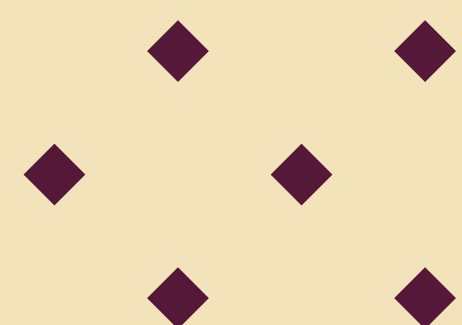# WEYMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL
CAPSTONE
PROJECT

Presented by: Karen Monahan, Principal
Malissa Northup, Associate Principal

ABOUT

- Students have 10 months to select a topic, research 15 sources, write a 4-page paper, and complete a real-world application.
- Students attend class 3 days out of a 7-day cycle, two days for CTE students.
- The course is taught by teachers in nearly all subject areas.
- The course has a written curriculum, Google Classroom, website, and teacher instructional resources.
- Students are assessed on all major assignments with school-wide rubrics.
- There is explicit instruction on all parts of the project including selecting quality sources, sending professional emails, giving oral presentations, and designing surveys.

THE NUMBERS

4790 Students who have graduated from Weymouth High in the last 12 years and successfully passed Capstone.

84 Percentage of students who self-report on the Capstone course evalution who state that they are proud of the project they created.

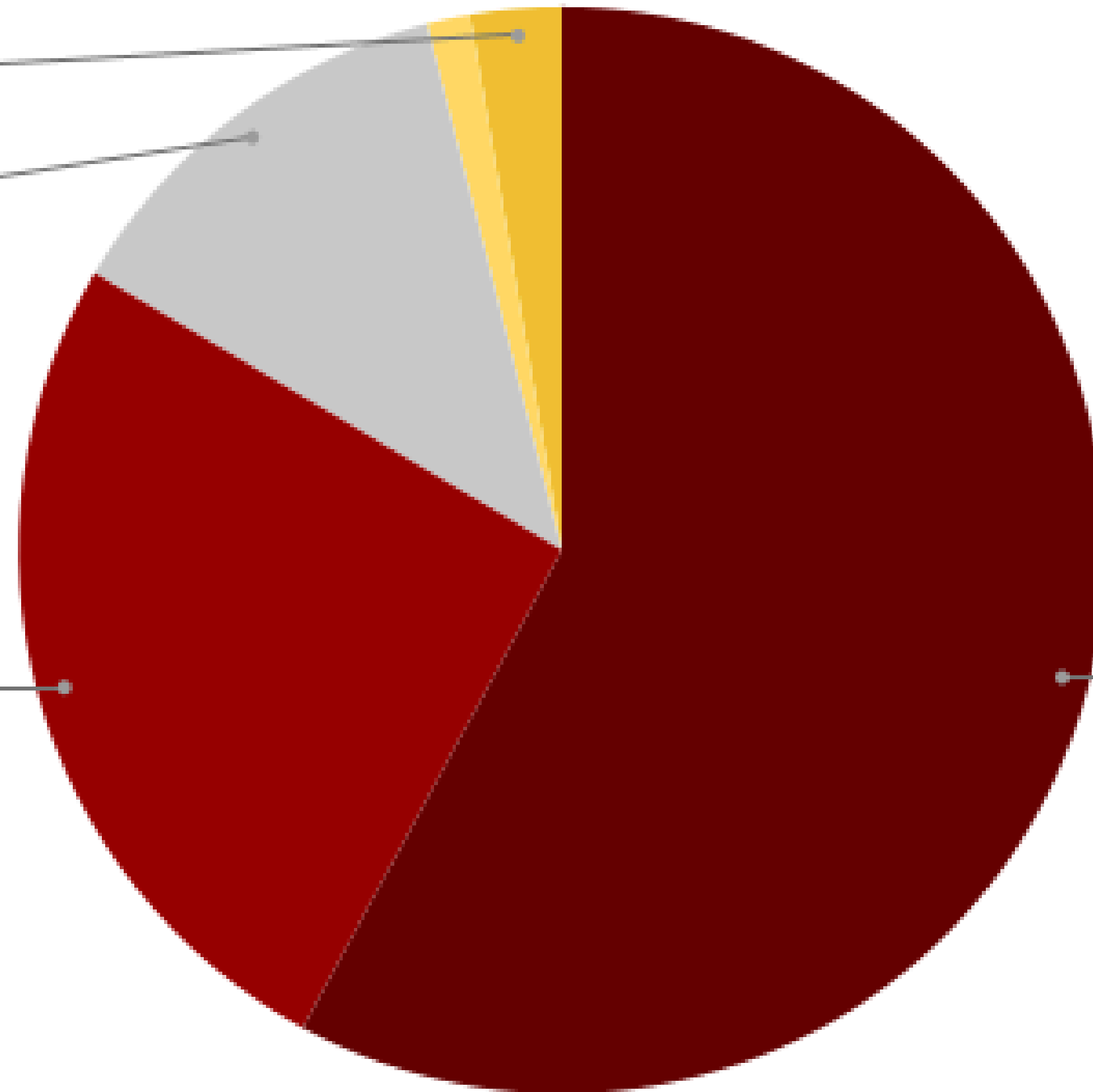# I am proud of the Capstone I created.
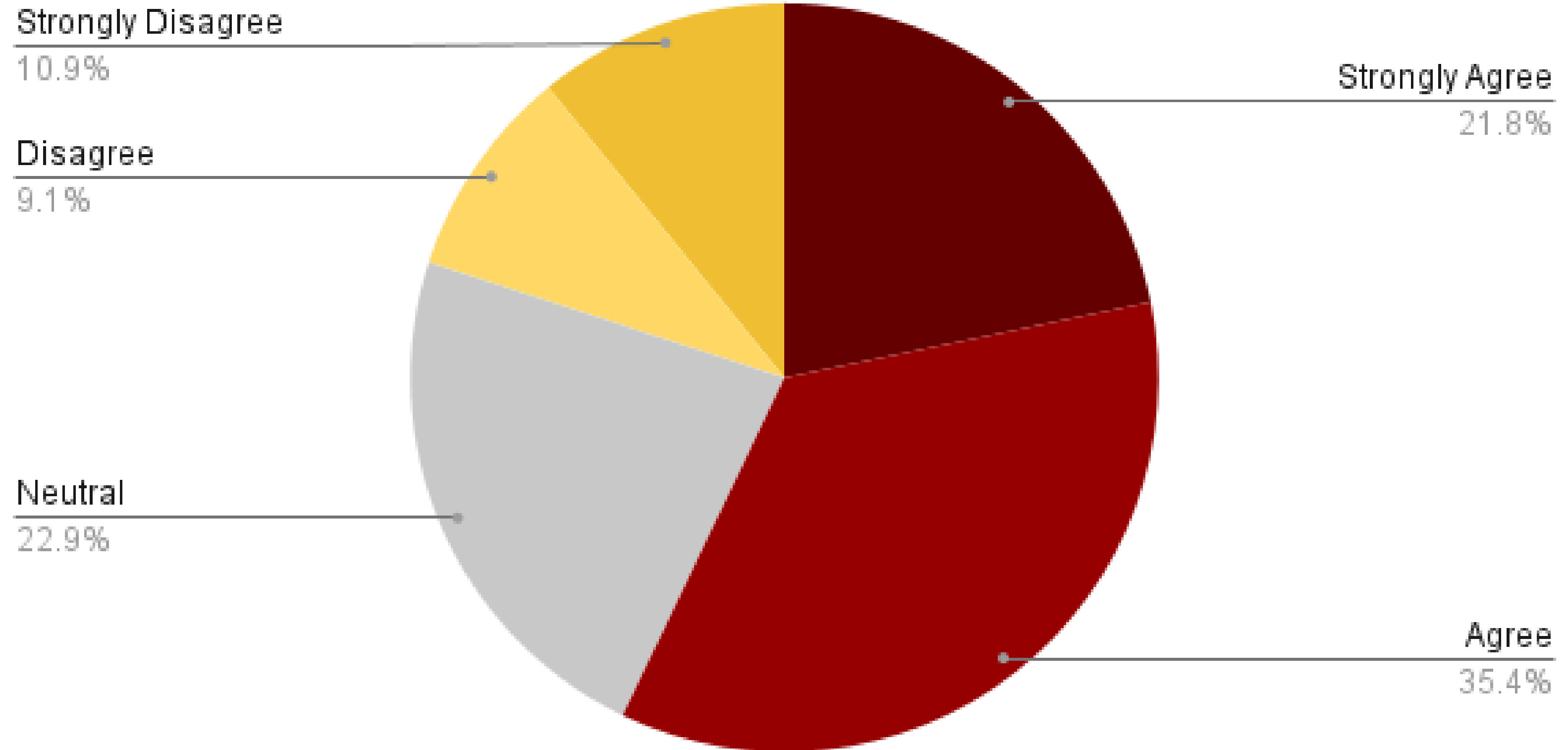

Strongly Disagree
2.7%

Neutral
12.5%

Agree
25.6%

Strongly Agree
57.9%

The course has prepared me for future projects in college and in my career.

Strongly Disagree 10.9%

Disagree 9.1%

Neutral 22.9%

Strongly Agree 21.8%

Agree 35.4%

Ample time was given to complete assignments.

Strongly Disagree
3.8%

Disagree
4.6%

Neutral
19.2%

Strongly Agree
28.5%

Agree
43.8%
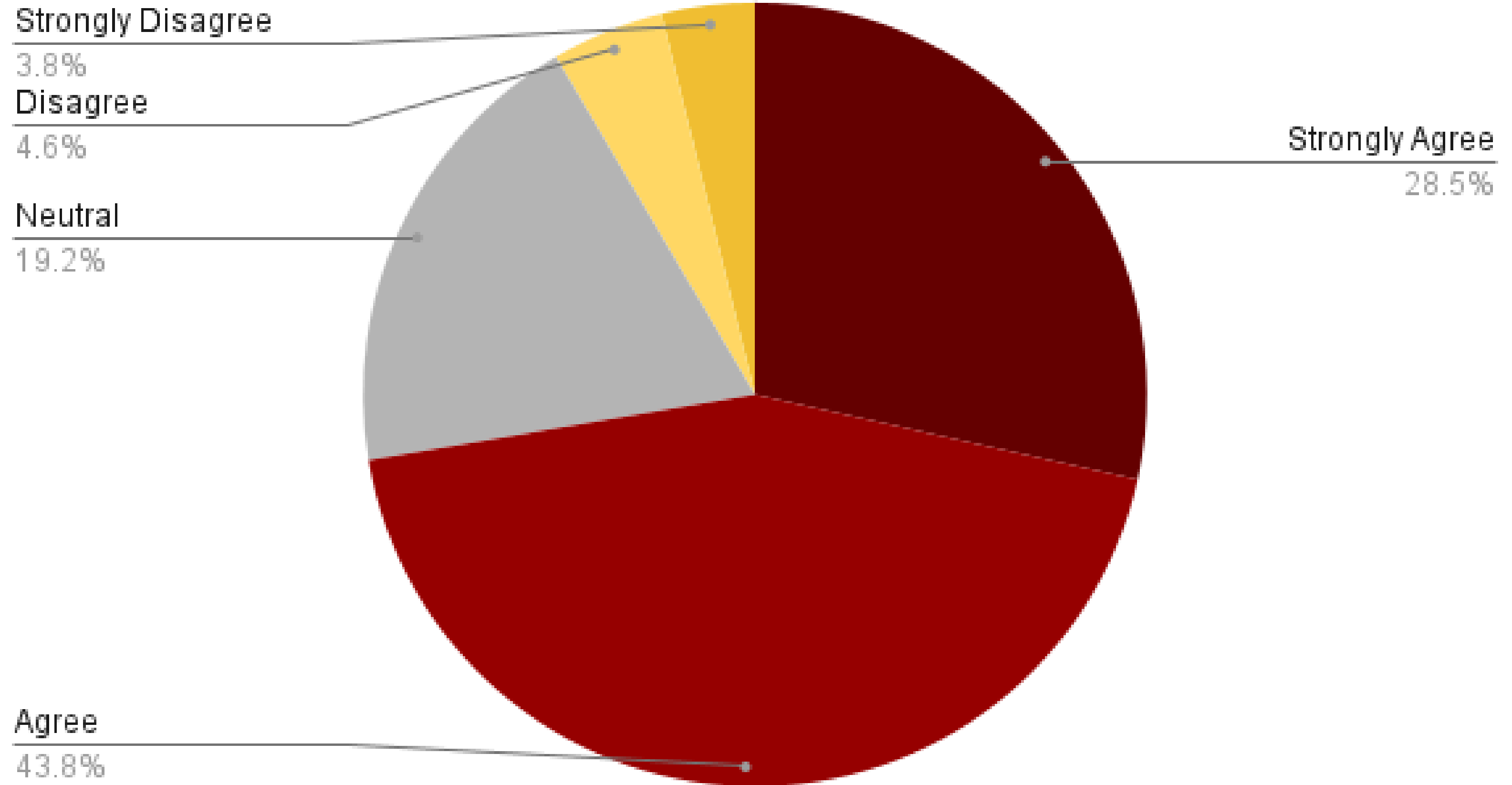
SKILLS

The Capstone project provides the opportunity to practice and demonstrate mastery of college and career readiness skills.

01 **Foundational Skills:**

Strategic reading

Written and oral communication

Research

02 **Additional transferable skills:**

Use of technology

Collaboration

Problem solving

03 **Soft skills:**

Time management

Planning/initiative

Creativity

Flexibility

Reflection

Resilience

WEYOUTH HIGH SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT

Weymouth High School will embed 21st-century skills across the curriculum to prepare students for postsecondary education, careers, and active citizenship.

WEYOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS VISION OF THE GRADUATE

Students graduate from Weymouth Public Schools with the academic knowledge, social and emotional skills, and growth mindsets necessary to succeed in college and career and are prepared to tackle and solve the most important problems in our local and global community.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Partners Gym Class

$50,000+ in Donations to Charity

Canine First Aid Kits

Thousands of Additional Community Service Hours

CPR Classes

Three Books Published

Wildcat Connect App

Professional Clothes Closet

RECOMMENDATIONS

dese | MASSACHUSETTS Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

MassCore

Adopted by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education in 2007 and amended in 2018, MassCore is a state-recommended program of study intended to align high school coursework with college and workforce expectations.

MassCore Framework
Massachusetts High School Program of Studies

SUBJECT	UNITS	NOTES
English Language Arts	4 Units	
Mathematics	4 Units	Including completion of Algebra II or the Integrated Mathematics equivalent. A mathem... senior year is recommended for all students. Students may substitute one unit of **Comput**... includes rigorous mathematical concepts and aligns with the Digital Literacy and Compute... standards for a mathematics course.
Science	3 Units of lab-based science	Coursework in technology/engineering courses may also count for MassCore science... substitute one unit of **Computer Science** that includes rigorous scientific concept... Digital Literacy and Computer Science standards for a laboratory science course.
History and Social Science	3 Units	Including U.S. History and World History.
world Language	2 Units	Of the same language. Districts may designate students with demonstrate... language(s) other than English as meeting the MassCore recommendatio...
Physical Education	As required by law	"Physical education shall be taught as a required subject in all grades fo... .L. c.71 §3).
Arts	1 Unit	
Additional Core Courses	5 Units	Other additional coursework (including Career and Technical Educatio... the above.

*A unit represents a full academic year of study or its equivalent in a subject that covers all the standards contained in a specific Curriculum Framew...

** Students enrolled in a state-approved Career and Technical Education program of studies have the option of opting out of world Language and Ar... fulfill MassCore.

MassCore is a recommended program of study Massachusetts high school students need to excel in college, career, and civic life. Developed by an ad... y group from elementary and secondary education, higher education, nonprofits, and the private sector, MassCore maintains flexibility for students while letting districts set additional g... ation requirements. Courses included in MassCore should be rigorous, engaging, and based on appropriate learning standards for high school or beyond. Fulfilling MassCore is just a start. Students should also engage... a l range of additional learning opportunities, such as: accelerated/advanced coursework; capstones or senior projects; dual enrollment courses; online courses; service learning; work-base... learning; clubs and stude... organizations; varsity and intramural athletics; and part-time employment.

"**Fulfilling MassCore is just a start. Students should also engage in a full range of additional learning opportunities, such as: accelerated/advanced coursework; <u>capstones or senior projects</u>; dual enrollment courses; online courses; service learning; work-based learning; clubs and student organizations; varsity and intramural athletics; and part-time employment.**"

RECOMMENDATIONS
MyCAP

My Career and Academic Plan (MyCAP) is a student-centered, holistic, multi-year planning tool which maps the academic plan, personal/social skill attainment, and career development activities required for postsecondary success.

Career Development Education Domain:
"Immersive work-based learning experience or capstone project that demonstrates learning"

Massachusetts CCR/MyCAP Professional Development Series — Scope and Sequence Competencies

College and Career Readiness & MyCAP – 12th Grade

Domain	CCA PROGRAM — What a Student Should Know, Understand and Be Able to Do in 12th Grade	Implementation Strategies and Activities	MyCAP — MyCAP Process and Documentation
	NOTE: Statements below are adapted from CDE benchmarks, SEL competencies, and/or ASCA Mindsets & Behaviors.	NOTE: Some of the strategies and activities presented here will benefit from the support of external partners, e.g., institutions of higher education, employers, and the state's Connecting Activities intermediary system.	NOTE: Journal entries refer to reflections in the journal section of the online platform; if your platform doesn't have this feature, students should complete reflections in Google Docs and upload to their platform
Personal Social	• Students will demonstrate personal responsibility • Students will demonstrate the ability to communicate and listen effectively in academic and work-related settings. • Students will demonstrate self-advocacy skills	• Have students conduct a credit review and identify exactly what they need to do to be eligible to graduate on time • Have students write and present a personal statement [make connections to college essay, cover letters] • Have other students use a rubric to provide feedback after presentations • Teach students the process for requesting transcripts, letters of recommendation, etc.	• Journal entry • Upload • Upload •
Career Development Education	• Student will demonstrate knowledge of key employability skills, and of the relationship between careers and required post-secondary education	• Immersive work-based learning experience or capstone project that demonstrates learning • Revisit career interests based on more recent experiences and document any changes.	• In connection with immersive experience, completion of MA Work-Based Learning Plan • Upload reflection on work experience including identification of key employability skills • Upload supervisor's evaluation and letters of reference
Academic College and Career Planning	• Students will demonstrate the ability to navigate and use a variety of technology tools in order to select their career and college options • Students will complete the application process for their postsecondary choice[s] • Students will demonstrate an understanding of FASFA, have access to it, and complete it with other financial aid applications related to their individual post-secondary goals • Students will identify and justify their postsecondary plan and develop a financial plan/budget to support it.	• Have students create a list of safety, reach and fit schools, OR a list of possible employers, OR a different postsecondary option with a rationale for whatever their choices are. • Have students complete a senior post-secondary timeline • Provide a variety of workshops for students to be taught the specific information relative to their post-secondary choice[s] [e.g., Common App, FASFA, military, job corps, community college, scholarships, understanding financial aid packages] • Provide structured time [with adult supports available] for students to work on materials required for their postsecondary applications and financial planning • Have students identify their final post-secondary plan and provide feedback on the supports they have received to help them develop the plan	By Sept 15: • Journal entry with preliminary post-secondary plan [lists] and rationale • Upload/link to their personalized senior timeline Ongoing: • Complete and track applications using online platform [if that feature is available] OR on a spreadsheet that is uploaded or linked to their online account. • Update their senior timeline monthly By one week prior to graduation: • Journal entry describing their post-secondary plan and their financial plan/budget to support it • Update resume • Complete senior survey

RECOMMENDATIONS
NEASC

An independent, voluntary, nonprofit membership organization founded in 1185, NEASC has a long tradition of school improvement and works to assess, support, and promote high-quality education for all students through accreditation, professional assistance, and pursuit of best practices. NEASC is guided by its mission to promote innovation and excellence in education and to empower students.

"authentic application of student learning reflected in Capstone projects"

"the capstone project is the most developed of the school's commitment to its implied values and published learning expectations"

"requires students to collaborate with members of the parent, business, and at-large community"

"The WHS capstone project requires that students apply knowledge to real-world experiences or situations."

"is truly a culmination of the achievement of the 21st century skills"

"altogether promot[es] a culture of high expectations, responsibility for learning, and shared ownership"

"promotes active citizenship while focusing on students' proficiency in mastering the school's 21st-century learning skills"

"provide[s] students with opportunities for hands-on, project-based learning and discovery lessons which challenge their thinking"

WHAT ASPECTS OF THIS COURSE WERE MOST USEFUL OR VALUABLE?

From the students:

Presentation practices were helpful to me in building my confidence when presenting.

The most useful area of Capstone was connecting with the community for a real world.

Research because I learned more about my topic and future occupation.

The whole "independent study" was a learning experience I could use later in college or life.

Learning to break down a massive project whilst always having a looming deadline accurately reflect projects in college and in work which both require independent time management while still requiring balancing other responsibilities. I think that simply tackling the project one piece at a time has improved my time management.t

Our real world app made a difference and that's valuable.

WHAT ASPECTS OF THIS COURSE WERE MOST USEFUL OR VALUABLE?
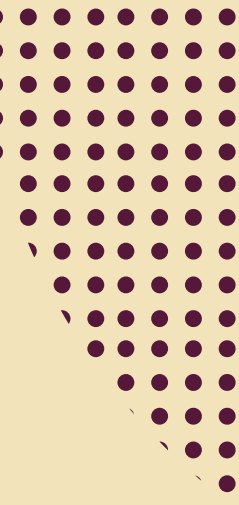
From the students:

I learned so much in my career field on how to make a bat and how certain machines and tools are used, I learned a lot.

The real world application to test your knowledge and link this project to the town.

I think just completing a research project this big showed me I can do big projects and be proud of them hard work pays off.

Researching and finding articles that were unbiased and contained relevant information. In today's world trying to find unbiased information is hard but it's also a skill.

Being able to comfortably present in front of a group of people was a hard task for me to accomplish before this course. Now I feel much more comfortable presenting in front of people and smaller groups.

**Capstone taught me to better manage my time.**

From a community judge:
"The four projects I evaluated were diverse, compelling in terms of their content, and the students were elated to address me and present their findings. The district should be proud of what they have produced in terms of the caliber of these students and the intelligible presentations they produced."

From a parent:
"I hope WHS can keep this program going indefinitely. As a parent, seeing it in action instilled a sense of validation for sending my son(s) there. Many friends and colleagues who have kids in other districts express envy when they learn about the Capstone program at WHS! "
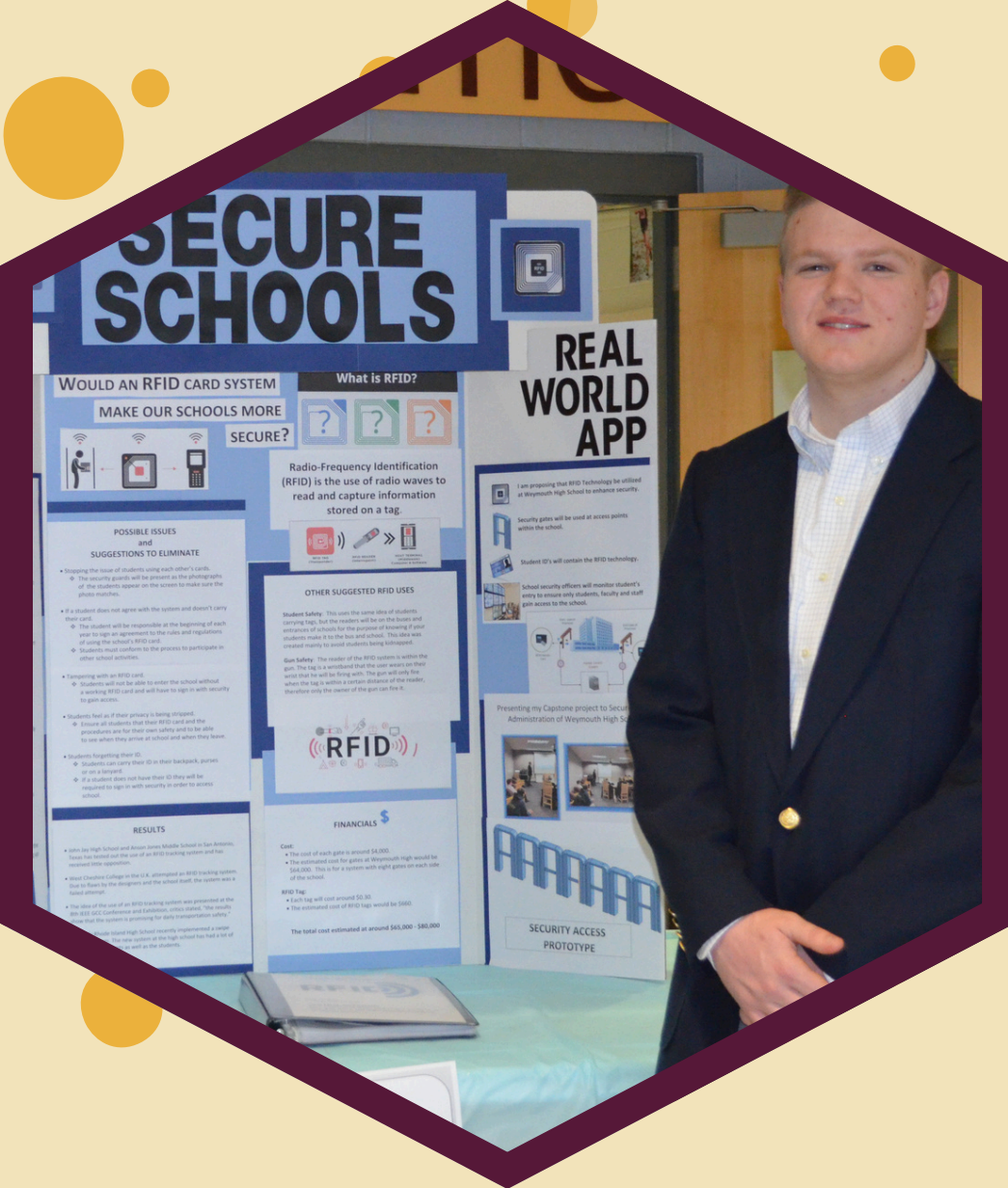
IMPACTS OF ELIMINATING CAPSTONE

1 ## Scheduling for the year is complete

Eliminating Capstone will require rescheduling 400 students and adjusting the schedules for teachers.

2 ## Credit requirement for graduation

Graduation requirement is 22 credits. If Capstone is eliminated, students will need to be scheduled into another 1 credit course. These meet every day.

3 ## NEASC

Our self-study will occur next year and we will be evaluated in 2026. Capstone played a major role in our accreditation in 2016.

4 ## Assessment with elimination of MCAS

If MCAS is eliminated as a graduation requirement (likely up for vote this fall), we will need a tool to demonstrate that students are meeting competencies.

5 ## Amending Program of Studies and Student Handbook

The current Program of Studies and Student Handbook will need to be reopened and amended to remove references to Capstone.

POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVES

Keep the course, make it elective

The course would remain the same, but students could opt-in to take it as an elective. There would be a significant decrease in enrollment and there would no longer be a fair.

Incorporate lessons into another course during Senior year

This is possible, but could not be completed this year. It would involve a change to the curriculum of any class in which it is incorporated and would require PD for staff for this purpose. A fair may be possible during the day.

Resources

[Capstone Curriculum Document](#)

[Capstone Website](#)

[Capstone End of Course Evaluation](#)

[School Wide Rubrics](#)

[NEASC Final Report on WHS 2016](#)

[MyCAP](#)

[MassCore](#)