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## Sample Homework Policy

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### A. Philosophy

The \_\_\_\_\_ School District believes that meaningful, carefully-planned homework can enhance a student’s overall learning experience. Homework should reflect evolving instructional practices, be designed to deepen understanding, and help build essential skills.

The District also recognizes that due to its potential to impact family life, homework must be balanced, reasonable, and implemented in a coordinated way. Effective homework requires collaboration between the parents/guardians, the teacher, and the school in order to supply details, clarify expectations, and to provide appropriate support.

### B. Definition

Homework is any task assigned by a teacher that is to be completed by the student outside of regular instructional hours.

### C. Types of Homework

- 1) Completion Homework - Work that was assigned during instructional time, but not completed in class. (If most students were unable to finish the assignment in class, additional time should be provided before making any assignment into homework.)
- 2) Practice Homework - Work that is designed to review or reinforce concepts or skills taught during instructional time. (Homework should never be used to introduce new concepts or skills.)
- 3) Enrichment Homework - Work that explores topics that connect classwork to specific student interests (e.g. - independent research, etc.).
- 4) Project Homework - An extended activity or task outside regular instructional time that expands learning beyond curricular expectations. (Projects must always avoid placing any financial burden on parents/guardians or students. Also, group projects are generally recommended for high school only.)

### D. Guiding Principles

- 1) All homework should be purposeful and meaningful, and primarily involve tasks that are interesting and engaging. (Teachers should avoid using worksheets and similar “busy work” as homework.)
- 2) All homework should be differentiated to ensure that students are able to complete the assignment independently or with minimal support.

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- 3) A student's grade in a course should not be put in jeopardy because of homework. If the student is unable to complete the assigned work at home, the teacher should help arrange appropriate alternatives (usually through RTI).
- 4) Teachers should coordinate homework assignments with other staff to avoid potential overload for any student at any given time. This includes being aware of the demands of extra-curricular activities and sporting events.
- 5) Teachers should actively communicate with parents/guardians so that they know the best way to get help when a student experiences difficulty with a homework assignment.
- 6) Teachers should be sensitive to the potential impact of homework on family time, and balance the benefit of homework with respect for the needs of families. In that context, teachers must also remember that for many low-income students, the concept of "home" can be ambiguous.
- 7) Teachers of older students are encouraged to solicit their input on homework, collaboratively seeking the best structure to support their learning and success.
- 8) Teachers should strive to make homework a positive experience. Homework should never be used as a punishment.

#### **E. Holidays/Weekends**

- 1) Teachers should avoid assigning homework over long weekends or holidays.
- 2) Since weekends are often filled with family demands (or work for older students), weekend homework should not exceed what might be assigned on a regular school night.

#### **F. Amount of Homework**

- 1) The National Education Association and the National Parent Teacher Association both support the "10-minute rule." This states that the total amount of homework should never exceed 10 minutes per grade level per night. (e.g. - The maximum amount of homework for 6th graders should not exceed 60 minutes *total* per night.) Since this recommendation is consistent with research on age, developmental stages, and grade levels, our District has chosen to adopt this guideline.
- 2) Implementing this guideline requires that teachers coordinate homework assignments with other staff to avoid potential overload for any student at any given time (see D4 above).
- 3) It is important to note that these guidelines reflect the *maximum* amount of homework. If the District's Guiding Principles are followed (see D above), a typical week would usually contain significantly less homework.

#### **G. Homework and Grades**

Research suggests that grading homework is often counter-productive. This is especially true with low-income populations. **Studies have found a direct correlation between homework**

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**grades and socio-economic status.** In addition, when homework is used primarily for practice or enrichment, assigning a grade may not be appropriate.

However, if a teacher feels he/she absolutely must give a homework grade, then the following should be considered:

- 1) Homework grades should never be punitive. The goal should be to enhance learning, not to kill motivation. (See D3)
- 2) A notation of “completed” for homework is often better than a letter grade since the act of completing homework is more a work habit than an academic indicator.
- 3) While not mandatory, a “ZAP policy” (zeros aren’t possible) can make homework more purposeful. If a student can simply take a “zero” to avoid homework, the assignment becomes meaningless. If it’s worth assigning, it’s worth making sure it’s done.
- 4) Regardless of the system used, homework grades should never exceed 10% of the total grade for a course.

## **H. Homework Responsibilities**

### 1) Student Responsibilities

- a. Students are expected to do their best in completing any homework assigned by their teacher(s).
- b. Students should share any challenges they face with their teacher and/or parents/guardians. This feedback is an important component of the learning process.

### 2) Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

- a. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to supervise homework, providing appropriate assistance as needed. However, since homework is designed to reinforce learning (not provide instruction), parents/guardians are not expected to “teach” lessons, but simply to provide appropriate support.
- b. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to communicate with the teacher if the student is experiencing difficulty with an assignment, or if there are extenuating circumstances that make completing the assignment difficult.
- c. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to view all homework assignments as an opportunity to deepen their understanding of the student’s learning.
- d. Parents/Guardians who wish to modify homework assignments (for whatever reason) should meet with the teacher to discuss a plan that might better meet the student’s need.
- e. Parents/Guardians should keep in mind that by taking an interest in homework, they model the family’s commitment to education.

### 3) Teacher Responsibilities

- a. Teachers are expected to follow all the Guiding Principles (see D1-D8).
- b. Teachers are expected to maximize instruction during classroom hours. Any homework assigned must be one of the four Types (see C1, C2, C3, C4).

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- c. Teachers must prepare students for any homework assignment, and support them in developing the skills they need to successfully complete the work.
- d. Teachers must regularly review their homework practices and make adjustments (if needed) to ensure that students are gaining the maximum benefit from homework.
- e. Teachers must utilize appropriate strategies for communicating homework assignments to students, and for keeping parents informed of the best way to receive help if students have difficulty with a homework assignment.
- f. Teachers should actively participate in professional development related to homework practices whenever it is provided by the state, district, or school.

#### 4) Administrator Responsibilities

- a. Principals must ensure that students, parents/guardians, and teachers are clearly aware of the District's Homework Policy.
- b. Principals must monitor their teachers to verify that they are consistently following the District's Homework Policy. They must also take appropriate steps when a teacher is not in compliance.
- c. As part of the ADMIN team, Principals must annually review the District's Homework Policy and make adjustments as needed.

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