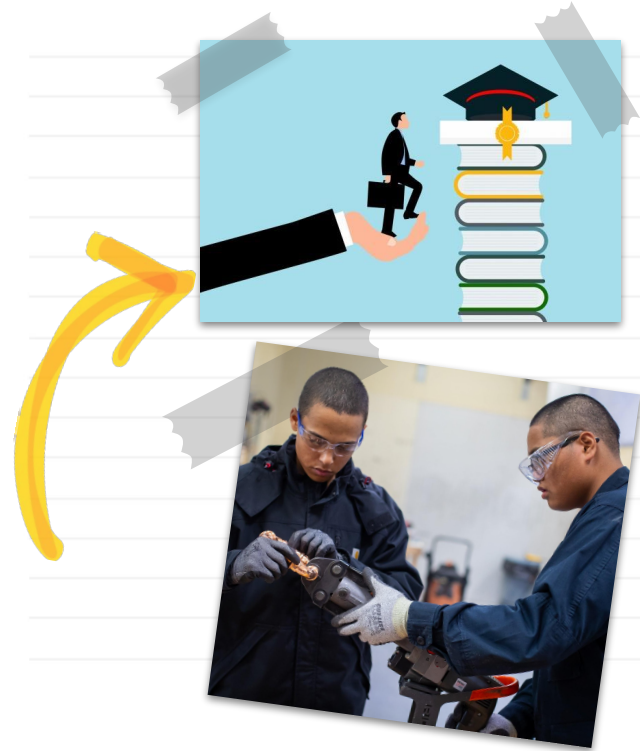


Showcase

All students participate in the ECHO Showcase and share their experience with the community

Rollout Timeline

- SY 26: Opt-in Pilot Year
- SY 27: Majority of Seniors Participate
- SY 28: All Seniors Participate
- SY 29: Graduation requirement



FAQs

Do all students have to end their Q4 classes to do this project?

- Students will opt in during the pilot year
- Goal is for all seniors to participate SY28

What about the inequities of some students having connections, transportation, etc to formal internships while others don't?

- SHS will support students to find appropriate internships; projects can, however, be independent and do not require a formal placement
- All project choices will be graded equally and note graded on placement

Will travel time be taken into consideration for the 30-hour requirement?

- This will be evaluated as part of their proposal and application process

Do students have to leave the building to work on this?

- Ideally, students are having a beyond-the-classroom experience, but we will support students who need to stay in the building

FAQs continued

What about students in grades 9-11 in senior classes?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 9-11 students will continue their learning the same as when the seniors leave (end of May)
How will the project be graded?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Current plan is for grades to replace Q4 grades in classes dropped but that is under review• Grading is with a universal rubric heavily based on participation (time sheets and journals) and completion of the Showcase
What about students in classes with tests or hour requirements? (CTE, AP and ESL courses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Those students will continue with their classes that require them to be in school
Will any students be denied the opportunity to participate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students who are not on track to graduate will focus their time on meeting graduation requirements

FAQs continued

How will placements be vetted?

- We already have in place agreements for co-op, internships, and job-shadowing and we will be refining agreements for the ECHO project

How will the school support connecting students with opportunities?

- Train students to practice those soft skills (phone calls, emails) as they try to find placements. We want this to be as student-directed as possible.
- Resources at the school like MassHire and College & Career Readiness will be available to support students with placements

How will the college course option work?

- College & Career Readiness is working on offering mini-mesters at local colleges
- Students interested in other advanced course or certificate opportunities will be approved



**More Questions? Email
Us!**

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