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## **NRHS AP Capstone Program Diplomas and Certificates Awarded**

**NEW ROCHELLE, N.Y. (January 7, 2019)** – Four current and former New Rochelle High School students recently became the school's first to receive diplomas and certificates from the rigorous two-year Advanced Placement Capstone program.

"It's very independent," said Sofia Halpern, who graduated NRHS in June and now attends Cornell University. "Even though you're collaborating with each other, it takes a lot of self-motivation and figuring things out on your own."

The other three students - Isabel Sanchez, Kailie Strutin and Sofia Valerio - are seniors. Sanchez is no longer in the School District; Strutin and Valerio remain at NRHS.

AP Capstone is a College Board diploma program comprised of two year-long AP courses - Seminar and Research. Strutin and Valerio received the certificate from the program. Halpern and Sanchez received the diploma, which requires earning qualifying scores on four AP exams in addition to the two years of study.

"Both courses prepare students for college and career success through the development of critical thinking, academic research, collaboration, presentation and time management skills," said Lokia Robinson, the AP Research teacher.

In their research projects, Halpern studied the effects of social media on teenagers' relationships; Sanchez explored how the level of parental involvement influences a high school junior's achievement; Strutin looked at the connection between participating in music class and positive personality traits; and Valerio looked at how a school district's health education curriculum meets students' needs.

Robinson and AP Seminar teacher Eric Hedman thanked science teacher Dr. Patrick Cushing, school psychologist Dr. Joshua Logan and the teachers, professors and others at NRHS, Iona College and the College of New Rochelle who served as mentors and helped in other ways.

Currently, 16 students are enrolled in the AP Capstone program at NRHS, and the school hopes to engage more.

"It's rigorous and intensive but it's really rewarding because the students who participate in it get to leave here with solid research skills," she said. "They get to explore their passion and improve their writing."

"You really need to have a genuine interest," Valerio said. "You have to have passion for the topic."

"I truly developed as a writer," Sanchez said. "This class provided me with the opportunity to learn how to write a proper research paper."

The students often met at Sanchez's home to study for hours.

"We all became very close," she said. "We became a strong support system for each other."

Strutin added: "I think we would each say that it is definitely one of our proudest accomplishments."

**CUTLINE: From left, Kailie Strutin, Isabel Sanchez, Sofia Valerio and Sofia Halpern**

### **About the City School District of New Rochelle**

With nearly 11,000 students in 10 schools, the City School District of New Rochelle, through an active partnership amongst community, parents, staff and students, provides a high-quality and challenging education for every child, in a safe, nurturing environment that embraces rich diversity and drives success.

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