

Update on AUSD Homework Policies and Practices

September 27, 2016

Teaching and Learning

Educational Services

Presentation Goals

- Review AUSD Homework Policy
- Recap status of homework evaluation process
- Review key research on homework
- Provide case study of completed evaluation process and policy outcomes
- Present recommendations for AUSD next steps

AUSD Board Policy 6154: Homework/Makeup Work

Excerpt:

The Board of Education recognizes that homework contributes toward building responsibility, self-discipline, and life-long learning habits, and time spent on homework directly influences students' ability to meet the district's academic standards. The Board expects students, parents/guardians, and staff to view homework as a routine and important part of students' daily lives.

<http://www.gamutonline.net/district/alameda/DisplayPolicy/586953/>

AUSD Board Policy 6154 (Continued)

Key aspects:

- Each site shall have a homework plan.
- The Board expects that teachers at all grade levels use parents/guardians as a contributing resource.
- When students repeatedly fail to do their homework, parents/guardians shall be notified and asked to contact teacher.

AUSD Administrative Regulation 6154: Homework/Makeup Work

School-site homework plan shall include guidelines for the assignment of homework and describe responsibilities of students, staff, and parents/guardians. The plan shall identify:

1. For each grade level, the amount of time that students shall be expected to spend on homework
2. For each grade level, the extent to which homework assignments shall systematically involve participation by parents/guardians

AUSD Administrative Regulation 6154 (Continued)

Each school-site homework plan shall identify:

3. The means by which parents/guardians shall be informed about:
 - Homework expectations
 - How homework relates to the student's grades
 - How best to help their children
4. Techniques that will be taught to help students allocate their time wisely, meet their deadlines, and develop good personal study habits

Administrative Regulation 6154 (Continued)

Each school-site homework plan shall identify:

5. The access that students shall have to obtain:
 - Resource materials from the library/media center
 - Assistance and/or tutoring through telephone help lines and/or after-school centers
6. The means by which teachers shall coordinate assignments so that students do not receive an overload of homework one day and very little the next
7. For each grade level, the extent to which homework assignments shall emphasize independent research, reports, special reading, and problem-solving activities

Recap of Homework Evaluation Process

- 2015-16 LCAP Parent/Guardian Advisory Committee homework discussions
- 3.22.16 Board presentation:
 - Reviewed Harris Cooper’s time recommendations
 - Noted support of National Education Organizations (NEA, NPTA, ACSA) for Cooper’s guidelines
 - Reviewed general alignment across elementary site policies and variance across secondary
 - Provided examples of current practices at elementary sites

Recap of Homework Evaluation Process

The 'Ten Minute Rule'

- Recommends that the maximum amount of homework for all classes should not exceed 10 minutes per grade level per night.
- Examples:
 - First grade: 10 minutes/night
 - Sixth grade: 1 hour/night
 - Twelfth grade: 2 hours/night

Recap of Homework Evaluation Process

Seven of 10 elementary schools have the following amounts of time per grade level established:

- Kindergarten: 50 minutes/week
- First Grade: 100 minutes/week
- Second Grade: 125 minutes/week
- Third Grade: 160 minutes/week
- Fourth Grade: 180 minutes/week
- Fifth Grade: 200 minutes/week

Summary of Homework Research

- Research provides many reasons to believe that homework is effective and valuable, but generalizable conclusions about its worth are difficult to find.
- The connection between student learning and homework is contested.
- Studies tend to focus on student age and relative amount of time spent on homework.

Effective Homework Policies and Regulations. Hanover Research Report.

May 2013.

Summary of Homework Research: Age

A landmark 1989 study and repeated studies by Harris Cooper and his colleagues have produced similar results:

Homework is more closely related with increases in academic achievement as students get older.

Cooper, H., et al. "Relationship Among Attitudes about Homework, Amount of Homework Assigned and Completed, and Student Achievement." *Journal of Educational Psychology*. 90:1. 1998, p. 70.

Cooper, H. "Synthesis of Research on Homework." *Educational Leadership*. 47:3. November 1989, pp. 85-91.

Cooper, H., et al. "Does Homework Improve Academic Achievement? A Synthesis of Research, 1987-2003." *Review of Educational Research*. 76:1 Spring 2006, pp. 1-66.

Summary of Homework Research: Age

- Homework is more closely related with increases in academic achievement as students get older
- Grades 4-6: Effect Size = .15 (negligible)
- Grades 7-9: Effect Size = .31 (small)
- Grades 10-12: Effect Size = .64 (medium to large)

Marzano, R.J. and D.J. Pickering. "The Case for and Against Homework." Educational Leadership. 64:6. March 2007 Pp. 74-9.

Summary of Homework Research: Age

- Cooper suggests that, while the academic benefits of homework are muted among younger groups of students, homework may serve a different purpose in elementary school than it does in middle school.

“Homework for young children should help them develop good study habits, foster positive attitudes toward school, and communicate to students the idea that learning takes work at home as well as at school.”

Cooper, H. “Synthesis of Research on Homework.” *Educational Leadership*. 47:3. November 1989, pp. 85-91.

Summary of Homework Research: Time

- Research appears to confirm that too much homework can diminish student performance.
- The widespread support of the ‘Ten Minute Rule’ follows this confirmation.

Summary of Homework Research: Time

- The time limit at which a high school student ceases to gain an achievement benefit is flexible.
- Middle school students do not appear to improve their performance after more than 1-2 hours of homework each night.

Cooper, H. “Homework for All – In Moderation.” Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. 2001.

Summary of Homework Research: Assigning Homework

Many aspects of homework effectiveness are beyond educators' control, including home workspace, competing activities, and distractions. These are likely to have significant impacts and should be considered.

- Homework should have a definitive purpose that is made clear to students.
- Teachers should make sure that students have the knowledge to complete assignments successfully.
- Prompt teacher feedback and a schedule also help ensure that assignments are useful.

Protheroe, N. "Good Homework Policy = Good Teaching." *Principal*. 2009, p. 44.

Summary of Homework Research: Assigning Homework

- Short frequent homework assignments are the most effective
- Assignments that practice past lessons and prepare for future lessons are more effective than assignments that only cover same-day content
- Assignments that disperse hard and easy material increase completion rates and accuracy while decreasing the students' perceived difficulty

“Effective Homework Assignments Brief.” 2008. National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.

Summary of Homework Research: Designing Effective Assignments

Guidelines for good homework assignments:

- **Purpose:** provide practice, check for understanding, or provide opportunity to apply knowledge and skills
- **Efficiency:** maximize opportunities for students to learn and demonstrate their knowledge
- **Ownership:** offer choices, be personally relevant, and create personal relationship
- **Competence:** students should be able to do their homework on their own personalized to students' abilities
- **Aesthetic appeal:** well organized and without excessive words or text

Vatternoot, C. "Five Hallmarks of Good Homework." *Educational Leadership*. 2010.

Additional Considerations: Grading Policies

Some grading policies can be detrimental to student performance:

- Assigning zeros
- Averaging scores
- Having one project or test with disproportionately high weight in final grade

Many researchers urge that grading reflect final understanding and recognize improvement trends.

Reves, D. 2008. "Effective Grading Practices." *Educational Leadership*. 65:5, pp, 85-7.

Wormeli, R. "Teaching in the Middle." *Middle Ground*. 9:3 February 2006.

Implementation and Management of Homework Policies

“School policy regarding homework, along with clear expectations for teachers as to what constitutes good homework, can strengthen the benefits of homework for student learning while decreasing potential problems.”

Protheroe, N. “Good Homework Policy = Good Teaching.” *Principal*. 2009, p. 44.

Case Study: Implementing Effective Practices

Davis Joint Union School District enacted a homework evaluation process that included the following:

- Established a Homework Policy Review Committee to research the issue
- Provided policy recommendations to Board
- Revised district's homework policy

Case Study: Implementing Effective Practices

Highlights of DJUSD Board Policy:

- Foundational Assumptions
- Philosophy
- Homework/Make-Up Work Guidelines

Case Study: Implementing Effective Practices

DJUSD Board Policy philosophy excerpts:

- The purpose of homework shall be to promote high quality student learning and achievement and to nurture a desire for students to extend their learning.
- Ongoing professional development shall focus on the quality of homework.
- As an extension of the classroom, homework shall be planned, organized, purposeful, grade-appropriate, and achievable for each student.
- Homework shall not place an undue burden on teachers, students, or families. Whenever possible, homework should take into consideration individual student needs and abilities through various forms of differentiation.
- Feedback and evaluation shall be timely and clear so the student may meaningfully incorporate that feedback into subsequent related
24 class/course work.

Case Study: Implementing Effective Practices

Assumptions guiding DJUSD's revision and implementation of homework policy:

- Homework shall have a positive impact on learning and achievement.
- Homework shall have a positive impact on student attitude and self-esteem.
- Homework time shall be measured as focused time on task.
- This policy applies solely to assigned homework.
- Additional teacher-guided or self-directed enrichment work is encouraged, provided no grade is assigned.
- Parents/guardians and teachers shall be mindful of the need for students to live balanced lives so they may achieve optimal health, development, and learning.
- Teachers shall not be required to assign homework.

Case Study: Implementing Effective Practices

Highlights of DJUSD Administrative Regulation:

- Types and Purposes of Homework
- Homework Examples
- Make-Up Work
- Maximum Amount of Homework Time
- Weekend and Holiday Assignments
- Long-Term Homework Assignments
- Roles and Responsibilities (Superintendent, Principals, Teachers, Students, Family)

Case Study: Implementing Effective Practices

DJUSD Homework AR – Types and Purposes of Homework:

All teachers must ask themselves the following questions when assigning any type of homework:

- What is it?
- Why is it assigned?
- How will it be used?

Case Study: Implementing Effective Practices

DJUSD Homework AR – Types and Purposes of HW:

Type	What	Why
Practice	Work that reviews and reinforces of skills and concepts taught in class	Develop fluency and move learning to long-term memory
Completion	Work assigned during school and not completed in class	Prevent students from falling behind
Preparation	Work that prepares students for upcoming lessons or units	Provide background, connect to prior knowledge and experiences
Extension	Work that explores and refines learning in new contexts	Encourages problems solving, creative and critical thinking

Case Study: Implementing Effective Practices

DJUSD AR – Maximum Amount of Homework Time:

- Four nights/week: Monday-Thursday
- Homework assigned in early grades shall be primarily reading
 - K-2: 20 minutes/day
 - 3rd: 30 minutes/day
 - 4th: 40 minutes/day
 - 5th: 45 minutes/day
 - 6th: 55 minutes/day
 - 7th-8th: 20 minutes/day each (English and Math)
15 minutes/day each (other academic classes)
 - 9th-12th: 30 minutes/day each (English and Math)
20 minutes/day each (other academic classes)

*High school Honors and Advanced Placement (AP) classes may require more homework than the specified limits

**Time limits do not include assigned music practice

Case Study: Implementing Effective Practices

DJUSD AR – Homework Time:

- Weekend and holiday homework shall not be assigned with the expectation that it be completed during those times
- The time needed to accomplish long-term homework assignments should be integrated into the total time needed for all homework assignments, short and long term.

Case Study: Implementing Effective Practices

Highlights of DJUSD Administrative Regulation:

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Recommendations for Next Steps in AUSD

1. Form committee to evaluate homework policies and practices in AUSD. Members to include:
 - Teachers
 - Administrators
 - Students
 - Parents/Guardians

Committee should be representative of district across sites, grade levels, and demographic subgroups

Recommendations for Next Steps in AUSD

2. Gather data and conduct analysis of the homework experience in AUSD
 - Survey teachers, students, and families to examine their views and experience with homework
 - Review site homework policies
 - Assess alignment across sites, within sites
 - Assess adherence to stated policies

Recommendations for Next Steps in AUSD

3. Develop policy recommendations to be presented to Superintendent:
 - Review key research findings
 - Establish core assumptions/values
 - Identify target outcomes
 - Draft research-based recommendations aligned to values and identified outcomes
 - Present recommendations to Superintendent

Recommendations for Next Steps in AUSD

Proposed Timeline:

Step	Date
Recruit, form, and convene committee	By December 2016
Data gathering and analysis	Jan-Mar 2016
Develop recommendations	April 2016
Present recommendations	May 2016
Policy revisions and submission for approval	May 2016
Implementation of new policy	2017-18

References

This presentation draws heavily from the following Hanover Research summaries:

1. “Effective Homework Policies and Regulations.”
Hanover Research. May 2013.
2. “Impact of Homework on Student Learning.”
Hanover Research. June 2014.

Questions?