



Submitted Photo

Adam Kalunian of Coventry plays the saxophone, as well as several other instruments.

Capstone helps CHS junior show love of music

Adam Kalunian uses school project to demonstrate why area schools should include subject in their curriculum despite constant talk of cuts

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COVENTRY — After months of hard work and research, Adam Kalunian, a junior at Coventry High School, is about to wrap up his semester-long Capstone Project.

A capstone, by definition, is the center stone that holds an arch together. The project requires students to learn about a specific issue by utilizing skills such as project management, teamwork and developing competency in gathering, analyzing

and reporting data.

It's an opportunity to combine their learning in all these areas and do it in real time in an unpredictable, complicated real-life environment. For organizations, it's the chance to have current and future public service leaders focused on their success.

The process of a Capstone Project, a requirement for graduation at CHS, actually begins in a student's freshman year.

"They tell you about it when you

start your freshman year," said Kalunian. "This is when you can start thinking about the project, but you don't actually start doing the actual work until your sophomore year — then you have all three years to do it but you can complete it anytime between sophomore and senior year."

Each student has a few choices for how they approach their project. They can design a product, improve a system (job shadow) or plan and organize an event or activity. Stu-

dents use a variety of tools to manage their projects such as communication techniques — both oral and written — internet research data and spreadsheets, as well as self-management tools and techniques.

It took Kalunian a long time to decide what to do for his project, but when he thought about how music programs in area schools are sometimes in danger of being cut and his passion for music, he knew he wanted to implement a presentation

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Capstone a requirement

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about keeping music programs in schools.

"I feel that music is just as important as any other subject," he said. "When children are exposed to playing music, they perform better on memory tests, their recall. Reading skills are enhanced through playing music and it helps children focus on the little things."

Music also helps build critical thinking, self discipline and helps them see things in a new way, he said.

He also learned the students in top-quality music programs scored 22 percent better in English and 20 percent better in math. Being involved with music promotes positive attitude, positive self image, cooperation skills and the ability to set goals.

Kalunian started playing clarinet when he was in the

fourth grade and has picked up guitar, bass guitar, and tenor saxophone through the years. Much of what he has learned is self-taught. He's able to read ahead of the notes in music to anticipate what notes are coming.

"I saw my brother play an instrument when I was younger and knew I wanted to do it too," said the high school junior. "After years of playing, my love for it has just grown. My favorite type of music is rock."

Kalunian admits he's not much of a reader, more of a math and science guy, and always chide away from public speaking but the project wasn't as hard as he expected it would be. He spent four and a half months, about an hour-and-a-half every other day.

"This project forced me to get myself out there and speak in front of the public," he said. "It's given me a lot more con-

fidence in myself. I took it step by step, I stayed on task and I didn't let myself get overwhelmed."

He wanted to express his thanks to his music teachers, Costa, Masse, Degrade and Smith.

"They take time out of their schedules to work on things with any student who requests it," he said.

He presented to the school committee last Tuesday. They had very positive comments and accolades for a job very well done. Now that he presented before the school committee, he'll present before a smaller panel of judges from the school within the next few weeks.

"If I can present it before the school committee, I can do it in front of fewer judges — no problem," he said.