

7810: Homework Policy

The school committee believes that properly assigned homework enforces student retention of classroom instruction, teaches student self-management of their time, provides the teacher valuable feedback on the effectiveness of classroom instruction and informs parents of the education programs.

Policy Proclamation

The school committee herein directs the superintendent to require that each district school develop and implement homework policies suitable to the course of instruction and the varying student learning abilities and student ages at that school.

Scope of Policy

This policy sets forth the guidelines for homework, which were developed by the district improvement team. The guidelines are provided for parental support, quality homework, teacher-parent cooperation, student accountability and grading homework.

Definitions

This policy defines three categories of homework.

1. Homework that is to be completed before the next school day and which is assigned to reinforce classroom instruction and to sharpen student skills.
2. Homework that is assigned to extend or complete a classroom lesson(s) and which may not be required to be completed before the next school day.
3. Homework that requires extended student research or writing and which may have an expected or flexible date for completion.

Parental Support

Parents that are interested in the success of their child are aware of and attentive to the child's homework assignments. Their support is essential to the child's efforts to complete each homework assignment in a quality manner. Such parents provide the home environment for child success. It is suggested that parents:

- Frequently communicate the importance of homework to their child.
- Establish a disciplined enforceable system for homework that their child can follow.

- Provide the child's own place to work. It does not have to be fancy and can be the kitchen table but it must be theirs. This will enforce the parent's feeling of homework importance.
- Talk to the student about their homework assignments after it is completed, not as a check up, but as a conversation about school and student interests.

Quality Homework

A successful school's homework program will have the following qualities:

- Focus on students' learning needs, be meaningful and not busy work. It must be relevant to learning standards and have a clear purpose that is understood by all students.
- Instructions that define how each homework assignment is to be done and the completeness expected should be clearly given to all students with extra attention to IEP and 504 students.
- Feedback from teachers and parents that encourage students to improve their homework.
- Homework policies that state expectations and procedures appropriate to the age of students.
- Homework, like classroom work, should be varied in approach to engage students with different learning styles and capabilities.
- Strategies that provide students with multiple ways to demonstrate their level of performance are applicable to homework and can be effective in increasing engagement and motivation.

Teacher-Parent Cooperation

The capacity of parents to support students in homework varies. Teacher strategies that can assist parental support include:

- Flexibility in assignments to meet varying needs of students,
 - Communicating homework issues with parents,
 - Consistent procedures and routines.

The amount of homework and the frequency of assignment for grades one to six students should be incrementally increased at each grade level. For these students, one hour and one half hour—estimated for students at risk—should be the maximum assignment to be completed by the next school day. Where students receive homework from more than one teacher or class, every effort should be made among the teachers to coordinate and control the amount assigned.

Student Accountability

All students are expected to complete their assignments and be held accountable to district and state standards. Absent of accountability, student homework participation erodes. Accountability must be balanced with support, communication, assessment, and intervention.

Elementary school students who make an effort, but fail to satisfactorily complete the homework assignment due to not understanding instructions, must be given an opportunity to make-up the assignment. When students refuse to do homework, punishment alone is not an effective strategy to change behavior. To increase participation it is important that teachers use positive strategies to motivate students. Suggested strategies include:

- Assure that homework assignments are of high quality.
- Assure that assignments are clearly explained and well understood by all students, with extra attention to IEP and 504 students.
- Have students explain why their assignments are not completed and what steps they will take to improve their performance.
- Provide students with modified homework assignment, as they may need, such as: more time, reduced amount, and recommendations to parents to break up time spent on assignments.
- Make sure students understand how homework provides them individualized learning support.

Grading Homework

Teachers are required to grade category two and three homework assignments but may omit grading category one homework. The grading value of homework may vary according to purpose and importance of each assignment. At Metcalf faculty will determine the value of homework—percentage of grade—collectively for each grade level.

Suggested guidelines for grading homework are listed below:

- There should be classroom-to-classroom consistency in the grading procedure for category one homework.
- Teachers should be increasingly critical in their review and grading of homework as students advance through the elementary school.
- Where no effort is shown and no homework is turned in a zero grade should be given.
- When grading category one homework, emphasis should be placed on the quantity of work done, the amount of student effort and a smaller grade value given to accuracy and completeness of the work.
- Grade value for category one homework should be a small percentage of the total classroom grade for each quarterly marking period.
- Teachers are obligated to return graded written homework to students within a time period relative to the classroom instruction from which the homework was assigned.

The above grading guidelines are not intended for book reports and other category three extended homework assignments. Homework assignments to JHS/SHS students are more curricular-integrated, complex and demanding of students' self-reliance. Teachers shall have wide discretion in grading such homework for these students.

Policy Dissemination

For effectiveness this policy shall be disseminated to principals and to all classroom teachers in each school.

Effective Date

This policy shall become effective upon the date that the school committee approves this revision.

First Reading: April 12, 2005

Second Reading: April 26, 2005

Adopted: May 10, 2005

Amended: May 9, 2006