

Conejo Valley Unified School District

HOMEWORK POLICY

Definition

Homework is defined as any work planned or approved by the teacher to be completed by the student outside of the regular classroom.

Philosophy

The Board of Education acknowledges the importance of current research* in developing and implementing homework policies and guidelines that will maximize the effectiveness of homework as a strategy for improving student success.

The overall effectiveness of homework in achieving improved student success is dependent on many variables including the purpose, type, and quantity of homework assigned, the grade level of the student, as well as the role played by teachers, students, and parents in the design, completion, evaluation, and grading of homework.

Purpose

Research has clearly shown that homework has different purposes at different grade levels. Homework for younger students should be designed to develop positive attitudes and work habits while homework for older students should develop or expand content knowledge. Student performance is enhanced by five types of homework:

- A. Study skills and habits: Homework assignments designed to improve skills such as concentration, discipline, notetaking, reading for understanding, and reading for pleasure.
- B. Practice/Review: Homework assignments designed to reinforce material presented in class and/or develop mastery of skills.
- C. Preparation: Homework assignments designed to introduce material that will be helpful in understanding future instruction.
- D. Skill Integration: Homework assignments designed to utilize separately learned skills and concepts and apply them in the completion of a single product such as a book report, science project, or writing assignment.
- E. Extension: Homework assignments designed to transfer previously learned skills and concepts to other situations such as making real world and cross-curricular connections.

Guidelines for Quantity and Type of Homework

The research is clear that the effectiveness of homework in improving student performance increases with the age of the child. The research also strongly suggests that the quantity and type of homework assigned must be grade level appropriate. Based on this research, homework should be assigned within the following guidelines.

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Cumulative Minutes/ School Day</u>	<u>Type(s)</u>
Kdg	0 - 10	Study skills/Habits
1-2	10 - 20	Study skills/Habits Practice/Review
3-5	30 - 50	Study skills/Habits Practice/Review Preparation Skill Integration
6-8	60 - 90	Practice/Review Preparation Skill integration Extension
9-12	90 - 120	Practice/Review Preparation Skill integration Extension

It is widely recognized that activities such as independent and recreational reading, practicing musical instruments and practice for extracurricular activities are also essential for improving student performance. These types of activities are generally expected to be completed in addition to study skill and content homework.

Use of Homework for Grading

At the Federal, State, and District level there is an expectation that student performance is to be measured and reported on the basis of clear curriculum content and student performance standards. Therefore, academic grades should be directly based on student performance in mastering approved State and District curriculum standards. Whereas homework is an instructional strategy for improving student success, it may only be used to formally evaluate student performance when it is directly related to the student's mastery of academic curriculum standards.

Responsibilities

A. Teacher

There is substantial evidence that the quality of the homework assigned and teacher response to homework enhance its value in improving student success. While it is neither practical nor necessary to give in-depth feedback on every homework assignment, teachers should use strategies that will maximize the effectiveness of homework assignments. Therefore, teachers must:

1. design the homework for one of the appropriate purposes noted above;
2. design the homework so that it can be accomplished by the child independent of direct support from others;
3. clearly communicate to the student the purpose, directions, and expectations for all homework assignments;
4. clearly establish and communicate to parents the general purpose and expectations for homework, and encourage feedback regarding quantity and difficulty of homework.
5. provide timely and appropriate feedback to students and parents using strategies that will
 - a. acknowledge receipt of the homework;
 - b. monitor for completion and accuracy;
 - c. give timely feedback on key assignments;
 - d. give significant feedback on assignments based on extension, or skill integration

The Board strongly encourages Teachers to:

1. utilize emerging technologies to improve parent/teacher communication.
2. avoid assigning homework over long weekends, holidays, and summer break (with the exception of AP/IB coursework).

B. Student

There is strong evidence that students who complete appropriate homework assignments will demonstrate significant improvement in academic achievement. Therefore, students have a responsibility to develop the discipline and study skills necessary to complete homework on a regular basis. Students must:

1. have a system for recording homework assignments on a daily basis;
2. have a clear understanding of the homework assignment before leaving school;
3. have the books and materials necessary to complete the assigned homework;
4. allocate an appropriate amount of time daily for the completion of homework;
5. turn in homework assignments when requested.

C. Parent

Research strongly suggests that parents have an important role to play in providing an opportunity for students to complete homework. However, the research is also clear that parents should not assume responsibility for the actual completion of the student's homework. Therefore, to the extent possible, it is recommended that parents are responsible for providing the following:

1. time for students to complete homework;
2. a place for students to complete homework;
3. the basic materials needed;
4. the expectation for homework to be completed;
5. the supervision necessary to ensure successful completion of homework.
6. information to the teacher about homework questions or concerns, and feedback regarding the quantity and difficulty of homework.

* Key Research References used to develop this policy:

Cooper, Harris, The Battle Over Homework, Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press, 2001.

Marzano, Robert; Pickering, Debra; Pollock, Jane, Classroom Instruction that Works: Research Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement, Alexandria: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2001.

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Bembunty, H. (2011) The Last Word. An Interview with Harris Cooper – Research, Policies, Tips, and Current Perspectives on Homework. *Journal of Advanced Academics*, (22)2, 340-349.

Cooper, H.; Robinson, J.; Patall, E. (2008) Parent Involvement in Homework: A Research Synthesis. *Review of Educational Research*, 78(4), 1039-1101

Jackson, B. (2007) Homework Inoculation and the Limits of Research. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 89(1), 55-59.

Kohn, Alfie (2006) Abusing Research: The Study of Homework and Other Examples. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 88(1), 8-22

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Homework has been a major topic among parents and educators for decades. Since the early 1900's homework controversies have followed a 30-year cycle, swinging between times of demand for rigorous homework and times when parents demanded less intrusion from homework on family time and activities. Currently, parents and educators face pressures from both sides of this issue. International and national studies on comparative student achievement, State Standards, State testing, and State accountability programs all argue for a resurgence in rigorous homework policies. At the same time, parents are concerned about the impact of homework on their family lives as students are involved in more outside activities than ever before, colleges and universities are looking for "well rounded" applicants, and there is unequal access to information outside of school.

District staff conducted an extensive review of available research to design a homework policy that would maximize the value of homework in improving student achievement. Over 120 studies were reviewed. The research has produced some profound and interesting results. For example, the research shows that homework does not contribute to any increase in student achievement in Kindergarten through third grade. However, homework can be used to develop study skills that will contribute to improved student achievement in later years. In general, upper elementary students can gain 6 percentile points in student achievement from homework. The value added doubles to 12 percentile points for middle school students, and doubles again to 24 percentile points for high school students.

However, these kinds of gains will only occur if homework is appropriate in content, within appropriate time guidelines, and acknowledged through feedback from the teacher. The research has identified 5 types of homework that have value: study skills, practice/review, preparation, skill integration, and extension. In terms of quantity, 10 minutes per grade level is the most effective guideline. Spending more than 60 to 90 minutes per day on homework in middle school potentially has a negative effect on student achievement. Conversely, high school students needed to do a minimum of 60 minutes per day before there was any improvement in student achievement and no upper limit has been determined.

The Board of Education has carefully considered the research on homework and has adopted this new Homework Policy in the attempt to balance the need for academic rigor with the importance of quality family time. Take a moment to read this new policy and learn more about how we can work together to ensure quality learning for your student.

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UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



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