

K-5 Homework Guidelines



Decisions about the type and amount of homework to be assigned, including finishing incomplete class work and making up missed homework assignments and missed class time should be based upon careful consideration of individual circumstances.

STATE COLLEGE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

DEFINITIONS

Homework is the additional practice and positive reinforcement of classroom instruction and learning.

It should be:

- respectful to the child's ability and developmental level,
- related to the work of the classroom and, where possible, to the interest of the individual student,
- reasonable in amount and degree of difficulty. (Chip Wood, 2000)

RATIONALE

Homework has an immediate impact on the retention and understanding of the material covered. In addition, it can improve students' study skills, improve their attitudes toward school, foster independent learning and responsible character traits, and teach that learning can take place anywhere. (Cooper, 2001)

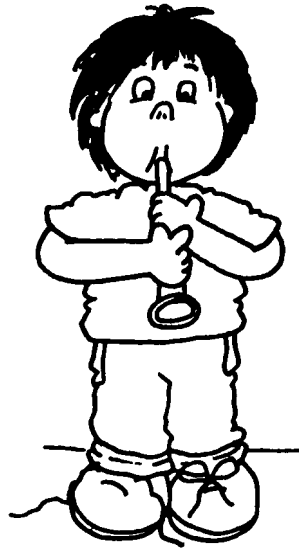
“By calling homework into question, we are not questioning the work of homework, but rather the value of students completing that work at home. Students need to complete long-term, independent projects. They need to learn many skills through drill and practice. They need time to make new learning their own. Professional educators need to design rigorous academic work, scaffold new knowledge and coach new study habits. The place for most of such work is in the school.” (Kravolec and Buell, 2001)

PURPOSE

Homework assignments should develop student responsibility, good study habits, and organizational skills.

Homework assignments should:

- allow for flexibility of teacher judgment in order to take into account the unique needs and circumstances of individual students,
- provide practice and reinforcement of skills already presented by the teacher,
- provide feedback for teachers to help guide instruction,
- provide an opportunity for parents to know what their child is studying.



TEACHER GUIDELINES

- Homework assignments should be designed to be completed independently and in a reasonable amount of time.

The National Parent Teacher Association and the National Education Association (2000) advocate “The Ten Minute Rule” as a general time limit guideline. (0-10 minutes multiplied by the student’s grade level per night). The 0-10 minute rule needs to be inclusive of all subjects. Careful consideration should be given during the year-long SOAR (Stop Often And Read) home/school reading program and for previously assigned independent long/short term projects.

- When necessary, teachers should communicate clear, written directions and expectations with homework assignments.
- Teachers should communicate to students and parents the relevance of homework assignments by providing discussion and/or appropriate feedback.
- All materials that are necessary for completing assignments should be made available for students.
- Consequences for lack of completion of work should be developmentally appropriate, consistently enforced, and clearly communicated to students and parents.
- In cases where students have more than one teacher assigning homework, teachers should collaborate regarding amounts and types of homework assigned.
- Careful consideration should be given to assigning homework over weekends.
- No homework should be assigned over scheduled school vacations.
- Homework should not be assigned as a form of punishment.
- Assignments outside of the school day should not require use of the Internet.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HOMEWORK SUPPORT

- Use of assignment sheets or booklets is encouraged to develop organizational skills.
- Homework should be adapted according to students' abilities and/or to individual circumstances.
- Schools are encouraged to develop homework assistance for students who need it.
- Teachers are encouraged to distribute the Homework Hint Page for students and share these District Homework Guidelines at the beginning of the year (Back-to-School Night) and as needed.



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RATIONALE

ROLES OF STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Students are expected to:

- accept responsibility for completing and handing in homework on time.
- make sure they have necessary materials to complete assignments at home.
- set aside enough time for completion of homework.
- decide, with parents, on a good place to do homework.
- feel comfortable asking parents and/or teachers for help with homework assignments.
- complete homework legibly.

Parents are encouraged to:

- take responsibility for saying that homework is important.
- establish a routine for scheduling and managing homework responsibility.
- act as models who encourage reading and good study habits.
- work with the student to provide a quiet environment for completing homework.
- make sure that enough time is available for homework to be completed.
- monitor activities such as phone calls, television and/or other potential distractions during homework time.
- assist with homework as necessary, rather than do the child's homework.
- check to see that homework is legible and complete.
- communicate concerns about excessive homework, confusion about assignments, other.

Homework Hints adapted from Park Forest Elementary and Boalsburg/Panorama Guidelines

REFERENCES

The following references were referred to during the development of the current homework guidelines. These references are available at the TRC if you are interested in doing additional reading:

1. Begley, Sharon (1998). Homework doesn't help. Newsweek, March 30, v131h n13, p. 50 (2).
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5. Finns, Jeremy (1998). Parental engagement that makes a difference. Educational Leadership, May, v55 n8, p. 20(5).
6. Franklin, John (2001). Enough Already? Questioning Homework for Young Children. ASCD Curriculum Update, Spring, 5.
7. Kralovec, Etta, Buell, J. (2001). End Homework Now. Educational Leadership, April, pp. 39-42.
8. Marzano, R., Pickering, D., Pollack, J. (2001). Classroom Instruction that Works. Homework in Practice, ASCD, pp. 60-71.
9. Stager, Gary (2001). Questioning Homeworks' Worth. Curriculum Administrator, January, p. 62 (7).
10. Wood, Chip (2000). Homework! Responsive Classroom - A Newsletter for Teachers from Northeast Foundation for Children, Fall, Vol. 12, No. 4.

Approved by Elementary Principals
April, 2002