

## SUGGESTED HOMEWORK PRACTICE

In response to the concerns of students and parents about late nights completing homework, the stress homework places on families, and inconsistency among schools over the types and quantities of homework, the Near North District School Board has investigated the issues and has determined suggestions that will establish consistent practices and reinforce homework as an engaging and relevant learning activity.

## DEFINITION - WHAT IS HOMEWORK?

Homework is relevant learning activities that are associated with the school program and which are completed outside classroom time. Homework is a planned part of the educational process designed to enhance student learning, and is directly connected to The Ontario Curriculum Learning Expectations, Learning Skills, and Ministry of Education Reporting Guidelines. Homework is a co-operative effort between home and school

Homework is designed to assist and improve learning. It reinforces what has been learned in class, prepares students for future lessons, teaches organization and responsibility, encourages innovation and creativity and helps students to develop the skills and attitudes they need for successful lifelong learning. Homework supports the development of learning skills, such as self-discipline, task commitment, time management, responsibility, independence, initiative, and problem solving. Homework programs recognize learning at home as an essential part of education. Research has shown that students achieve academic success more consistently when parents are involved in their child's education. Homework facilitates parent involvement in their child's learning and insight into the school curriculum. In addition, effective at-home practices enhance positive attitudes about school and about learning routines.

### TYPES OF HOMEWORK

- *Practice* - review and reinforcement of learning presented in class.
- *Preparation* - provides background information for future class work.
- *Extension/Creative* - creative applications that integrate and/or expand upon classroom learning.
- *Completion* -



the child is in preschool or in the upper grades (Coleman 1966; Epstein 1991; Stevenson & Baker 1987; de Kanter, Ginsburg, & Milne 1986; Henderson & Berla 1994; Keith & Keith 1993; Lontos 1992; Walberg, n.d.). Higher achievement is, in part, the result of the increased amount of homework completed by students with families who are more involved in their education.

- Research suggests that, in general, students who do homework have higher achievement scores than students who do not do homework. Supervised study has a more positive effect than homework in the elementary grades up to Grade 6, whereas homework is more effective for junior high (Grades 7 - 9) and high school students (Cooper 1994).
- Homework in the earlier grades promotes good attitudes and study habits, and can have a long-term effect that reveals itself later on, when the student moves into secondary school. Therefore, research supports the assignment of homework in early grades, not necessarily for its immediate effects on achievement, but rather for its potential long-term impact (Cooper & Lindsay & Nye & Greathouse 1998).
- Schools that assigned homework frequently showed higher student achievement levels than did schools that made little use of homework (Rutter and others 1979).

### HOMEWORK PRACTICE

The suggested guideline balances the time required to complete homework with extra curricular activities and family time. The types and quantity of homework should reflect the student's learning profile. Differentiation of homework is essential; careful consideration must be given to modification of assignments when appropriate. Provided that the student (based on his/her capabilities) took full advantage of in-class time offered for work completion, the following homework timelines should be adhered to:

- Kindergarten students will not be assigned homework except for early learning activities such as reading with or talking to their parents, or playing.
- Grades 1 to Grade 6 will primarily have homework involving family time such as discussion, playing games, cooking, etc. or reading. On occasion relevant junior students Grades 4 to 6 independent or group project work may be assigned such as book talks, oral presentations, science fair or heritage fair projects.
- Grade 7 & 8 students should have no more than 1 hour per day.

Our mission is to educate learners to their fullest potential in preparation for life-



- Students should, based on his/her capabilities, take full advantage of in-class time offered for assignment and homework completion to help reduce what is left for homework.
- Students should, based on his/her capabilities put forth a strong effort to complete the tasks required.
- Students should negotiate with the teacher in advance if the student expects that they may not be able to accomplish the required homework due to special circumstances.