

Instruction

BP 6154(a)

Homework and Missed Assignments

The Governing Board recognizes that the purposes of meaningful homework assignments include the following:

- Practicing a learned skill;
- Valuable extension of student learning time; and
- Assisting students in developing the Essential Outcomes, including good study habits, responsibility, self-discipline, and independence.

The Board believes that family time, extra-curricular activities, and self-guided time for students are critical to development of the whole child. Accordingly, homework will be assigned to allow for all aspects of social, emotional and intellectual growth to occur, including the learning that happens through family and other social interaction outside of assigned homework.

Responsibilities

1. The superintendent is responsible for ensuring all schools are adhering to the homework policy, making certain that all staff members are informed about the homework policy, and supporting staff members as needed.
2. Principals are responsible for implementing and coordinating the Board homework policy at their sites, communicating about homework to parents/guardians, and supporting staff members as needed.
3. Teachers are responsible for adhering to the Board homework policy and communicating effectively with students and parents/guardians. Teachers will:
 - a. Assign homework with clear deadlines;
 - b. Define what role, if any, parents/guardians will have in various types of homework assignments, especially for any long-term projects; and
 - c. Actively encourage reading at all grade levels, working to instill life-long reading habits in all students.
4. Parents/guardians are responsible for cooperatively supporting homework by the encouragement of and appropriate involvement with their child(ren). Parents/guardians will contact teacher(s) if their child is consistently not able to complete homework assignments independently or if challenges or questions arise. Parents/guardians will actively encourage reading at every grade level.
5. Students are responsible for completing assigned tasks which result in a quality work product. Students will bring required materials to and from school and will plan effectively for long-term projects. All students will read at home. Students will complete their assignments, including making up missed assignments, by the due date set by the teacher. Finally, students are encouraged to pursue passions and other areas of interests that are not assigned.

Homework and Missed Assignments**Differentiation**

The grade level guidelines defined below are based on the needs of the average student. Teachers should use their professional judgment and knowledge of their students in order to modify or adjust assignments to the needs of their students. However, if significantly less or significantly more homework is required for a student, that arrangement should be made through the mutual consent of the teacher and parent/guardian.

Kindergarten through Eighth Grades

1. Homework assignments: Homework assignments may be assigned to be completed in a single day or may take several days to complete.
2. Weekends and Holidays: In order to preserve family time and minimize student stress, homework will not be assigned to be completed wholly on weekends or during holiday breaks. Although homework assignments that span several days or long-term projects may include a time span that includes weekends or holiday breaks, these projects should not be due immediately following a weekend or holiday break. Independent of assigned homework or projects at any time, reading should always be a part of every student's daily life, including weekends and holidays.
3. Feedback: Effective communication between teachers and students is critically important, and teachers should provide appropriate feedback to students in a timely manner regarding homework assignments. Feedback may take a variety of forms throughout the year.
4. Reading: Students will read at school and at home at every grade level, and a variety of strategies will be employed with the goal of instilling a love of reading and the lifelong habit of reading.
5. Student-Driven Learning at Home: Students will be encouraged to pursue their passions and interests to enrich and deepen their learning. When possible, students will be given the opportunity to show what they have learned with their peers.
6. Family Activities: Teachers are encouraged to suggest, but will not require, family games, activities, and discussions appropriate to the grade level to support learning.

Long Term Projects in Kindergarten through Fifth Grade:

For the purposes of this policy, a "long-term project" is any activity which takes place over an extended period of time, is designed to be completed in stages or parts, and which is designed to demonstrate deep engagement with a skill or subject. Students are given detailed information about expectations at the beginning of the project, and formal feedback is given which is attuned to the expectations set at the start of the project. As an example, a rubric may be used to set expectations and give formal feedback.

Collaborative projects are key opportunities for learning. Due to the complexity of student schedules after school hours, the need for an adult to monitor individual contributions, and

Homework and Missed Assignments

group dynamics, *assigned and required* collaborative projects which require students to physically meet and work together should occur only during the school day. Optional collaborative assignments may be offered to or suggested by students, but no student will be required to complete an at-home collaborative project. Individual, at-home long-term projects are allowed as defined in the grade level descriptions below.

Kindergarten and First Grade

1. Reading: The foremost expectation for homework is reading. Reading experiences will include students *being read to* by adults or peers, students reading *with* adults or peers, students reading books out loud *to* adults or peers, and, for advanced readers, silent reading.
2. Mathematics: Occasional assignments may occur to practice or apply a learned skill. Teachers are encouraged to suggest, but will not require, family games, activities, and discussions to support mathematic learning.
3. Individual Long-Term Projects: Teachers may assign individual long-term projects to be completed at home up to three times a year. These projects will focus on critical concepts, be broken down into manageable parts to aid students in time management, and clearly delineate the role parents/guardians will take (if any) in the completion of the project. Once completed, students will be given feedback that will guide their future learning.
4. Time Spent: While all students are different, as a general guideline students should read about twenty minutes per night. Each long-term project should take approximately one hour to complete.

Second and Third Grade

1. Reading: The foremost expectation for homework continues to be reading. Even when students begin to read with fluency and understanding, reading experiences will still include students *being read to* by adults or peers, students reading *with* adults or peers, students reading books out loud *to* adults or peers, and silent reading.
2. Mathematics: Occasional assignments may occur to practice or apply a learned skill. Teachers are encouraged to suggest, but will not require, family games, activities, and discussions to support mathematic learning.
3. Individual Long-Term Projects: Teachers may assign individual long-term projects to be completed at home up to three times a year. These projects will focus on critical concepts, be broken down into manageable parts to aid students in time management, and clearly delineate the role parents/guardians will take (if any) in the completion of the project. Once completed, students will be given feedback that will guide their future learning.

Homework and Missed Assignments

4. **Time Spent:** While all students are different, as a general guideline students should read about thirty minutes per night. Each long-term project should take approximately two hours to complete.

Fourth and Fifth Grade

1. **Reading:** Reading continues to be a focus for homework, and students will continue to interact with books in a variety of ways. Content reading may be assigned in these grades.
2. **Mathematics:** Teachers may assign mathematics homework at a student's level when practice or enrichment is needed. Once a skill is mastered, a student should not be required to continue to practice the skill, other than to occasionally review this learned skill.
3. **Individual Long-Term Projects:** Teachers may assign individual long-term projects to be completed at home up to four times a year. These will focus on critical concepts and clearly delineate the role parents/guardians will take (if any) in the completion of the project. Teachers will support students in determining how to break down the project into manageable parts. Although students will not be required to independently break down a project, the teacher will ensure that students take on increasing levels of ownership of this task. Once a project is completed, students will be given feedback that will guide their future learning. Teachers will ensure that if the student follows a sensible plan for completion, students will be able to complete projects, reading, and all other assignments within the general time guidelines listed below.
4. **Study Skills:** Teachers will begin teaching specific study skills during class time. Once taught and practiced in class, students will occasionally be assigned to study for a test using one or more of the mastered techniques.
5. **World Language:** Teachers will assign homework to aid in the development of world language skills. Assignments will focus on skills which require practice and repetition in order to achieve mastery. Homework should be designed to be completed independently by students.
6. **Other Subjects:** Except as defined above, homework will be assigned only in the areas of reading/language arts and mathematics.
7. **Time Spent:** While all students are different, as a general guideline students should spend about forty minutes per night on all assignments, including reading, mathematics, world language, and long-term projects.

Homework and Missed Assignments

Sixth through Eighth Grade

Homework needs to be balanced across all curricular areas. Home assignments support the meaningful learning that has transpired in the classroom. Practice is a necessary component in mathematics, reading, writing, critical thinking, studying, and experiential learning; therefore homework will be thoughtfully given to promote positive student learning outcomes.

For the purposes of this policy, a “long-term project” is any activity which takes place over an extended period of time, is designed to be completed in stages or parts, and which is designed to demonstrate deep engagement with a skill or subject. Students are given detailed information about expectations at the beginning of the project, and feedback is given which is attuned to the expectations set at the start of the project. When adding long-term projects to homework, the consideration for limiting other homework in the same subject area should occur. If a collaborative assignment is to be completed in whole or in part at home, it should be organized in such a way as it does not require students to physically meet together outside of school hours.

Students will need to learn to balance their home studies with extra-curricular activities and family time; therefore, keeping communications open between school and family is critical. If a student’s homework load is unreasonable for his/her capacity in any given night, communication to the teacher(s) is welcomed and appreciated. Work can then be adjusted and individualize for student success.

Students who choose to take accelerated, advanced, or instrumental music classes will have additional responsibilities which may add to their homework.

Missed Assignments

Students who miss school work and/or homework because of an excused absence will be given the opportunity to complete all assignments and tests that can be reasonably provided. As determined by the teacher, the assignments and tests will be reasonably equivalent, but not necessarily identical to, the assignments and tests missed during the absence. Students will receive full credit for work satisfactorily completed within the period of time prescribed by the teacher.

Students who miss school work and/or homework because of an unexcused absence will be given the opportunity to make up missed assignments for reduced credit. The teacher of any class from which a student is suspended may require the student to complete assignments and tests missed during the suspension.

Homework and Missed Assignments

Students who are not able to complete assigned tasks within the assigned deadlines for reasons other than absence are encouraged to discuss this with their teacher in advance of the deadline. Teachers will have the discretion to approve extensions based on the best interest of the student.

Policy
adopted

Hillsborough City School District
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