

FREDERICK COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS	Reg. No. 500-15
Subject: HOMEWORK GUIDELINES	Issued: 5/10/79
Preparing Office: Office of the Superintendent	Amended: 9/15/21

I. Policy

II. Procedures

A. Research-Informed Philosophy

Educators and parents share one common goal—to help each student in our schools be successful. Each group plays an important role in student achievement. Students learn best when they, their parents, and their schools work together. Parents are encouraged to communicate with teachers should questions arise concerning homework, and teachers should contact parents when the student’s homework is not satisfactory.

While teachers may strategically assign homework, due to a number of factors impacting homework success, recording a grade for all homework assignments may not be an equitable practice. Grading homework can warp the accuracy of academic progress if students have not worked independently on an assignment. It may perpetuate the achievement gap and reveal biases if some students do not have access to resources that others do, and it could undermine the concept of valuing risk-taking and mistake-making in practice towards standards proficiency (Feldman, 2019). Teachers will consider these factors as they evaluate whether or not to record student evidence of learning on homework in the gradebook and as such, these graded assignments should make up no more than 10% of a student’s grade.

Assigning homework may be effective, but its effect depends on many factors. In strategically assigning homework, “it is not necessary to assign huge quantities of homework, but it is important that the assignment is systematic and regular, with the aim of instilling work habits and promoting autonomous, self-directed learning. Homework should not exclusively aim for repetition of content, as this type of task is associated with less effort or lower results. When it comes to homework, how is more important than how much.” (Fernandez-Alonso, 2015). In other words, homework should not be assigned for the sake of simply doing more; we should not base assigning homework on the assumption that significant quantities of work is equivalent to academic rigor.

B. Purposes and Guidelines

1. Purposes of Homework – Assignment of homework must be a strategic, authentic part of the learning process, aligning with one or more of the following purposes:
 - a. **Practice** – The student refines and strengthens skills previously taught in class.
 - b. **Preparation** – The completion of this type of assignment makes the next day's lesson more meaningful and easier to master. The flipped classroom and preparatory reading assignments are examples of this type.
 - c. **Application** – Successful completion of the assignment requires coordinating and combining several skills and concepts. This type requires more time and a greater variety of resources.
 - d. **Extension** – This is the application of skills and concepts to more complicated situations. It requires higher level of thinking skills, problem-solving and use of abstract ideas. Short essays, projects, and reports are examples of this type.
2. Guidelines for Homework

All assigned homework must align to the philosophy described in II, A.

- a. Scope – Homework will be planned so students:
 - (1) Understand the purpose of and see the relationship to their homework to intended learning objectives.
 - (2) Have a clear understanding of the procedures and due dates.
 - (3) Understand how their homework is evaluated.
 - (4) Understand how they can use feedback on homework to improve understanding.
- b. Volume and Extent ¹
 - (1) High Schools – No more than two (2) hours of homework per night for combined subjects. Note: Exceptions may apply for students participating in dual enrollment courses.
 - (2) Middle Schools –
 - (a) Grade 6: No more than 60 minutes per night for all combined subjects.
 - (b) Grade 7 – 8: No more than 75 minutes for all combined subjects.
 - (3) Elementary Schools –
 - (a) PreK – Grade 3: Since research shows that homework is not as beneficial for students in these grades as it is for older learners, teachers should use discretion in assigning homework.

¹ Research shows that homework is more beneficial after Grade 3 (Marzano, 2007); however, even for high school students, more than two hours of homework was not associated with greater levels of achievement (Cooper, 2006). Therefore, in situations where students are working with more than one teacher, considerations should be given by the faculty to avoid excessive nightly homework. In general, it is better for students to do a little bit of homework regularly than a lot of homework only now and then (Trautwein, 2007).

- (b) Grade 4 – 5: No more than 45 minutes of homework per night for combined subjects.
 - (4) School leaders and teacher teams should develop systems to monitor the volume and extent to which homework is being assigned.
 - c. Timing – Teachers should give careful consideration when assigning homework over the holidays and weekends.
 - d. Accommodations – Teachers are legally required to ensure that homework is accommodated/modified as necessary in accordance with students’ IEPs and Section 504 Plans.
 - e. It is acknowledged that as teachers collect evidence of student learning via tests, quizzes, projects, or other classwork assignments, there are times when these assignments become work that is done at home or outside of the school day. These assignments fall outside of the 10% maximum weight, but should be considered for scope and volume.
3. Teachers should regularly check assigned homework to provide feedback for progress towards standards proficiency. Student achievement on homework should primarily be used as formative evidence of learning for the teacher and the student.
4. Parents are encouraged to:
- a. Create a home environment that makes studying each night a priority.
 - (1) Set and maintain a daily homework time.
 - (2) Provide necessary supplies.
 - (3) Assist your child in establishing a system for recording homework assignments. Help in organizing class notes and notebooks.
 - (4) Plan an order of study: for example, save the most enjoyable study until last, plan breaks and use a timer to segment difficult tasks.
 - (5) Encourage a buddy system to get homework when absent from class.
 - b. Be an advocate for your child and his/her learning.
 - (1) Provide praise, support and assistance when necessary.
 - (2) Communicate with the teacher when you have questions or concerns about homework assignments.

C. Research

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