



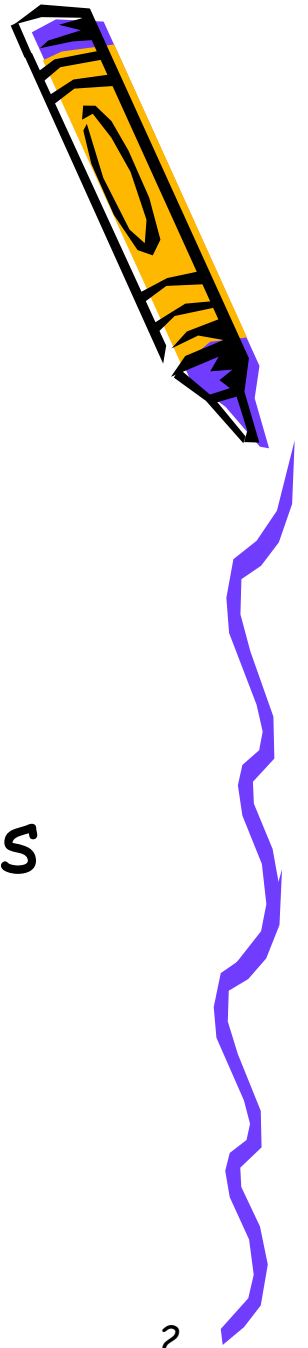
Pittsburgh Public Schools
Homework:
Moving From Written Policy To
Implementation and Strategy

Board of Education Update
May 12, 2009



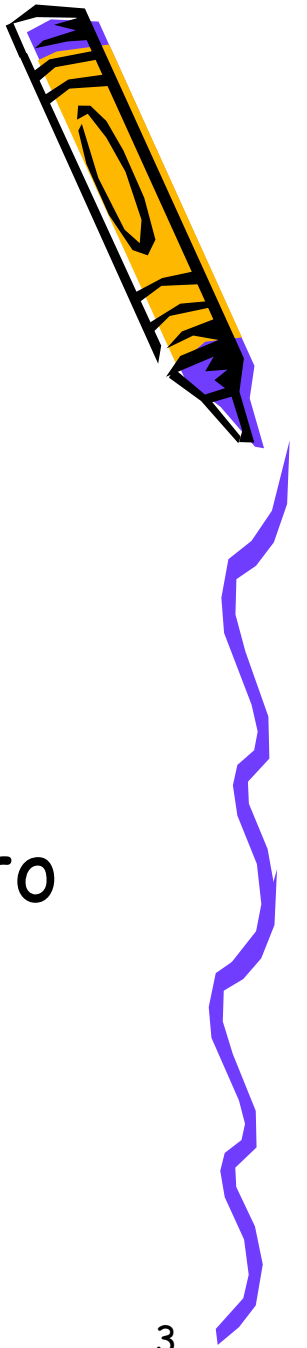
The Work

- Review and recommend a *policy*
- Craft procedures to support the policy
- Create the ties to the curriculum, including model homework examples
- Motivate students to complete homework



Why are we here

- The Homework Policy has not been reviewed since the Board adopted the policy in 1985.
- Update the Pittsburgh Board of Education regarding our progress to and seek board thoughts.

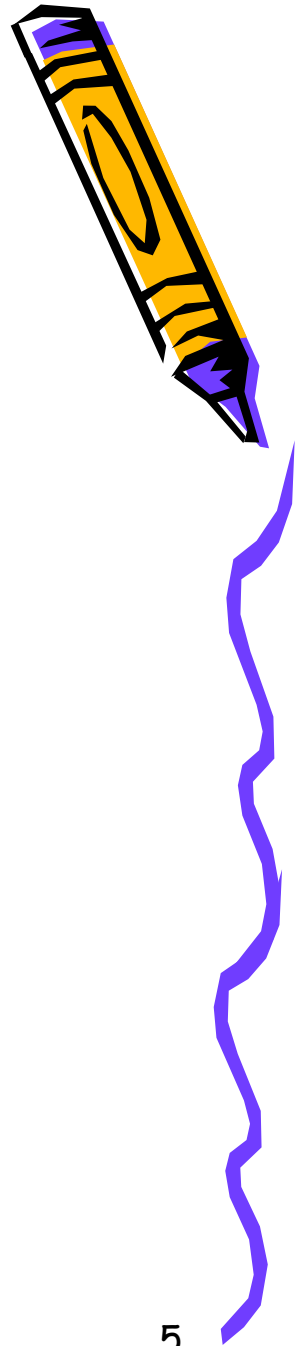




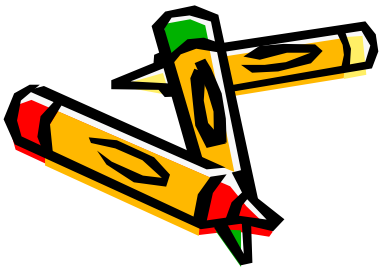
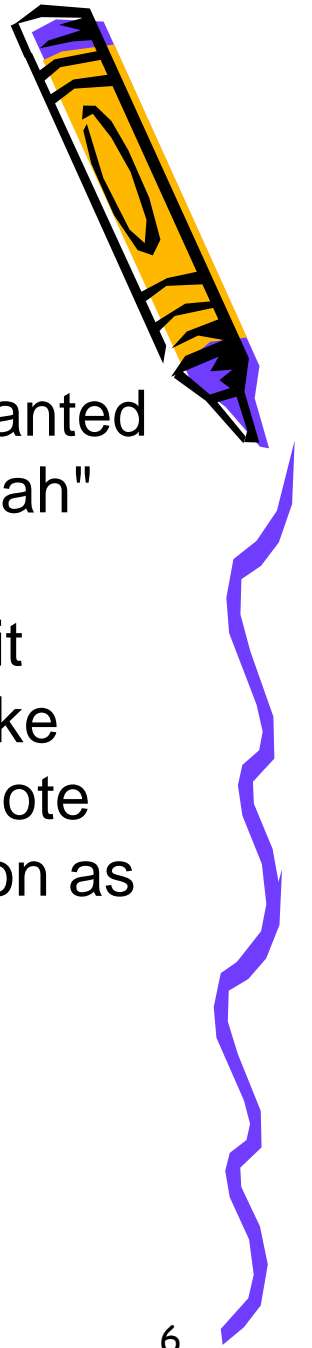
Why Homework is Important

... and context and communication matters





When asked to draw a picture of what they wanted to be when they grew up, second-grader "Sarah" turned in the lovely drawing shown above. Needless to say, the teacher was a bit surprised -- Mrs. Smith had always seemed like such a conservative woman. So she sent a note home to the girl's mother asking for clarification as to the picture's meaning.

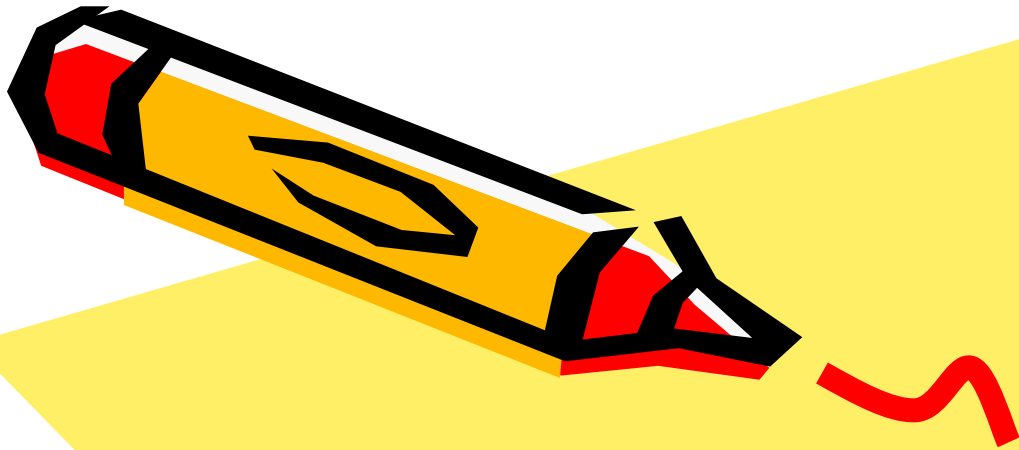


Dear Mrs. Jones,

I wish to clarify that I am not now, nor have I ever been, an exotic dancer. I work at Home Depot and I told my daughter how hectic it was last week before the blizzard hit. I told her we sold out every single shovel we had, and then I found one more in the back room, and that several people were fighting over who would get it. Her picture doesn't show me dancing around a pole. It's supposed to depict me selling the last snow shovel we had at Home Depot. From now on I will remember to check her homework more thoroughly before she turns it in.

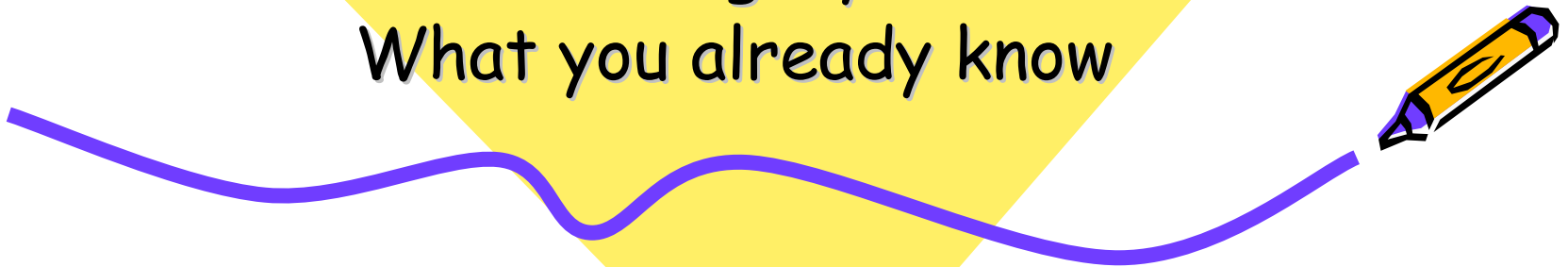
Sincerely,
Mrs. Smith





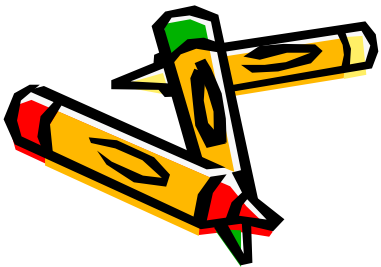
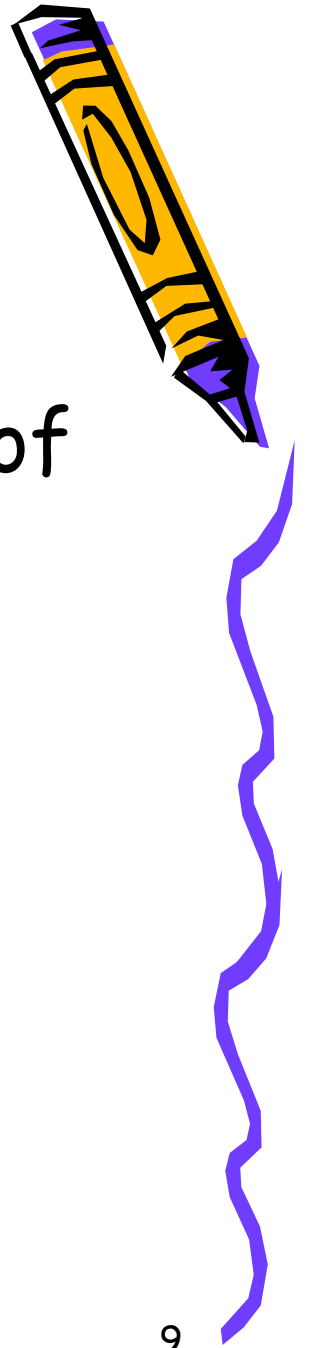
Homework Jeopardy

Category:
What you already know



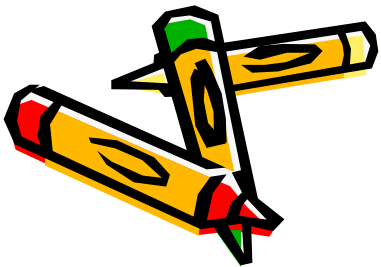
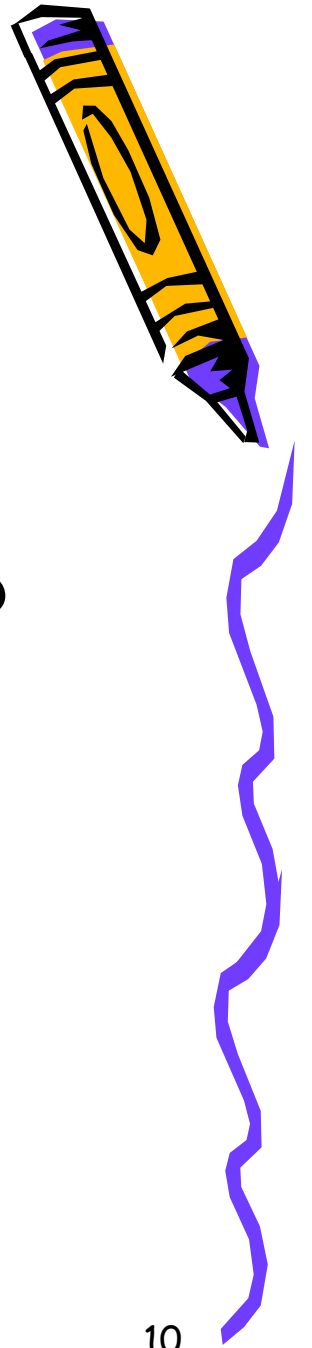
Answer

- One of the two leading indicators of college success



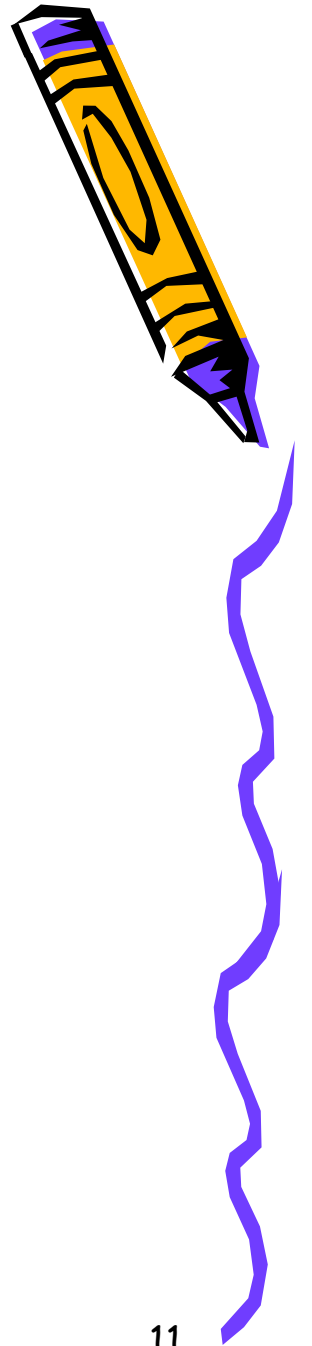
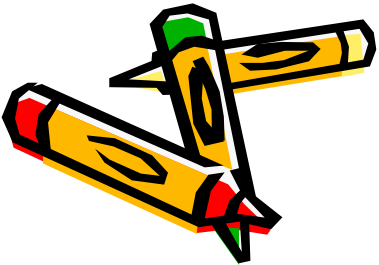
Question

- What is homework completion?
- What is class attendance?



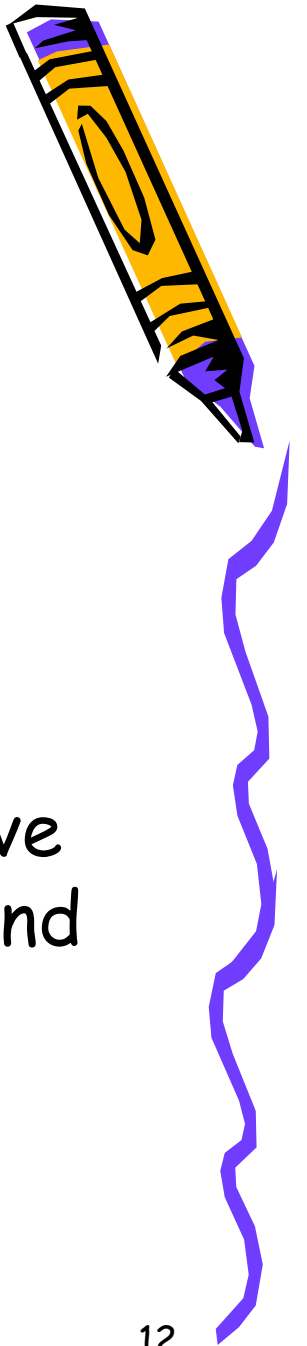
Answer

- On a typewriter



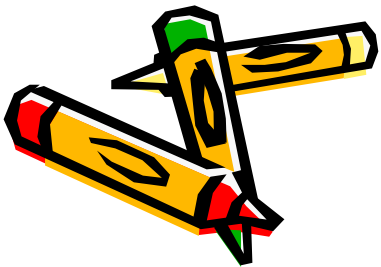
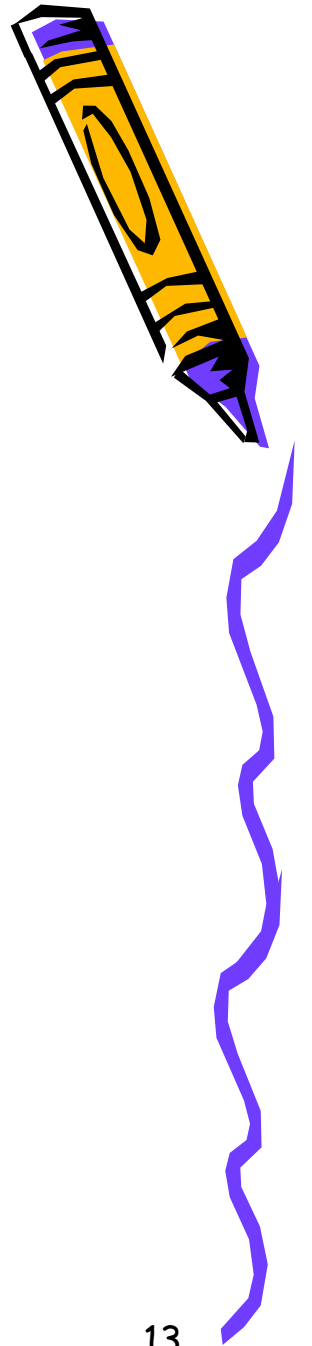
Question

- On **what technology** was the policy compiled and written?
- Since this time, the personal computer, the facsimile, and the cellular phone have all become common place in our homes and businesses.



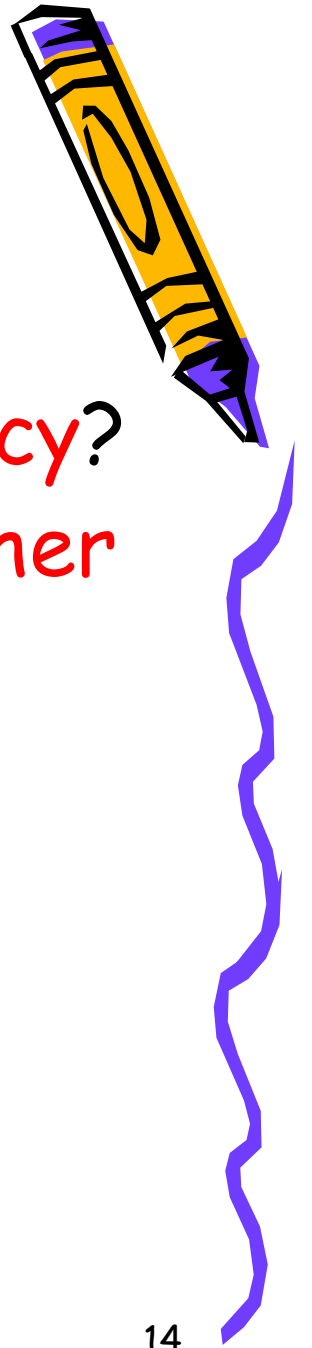
Answer

The many reasons to embark upon this journey to review the PPS Homework policy and practices.



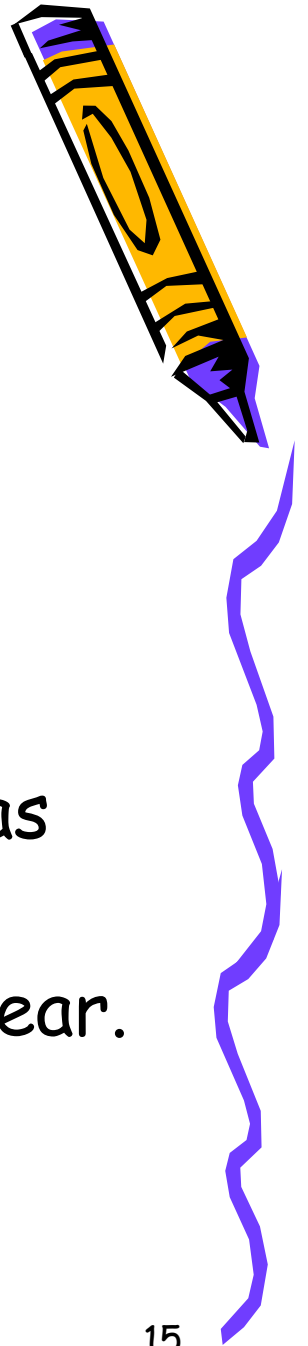
Question

- What is to look at our current policy?
- What is to look at family and teacher attitudes about homework?
- What is to look at the research?
- What is to begin recommending a new policy with attendant procedures?



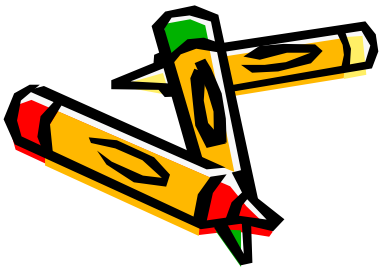
PPS Homework Policy

- Taken from a memorandum drafted by Louise Brennan, then Associate Superintendent to Elementary School Principals and Assistant Principals
- Homework Policy Task Force Report was adopted June 26, 1985
- For implementation in 1985-86 school year.



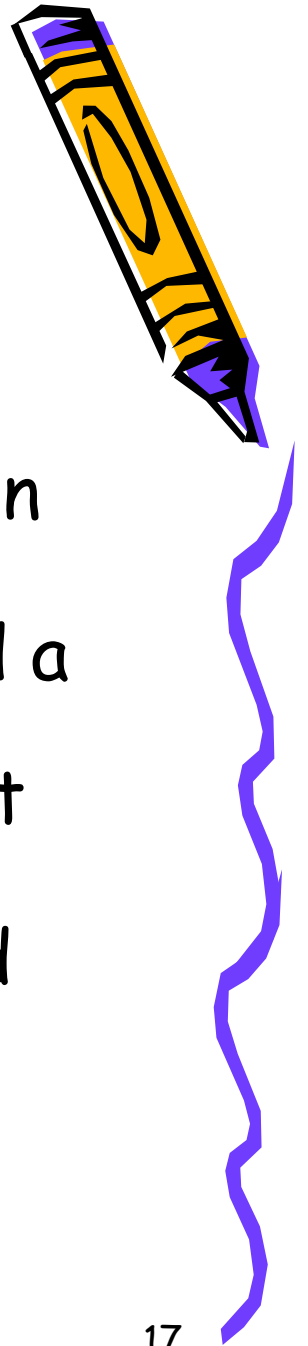
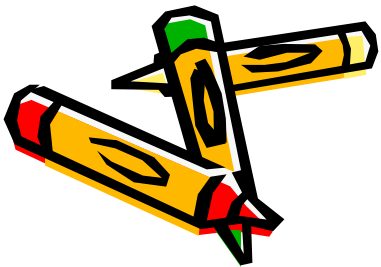
Homework Defined

Any independent work planned or approved by the teacher to be completed by the student outside of the regular classroom without the immediate and direct supervision of the teacher.



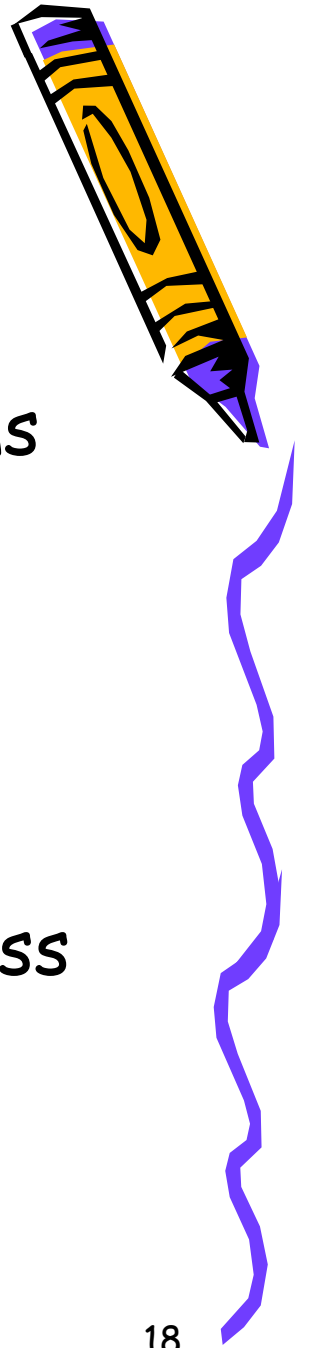
Objectives

- To reinforce learning through practice, application, integration and/or extension of knowledge and skills
- To develop study skills, work habits and a sense of personal responsibility so that the student may become an independent learner
- To stimulate imagination, originality and creativity



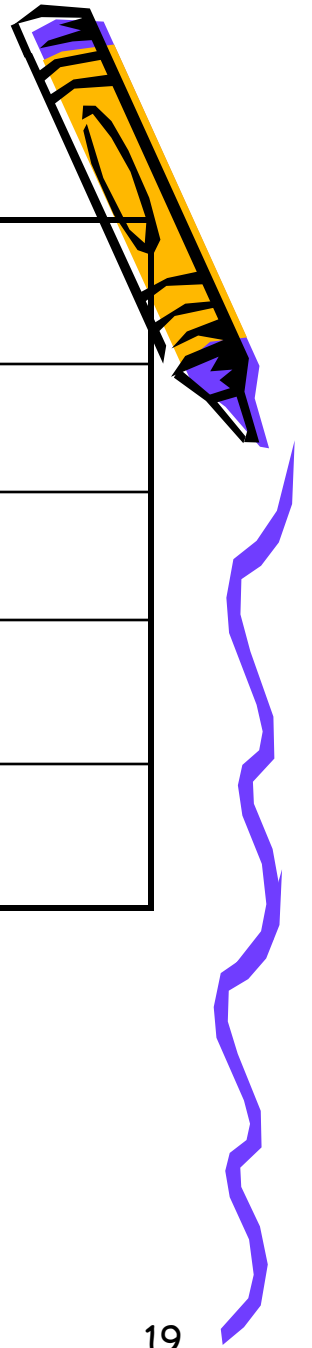
Objectives (cont.)

- To enhance home/school communications and provide increased curriculum understanding
- To encourage a follow up of worthwhile school activities into permanent leisure interests.
- To involve parents in the learning process of their children



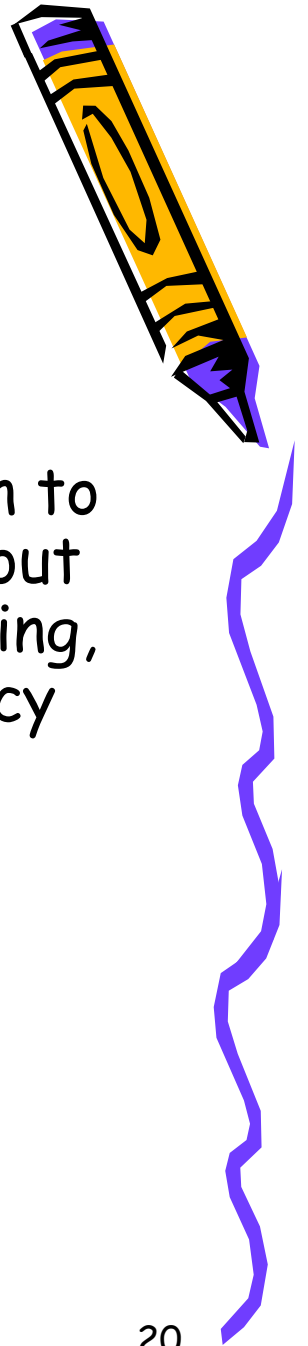
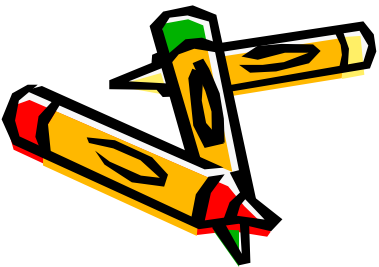
Time for Homework

Kindergarten	Occasional Basis	
Grades 1-3	4 Evenings a week	30 minutes
Grades 4-5	4 Evenings a week	60 minutes
Grades 6-8	4 Evenings a week	60 minutes
Grades 9-12	4 Evenings a week	90 minutes



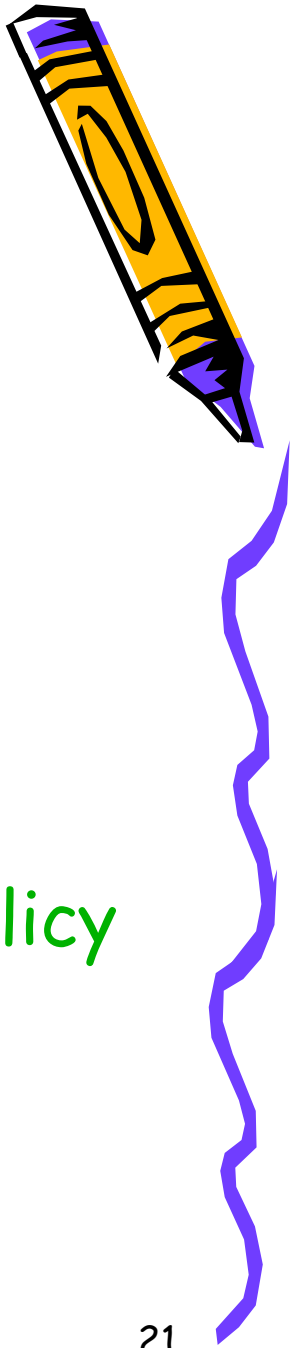
Homework Policy Review

- A review of the homework policy should be examined following one year of implementation to determine whether it is in fact being carried out as it is written, whether it has improved learning, and whether there is a need to revise the policy to make it more effective.
- NOTE: THIS DID NOT OCCUR AND THE POLICY HAS NOT BEEN EXAMINED SINCE.



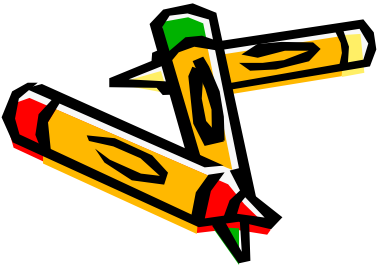
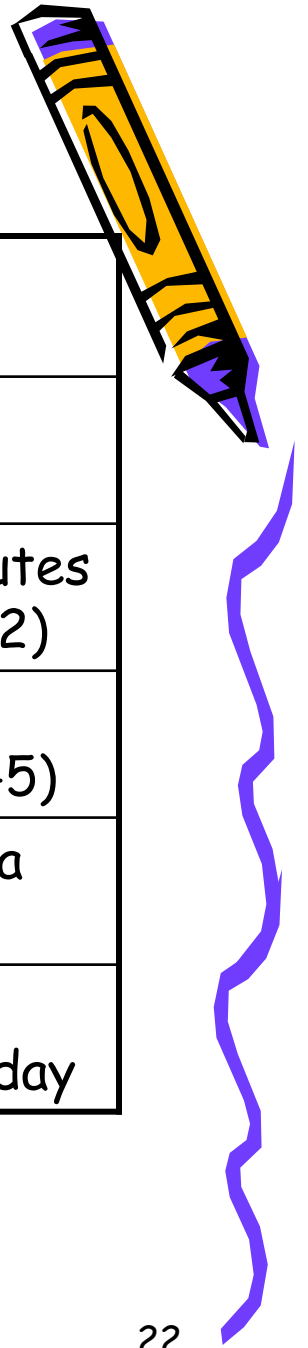
Work of the Committee

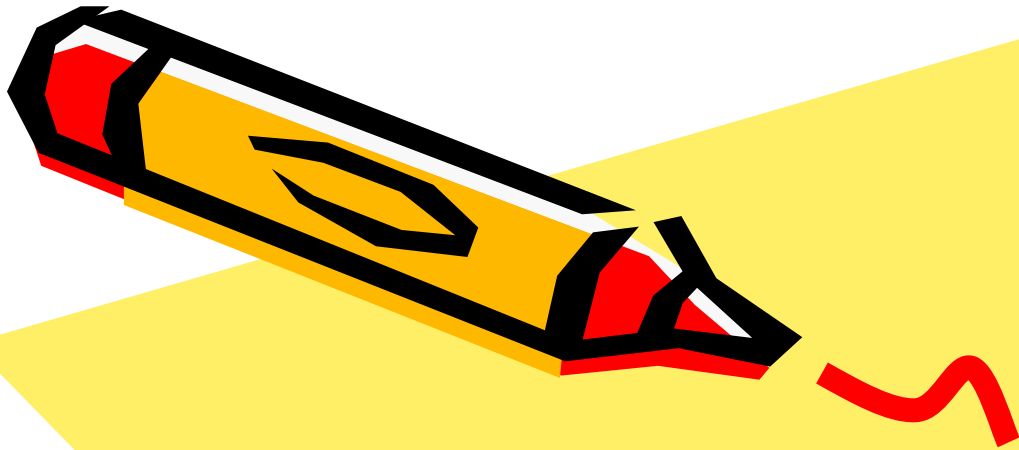
- We reviewed a PFT teacher survey regarding the efficacy of homework
- We examined some current research regarding homework and a sample homework policy from another district
- We discussed the current homework policy and practice in this district



Time for Homework

	Days a week	Current	Planned
Kindergarten	Occasional Basis		No Change
Grades 1-3	4 Evenings a week	30 minutes	15-30 minutes (Grades 1-2)
Grades 4-5	4 Evenings a week	60 minutes	30-60 (Grades 3-5)
Grades 6-8	4 Evenings a week	60 minutes	4-8 hours a week
Grades 9-12	4 Evenings a week	90 minutes	7days, 90 minutes a day





Homework Committee

Next Step-Reconvene



To Be Determined - Guidelines for Assignments and Evaluation

- The Committee will reconvene to discuss explicit guidelines for assignment and evaluation
 - **Quality** - To address the quality of homework assignments
 - **Consistency** - To address the disparity in the kinds of homework assignments given
 - **MERIT/CREDIT** - To address the kinds of evaluation that would give appropriate merit and credit to the students so that they are motivated to complete assignments



To Be Determined-Strategy for Implementation

- The committee voiced a need to develop a comprehensive strategy
 - To communicate the importance of homework to all stakeholders
 - To support the assignment of appropriate homework
 - To support the completion of homework with the appropriate supports for all students
 - To conduct an independent review of the implementation of the homework policy periodically to ensure its efficacy and equity



Questions to be considered moving forward

How has the district changed since the 1985 policy adoption?

- Size and Demographics
- What more do we know about student learning?
 - Brain Research
 - Learning Styles Inventories
- What are some other considerations?
 - Technology
 - Working Parents and Busy Schedules
 - Homework Practices within a Managed Curriculum

