

Parent Responsibilities - parent involvement in homework and parent support of a homework plan is beneficial to a child's academic growth and achievement. The following are considered parent or guardian responsibilities:

- a. Assist students to develop good study habits by providing a specific time and place for study which is free of television and other distractions.
- b. Develop a routine to ensure that - all necessary homework and materials are brought home; the student has an organized means of keeping and carrying homework to and from school; and all assignments are completed and returned to school on time.
- c. Promptly communicate any concerns or questions regarding homework assignments to your child's teacher.



Standards-based Grades and Homework

While feedback and assessment of a student's homework is important, it is not reflected on the report card as part of the student's progress toward standards grade.

In a standards-based grading and reporting system, grades reflect what a student knows and can do in relation to grade-level standards. **Progress made toward the standards** will be reported separately from the student's achievement grade (at the middle school level), behavior, completion of assignments on time, and other work/study habits on the report card.

Grades based on standards help to ultimately improve student achievement by focusing on four critical questions:

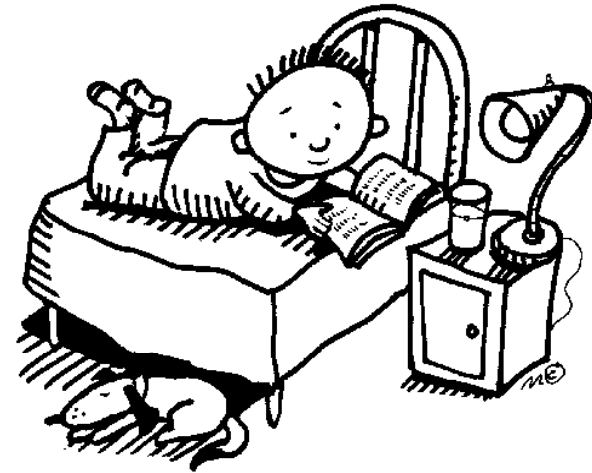
- What do students need to know and be able to do?
- How will we know that they have learned it?
- What will we do when they haven't learned it?
- What will we do when they already know it?

Grades based on curriculum standards become triggers for action. Standards-based grades help teachers plan their instruction so they can challenge and support all students. They help parents know the academic areas in which a student meets or exceeds expectations, needs challenge, or needs support.

Keeping **progress on standards** separate from the achievement grade (only given at the middle school) and work habits (at all grade levels) allows teachers and parents to have a clearer picture of a student's progress.

Should you have questions or concerns regarding a student's achievement and progress or homework please contact the teacher(s) first and then the building principal.

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Homework by Design

Homework Information for Parents

(Revised January 2008)

Why This Brochure?

The information included in this brochure was compiled to review and clarify the purposes, amount, effectiveness, and grading of homework. Using research and information gathered over the years, the following homework plan is intended to address the academic needs of our students. Throughout the brochure, we have used the work of two noted educational researchers, Tom Guskey and Robert Marzano.

Philosophy

Homework is a constructive tool in the teaching/learning process when geared to the needs and abilities of students. Homework provides opportunities to apply learning and to experience necessary practice. It promotes student responsibility and accountability by developing work habits essential for succeeding in life. Homework offers teachers, parents and students the opportunity to be involved in and support the learning process outside of school. Research shows that meaningful homework may increase student achievement. To move our students forward in the learning process, teachers will assign consistent, appropriate and meaningful homework.

District Homework Policy

Homework is considered an essential component for the learning process for students in grades K-8 at Hawthorn schools. Although homework is typically not assigned formally to students in the primary grades, students are encouraged to read and/or write each night for 20 minutes and/or parents are encouraged to read to their children during this time. In the upper grades, homework assignments are given to reinforce newly introduced concepts or act as an enrichment activity to enhance learning, while helping students learn to plan, prioritize, and budget their time wisely. Daily assignments are posted in the classroom and, in many instances, on teacher web pages with the expectations that students will complete them. There are many variables affecting the amount of time individual students will need to complete homework assignments. Specific concerns should be discussed with the teacher giving the assignment.



Suggested guidelines for daily homework follow. Leisure reading should not be counted in the minutes.

Grades K-2: 20 to 30 minutes per day

Grades 3-5: 30 to 60 minutes per day

Grades 6-8: 60 to 80 minutes per day

If, for any reason, a student is consistently exceeding these recommended guidelines for homework, and/or consistently not being given any homework, parents are encouraged to contact the teacher(s) to remedy the situation.

Purpose

Teachers will strive to make each homework assignment meaningful. Homework gives students the opportunity to practice skills/concepts, prepare for a new topic, or elaborate on material already introduced. Robert Marzano identifies several major purposes of homework.

- **Practice** - Students must reach a level of self-sufficiency in performing a learned skill. This kind of homework typically increases speed and accuracy.
- **Preparation** - Students must access prior knowledge about a topic to be learned. This type of assignment might ask a student to reflect on previous learning or challenge them to think about what they want to learn.
- **Elaboration/Extension/Enrichment** - Students might conduct research, compare items, support a position or develop a graphic organizer. These challenging assignments allow students to demonstrate their knowledge in creative and varied ways.
- **Reading** - Students must spend time reading to increase fluency and comprehension. By practicing this key skill students improve their reading comprehension and vocabulary development.
- **Study** - Students may be asked to review key information contained in notes and assignments. This process allows information to enter long-term memory and enhances understanding of a subject.

Procedures

Teacher Responsibilities - it is the responsibility of the individual teacher to schedule daily, weekly, and/or long-term homework assignments that are meaningful and useful to support the student's total learning experience and aligned to the Homework policy and guidelines. Teachers will provide written communication to parents or guardians regarding homework expectations. Teachers will also monitor by providing feedback and checking for completion, in light of the purpose of the homework. While monitoring of homework is essential, and may be included as part of a student's achievement grade (at the middle schools) it will not be a factor in a teacher's end-of-term assessment of a student's progress toward the standards.

Student Responsibilities - in order to foster independent study habits, students are responsible for following these guidelines:

- a. Make sure you understand the homework assignment(s) before leaving school.
- b. Take home all necessary homework and materials you need to complete assignments.
- c. Have an organized means of keeping and carrying homework to and from school.
- d. Do your homework with a minimum of parental help.
- e. Do homework as carefully and as neatly as in-school work.
- f. Complete homework on time and budget your time for long-term projects.