

Portola Valley School District

ROPES 2026 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, Ms. Shima or our District Curriculum Coordinator, Mrs. Amsler.
2. Complete and submit a [ROPES Candidate Form](#) by **Friday, January 9, 2026**. The form can be found 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 24**. 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 27 or April 28. between 5:00 and 7:00 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 12 at 6:00 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. Your teacher
4. Mrs. Amsler, District Curriculum Coordinator kamsler@pvdsd.net