

PORTOLA VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

*Inspired to Explore -
Prepared to Succeed*

“ROPES” 2025

*Rite of Passage
Experiences*

Student/Parent Guide



Dear Third, Fifth, Seventh And Eighth-Grade Students And Parents,

The Portola Valley School District is very excited to invite you to participate in the **Rite Of Passage Experiences (ROPES) Project**. The ROPES Project is specifically designed as an **optional enrichment activity** as students complete a cycle of their education (Ormondale to Corte Madera, elementary grade to middle school, middle school to high school). The ROPES Project gives students in third, fifth, seventh and eighth grade opportunities to explore and demonstrate project-based learning. The project is an opportunity for students to participate in an academic ritual by way of real-life experiences. **This is not a classroom assignment and there is no grade attached to it.**

ROPES participants select from the list of ROPES Challenges. These challenges encourage students to use their school learning to suggest solutions, research information or create products that reflect real life situations. Each challenge gives students a chance to demonstrate critical thinking and creativity and each can be done individually or with a partner. The project should be thought of as a **“passion project”**. The project is multi-tiered and is worked on over the course of several months before being presented to a panel. The capstone of the project is the ROPES Celebration Night where students who have successfully met the ROPES criteria will receive a rope in honor of their accomplishment.

In an effort to increase participation this year, information about ROPES is being distributed to students during the week of December 9. This information will also be available online for parents on the PVSD website. There will be two information meetings for parents of students who may be interested in participating in the ROPES Project on **Monday, January 6, 2025**. **These meetings will be held virtually and parents can choose to sign on at 9:00 a.m. or 4:00 p.m.** During this meeting I will discuss the process of completing a ROPES Project as well as details about the challenges that students can choose from. There will be plenty of time for questions and answers. **Parents are not required to attend the orientation if they feel that all their questions are answered by reading the packet.** *Google Meet links will be available on the district website calendar.*

It is our hope that the ROPES Project will become a milestone event in each of our PVSD students' lives that they look forward to participating in. Please feel free to reach out to me with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,

Ms. Lynette Hovland
Principal, Ormondale School
ROPES Coordinator

Portola Valley School District

ROPES TIMELINE - 2025

Monday, December 9, 2024	ROPES Information/candidate forms available online
Week of December 9, 2024	ROPES Information shared w/ students at school
Monday, January 6	ROPES Orientation for Parents (virtual) 9:00 a.m. or 5:00 p.m.
Friday, January 17	Candidate Forms Due online
December/January - April 26	<u>Work on ROPES Project</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Select Challenge● PLAN AND DO! Research, carry out action etc.● Write report – include time log● Prepare visual aid i.e., presentation board, PowerPoint presentation, slide show, video● Prepare oral presentation● Practice oral presentation
April 28 or 29	Attend your ROPES Presentation appointment Time to be determined Location - Ormondale School
Tuesday, May 6	Attend ROPES Community Recognition Night 7:00 p.m. Ormondale School MUR

Portola Valley School District

ROPES 2025 GUIDELINES

These guidelines are intended to assist you in preparing for your ROPES project, regardless of the subject matter of your challenge. Check off the items as you complete them and be sure that all areas have been covered prior to your presentation to our ROPES judges.

To participate in ROPES, you will need to complete the following steps:

1. Carefully read this handbook and then choose your challenge from the list of challenges. If you have an idea for a project and don't think it falls under one of the challenges listed, you can ask for guidance from your teacher, or principal, Ms. Hovland or Ms. Shima. Another good resource is Ms. Richard who teaches STEAM at both schools.
2. Complete and submit a ROPES Candidate Form by **Friday, January 17**. The form can be found here and on the PVSD website homepage at www.pvsd.net. Submit the form online. If you are working with a partner, a form should be submitted for each student.

3. Choose your challenge.

The challenge choices are listed in this handout. You should ask yourself the following questions as you identify what your challenge will be:

- What is your passion? What do you really enjoy doing?
- What would you like to learn more about or what is something that you have been interested in trying?
- What can you learn from completing a project about your selected topic?
- Would you prefer to work alone or with a partner?* (*If you are working with a partner/group – see section titled **Working with a Partner/Group.***)

4. Plan your steps.

Once you have identified what your project will be and have submitted your Candidate Form, make an outline for the steps that you will take and a timeline for completing those steps. It is fine if your plans change along the way, but this outline will give you a starting point and keep you on track as you work toward completion of your project. Plan your steps and begin working on your project as soon as possible to allow enough time to complete the project and prepare your presentation. Keep a log of your activities and keep documents or other items that can be included in your report or on your display board. You should plan to spend between 12 to 15 hours on your project.

5. Investigate and experience your challenge.

Complete your project by **April 25**. Be sure to log your time.

6. Write a report.

Write a report summarizing what you did and what you learned and prepare a visual display of your project. (See below for more details of what should be included in the written report.)

7. Prepare and practice for your oral presentation.

Here are the things that you will need to do to prepare for your presentation:

- Prepare visual aids – e.g., presentation board, PowerPoint presentation, Google Slides, video, sample products. Visual presentations should be neat and well organized.
- Log of preparation time and activities (needs to be included with your written report).
- Write a written report that includes a description of pre-project activities such as research and information gathering and description/evidence of new learning experiences. The written report should also include why you chose the challenge and what you learned from your experience. The written report should be typed or handwritten neatly.
- Your oral and written report should not be the same.
- Your oral presentation should have a beginning, middle and end. It should be a summary of your written report. It is okay to use note cards for your oral presentation. You should not read your written report to the panel.
- For students needing a computer for their presentation, we will have Chromebooks and projectors available in all of the classrooms used for judging. You are welcome to bring your own laptop if you feel more comfortable.
- Only you (and your partner, (if you are working with someone else) will be allowed into the presentation room. Parents and/or other adults may not accompany you.

8. Attend your ROPES Panel appointment.

You will be scheduled to make your panel presentation on either **April 28 or April 29. between 5:30 and 7:30 p.m.** You will be notified of the date and time of your presentation at least one week before. Bring all of your materials with you.

9. A rope must be earned.

If your panel determines that your project or presentation has not met the criteria for your challenge, you will be provided with direction as to what improvements are needed to earn the rope and you will be given an opportunity to make another presentation.

ROPES Community Recognition Night

Following a successful ROPES Panel presentation/interview, you will receive an invitation to the ROPES Community Recognition Night, which will be held on **Tuesday, May 6 at 7:00 p.m.** in the MUR at Ormondale. At this event, each student will be given his/her rope.

Working with a Partner or Group:

Being able to work cooperatively is a good skill for all students to master. If you choose to complete your ROPES Project with a partner please keep the following in mind:

1. We recommend that your group be no larger than three.
2. Every member of the group must put in the same amount of effort and work on the project.
3. It is only necessary to turn in one written report, however, each member of the group must do their own time log and all time logs must be included in the group written report.
4. Each person who is a member of the group must participate equally in the oral presentation. The judges must be able to determine that every member of the group is equally prepared.

Parents please note:

The work for this project must be done by the student. It is okay for you to guide your child if he/she gets off course but we want this experience and work to be the student's. For this reason, we also encourage the students to contact us directly if they have questions or need to make special requests regarding their presentation.

ROPES Contacts:

1. Ms. Hovland - lhovland@pvdsd.net
2. Ms. Shima - kshima@pvdsd.net
3. Ms. Richard - trichard@pvdsd.net
4. Your teacher

Portola Valley School District

2025 ROPES CHALLENGES

The ROPES Challenges are designed to encourage students to demonstrate their ability to be learners in the 21st century and encourage students to explore, demonstrate creativity, use higher order thinking skills and contribute to society in a meaningful way.

1. Creativity/Appreciation of the Arts

This challenge encourages the candidate to explore, cultivate and express creativity. Art comes in different forms. It can be visual (something that you look at) and it can be performed (something that you do). Examples include: Design, Cooking/Baking, visiting museums and comparing and contrasting the various exhibits. You can also choose to learn about a specific artist, composer or to perform certain types of dance or music or design a music video or set a story or poem to music.

2. Innovation/Invention

This challenge involves exploring one's curiosity to formulate a question or problem of personal importance and to pursue an answer or solution. Candidates will learn the knowledge and skills necessary to produce a useful product. An example might be to create an invention or develop a blueprint for an invention. Explain why this is necessary and whether its creation is for present or future use and the reasons for its necessity.

3. Adventure/Personal Challenge

This challenge involves exploring the candidate's courage, endurance or skill in a selected physical pursuit. This can be learning a new skill or pushing yourself to the next level in a physical pursuit you currently participate in. Examples include: planning a family hiking trip, preparing for a long-distance bike race or run, taking a class in rock climbing. Your project must illustrate what your personal challenge was and how you trained to complete the challenge.

4. Service/Advocacy

This challenge will have you identify a societal need for assistance and provide it; to express caring without expectation of reward. You are encouraged to research existing community organizations to learn what services they offer to those who access their assistance and how private citizens may support their efforts. While raising money for a cause or organization is a noble endeavor, the primary goal of this challenge should not be fund-raising.

5. Personal Reflections: "Where I've Been, Where I'm Going" (8th graders only)

It is important to understand the past and its influence on the future. This challenge asks you to demonstrate an understanding of the years spent in grades (T)K-8 and to reflect on how your experiences will influence your future. This ROPE has three major components:

1. Interviewing other eighth grade students regarding their school experiences to date and comparing and contrasting their answers. Topics can include: significant events, emotions, achievements, etc.
2. Preparation and presentation of a promotion speech on the topic, "Reflections on My School Years Thus Far".
3. Completion of a visual such as a scrapbook, video or slide show which illustrates key events in your (T)K-8 years.

Your oral and visual presentation of your reflections should be coupled with a personal vision of the future.

Portola Valley School District
Scoring Rubric for ROPES Projects

Your ROPES Project and presentation will be judged in the following categories:

- **Quality**
- **Attitude**
- **Effort**
- **Organization**

The rubric is as follows:

- 5 - Exemplary
- 3 - Good
- 1 - Minimal

Quality:

5 - Work exceeds expectations. The student communicates a strong sense of pride in meeting the goals of the project.

3 - Work demonstrates a grasp of chosen objectives. There are minimal errors and work shows a thoughtful effort. Individual pride is evident.

1 - Student work demonstrates the minimum task but contains many errors. Student work demonstrates little time invested in preparation.

Attitude:

5 - The student demonstrates respect for him/herself and others and demonstrates whole hearted enthusiasm for the subject matter.

3 - The student demonstrates respect for him/herself and others but is willing to settle for lower quality of work. Demonstrates some enthusiasm for the subject matter.

1 - The student demonstrates minimal respect for him/herself and others. If given a suggestion or asked a question, student responds poorly or negatively. Student demonstrates limited interest in the subject matter.

Effort:

5 - Student demonstrates enthusiasm and shows excellent effort in developing their project and presentation. Student follows all specifications for oral and written work and demonstrates problem-solving, critical thinking and creativity.

3 - Student demonstrates adequate enthusiasm for their project and presentation. Work is consistent and complete. Student follows most of the requirements and exhibits a thoughtful use of problem solving, critical thinking and creativity.

1 - Work is inconsistent and doesn't fully meet all the requirements. Student demonstrates limited use of problem solving and creativity. Student demonstrates limited enthusiasm

Organization:

5 - Student is very prepared and is able to answer questions about the project. The presentation is organized and focused. Presentation skills are strong and visual aids are used to enhance the presentation.

3 - Student is prepared but the presentation may lack focus and/or organization. Presentation skills are evident and visual aids are used in the presentation.

1 - Student does not appear prepared. Presentation is disorganized and lacks necessary materials or information. Presentation skills are weak and visual aids are not used..