

Update on AUSD Homework Policies and Practices

June 26, 2018

Educational Services

Presentation Goals

- Summarize context for workgroup
- Review key elements of current AUSD Homework Policy
- Summarize homework workgroup process
- Review key elements of revised policy (recommendations)
- Recommended next steps/timeline

Homework Workgroup Context

- Formed in spring 2017 following stakeholder interest in reviewing district policies
- Met monthly beginning in April 2017 through May 2018
- Includes students, parents/guardians, and staff
- Reviewed research, current policies, and model policies. Conducted survey and focus groups

Current AUSD Policy (BP/AR 6154)

AUSD has a ‘decentralized’ policy in which the district’s Board Policy sets parameters for site policies/plans that are to be locally determined. Key elements of site policies are to include:

- Amount of time students are expected to spend on HW
- Extent to which HW assignments shall involve parents/guardians
- How parents/guardians will be informed about HW expectations, relation to grades, and how to help students
- Techniques that will be taught to help students allocate their time wisely, meet deadlines, and develop good study habits
- Student access to resource materials and assistance
- Means by which teachers will coordinate assignments to avoid overload of HW on one day and very little the next
- Extent to which HW assignments shall emphasize independent research, reports, reading, and problem-solving activities

Homework Workgroup Process

- 3.22.16 BOE Presentation
 - Reviewed key research (including Harris Cooper)
 - Summarized stances of national organizations (NEA, NPTA, ACSA) for Cooper’s general guidance
 - Reviewed general alignment of current AUSD practices across elementary schools and variance across secondary schools
 - Provided examples of current practices at elementary sites
- 9.27.16 BOE Presentation
 - Additional research review including limited effect size for HW at elementary and middle grades
 - Summary of DJUSD’s HW evaluation and policy revision process
 - Recommendations for next steps

Homework Workgroup Process (Continued)

- 3.28.17 BOE Presentation
 - Obtained final Board guidance to form workgroup and initiate process
- March-April 2017: Recruitment of workgroup members
- April-May 2017: Group norms, review of current AUSD context, development of timeline, review of model policies, and review of key research
- Summer 2017: Reading of text *Rethinking Homework* (Vatterott)
- Fall 2017: Additional research review, development and administration of stakeholder survey, and additional model policy review
- 1.9.18 BOE Presentation: Review of HW Survey Results
- Spring 2017: Policy language drafting, focus groups, and ongoing revisions
- 6.14.18: Board Policy Subcommittee Discussion

Proposed Policy Revisions: Introduction Highlights

- Homework is defined as school-related and assigned work completed beyond the regular school day.
- Homework may be assigned when necessary to support classroom lessons, enable students to complete unfinished assignments, or review and apply academic content for better understanding.
- 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.
- When assigned, homework will contribute to the healthy development of the whole student.

Proposed Policy Revisions: Key Elements

- Foundational Assumptions
- ‘Help not Hurt’
- Defined Homework Types
- Roles and Responsibilities
- Time Parameters
- Late/Makeup Work Guidelines

Proposed Policy: Foundational Assumptions

The following assumptions are foundational to this policy:

1. Homework shall have a positive impact on learning and achievement.
2. Homework shall have a positive impact on student attitude and self-esteem.
3. Homework time shall be measured as focused time on task.
4. This policy applies solely to assigned homework.
5. Additional teacher-guided or self-directed enrichment work is encouraged, provided no grade is assigned.
6. 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.
7. Teachers shall not be required to assign homework.

Proposed Policy: 'Help not Hurt'

- A student's homework performance may help but not hurt their overall grade in the class/course.
- In a course with multiple grading categories, a student whose grade in the homework category is less than their grade in all other categories combined shall receive the grade without homework factored in.
- This shall not apply to work that, while completed in part or whole at home and subject to the overall time limitations set forth in this policy, is more appropriately placed in a non-homework grading category (e.g. projects, essays).

Proposed Policy: Defined Homework Types

The purpose of any assigned homework must be aligned with course curriculum and be grade level appropriate. 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?

Four defined types of homework:

- Practice: review and reinforce skills/concepts taught in class
- Completion: finish work not completed in class
- Preparation: prepare for upcoming lessons/units
- Extension: explore and refine learning in new contexts or integrate and expand on classroom learning

Proposed Policy: Roles and Responsibilities

Guidance for various stakeholder groups to support student success on homework assignments

- Students
- Parents/guardians
- Teachers
- Site administrators
- Superintendent or designee

Proposed Policy: Time Parameters

Establishment of maximum amounts of homework time per week by grade level (specific content area maximums are defined to yield total maximum):

- K-2: 100 minutes/week
- 3rd: 150 minutes/week
- 4th: 200 minutes/week
- 5th: 225 minutes/week
- 6th: 375 minutes/week
- 7th-8th: 425 minutes/week
- 9th-12th: 10 hours/week*

*Advanced Placement, honors, and auditioned music courses are exempt from time parameters

Proposed Policy: Time Parameters Continued

Weekend and Extended Break Assignments

- Homework assigned over weekend days shall be counted toward the weekly maximum amounts established above.
- Weeks of extended break (Fall, Winter, Spring, and other week-long breaks) do not generate a weekly allotment of time to assign additional homework.
- Students shall not be assigned work that is expected to be completed specifically during extended breaks.
- No summer homework may be assigned with the exception of Advanced Placement and Honors courses.

Proposed Policy: Late/Makeup Work

- Students shall receive credit for work that is completed and turned in late
- Students who miss school work as a result of absence shall be given the opportunity to complete all work that can be reasonably provided
- If some/all of the work cannot be reasonably provided, a comparable alternative will be provided or the assignment will not be counted toward the student's grade
- Students who are absent shall receive full credit for work satisfactorily completed within a reasonable period of time
- Reasonable period of time = two school days per day of absence

Proposed Policy: Late/Makeup Work Cont.

- Students who do not submit assigned work when no absence is involved shall also receive credit for work that is completed and turned in
- No late penalty need be imposed
- If a penalty is imposed, it shall be limited to a maximum amount that is proportional to the relative lateness of the submission
- No minimum penalty is established and no penalty is required

Proposed Next Steps

- August 2018: Provide proposed policy revisions to sites for potential piloting and additional discussion
- Fall 2018:
 - Follow-up Survey including potential sampling across defined time period, additional focus groups, input from piloting teachers/sites
 - Support sites in structured discussion of policy elements
- Spring 2019:
 - Revise proposed policy language and present to BOE
 - (if approved) Initial training at sites
- Fall 2019:
 - Implementation including additional training
- Ongoing monitoring and revisions as needed

Questions?