

MINNETONKA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Policy #621: Homework

PURPOSE

The primary purpose of this policy is to communicate a message to students, teachers and parents about the value and benefits of homework.

GENERAL STATEMENT OF POLICY

- 1.0 Homework is a valuable part of schooling that allows for practicing, extending and consolidating work done in class. Homework provides students with opportunities to deepen their understanding and skills relative to content that has been initially presented to them. Homework can have a positive effect on achievement and on developing lifelong skills of self-discipline, motivation, curiosity and confidence. It can serve as a communication link between the school and the home. It provides parents with insights into what is being taught in the classroom and the progress of their children.
- 2.0 Homework is most beneficial when it reinforces and extends class work and requires the application of knowledge and skills. It also develops and extends the core learning skills of inquiry and independent study.
- 3.0 Homework should be challenging and purposeful, but not so demanding that it has adverse effects on a student's motivation.
- 4.0 Homework provides training for students in planning and organizing time, in developing skills to identify and use information resources, and in helping form habits of study and concentration.
- 5.0 Students varied interests and readiness can be addressed through differentiated types of homework assignments. These practices would encourage high expectations and student pursuit of personalized goals and unique talents.
- 6.0 Research supports findings that homework has a positive influence on learning, to varying degrees at different levels of schooling.
 - 6.1 At the elementary level starting at grade 2, purposeful homework, in appropriate amounts, has a small beneficial academic result. Even though homework may not noticeably improve test scores, it does help young students develop good study habits, foster positive attitudes toward school, and communicate to students that learning takes work at home and school.

- 6.2 At the secondary level, studies show that focused homework results in achievement gains at both middle and high school levels, with the most significant academic benefit at the high school level. Although ethical and practical considerations are important, at the high school level, the more homework students do, the better their achievement.

DEFINITIONS

Homework: Homework includes learning tasks, assigned to students by teachers, that are meant to be carried out during non-class hours, most often at home. Students may also complete homework assignments during non-classroom school time.

Differentiation: The process teachers use to plan learning experiences, which intentionally respond to learner differences. Students would have opportunities to work at their levels of readiness (assessed levels of skills and knowledge), in preferred and varied learning modes/styles, and engage their interests in order to achieve curricular goals.

Metacognition: A mental process of thinking about how one learns. This is a strategy that can be taught and modeled to students to help them learn rigorous, difficult content.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- 1.0 The amount of homework assigned should be reasonable and vary at levels of schooling.
- 2.0 The purpose of homework should be identified and articulated to students by teachers.
 - 2.1 Homework assigned as practice should be structured around content with which students have a high degree of familiarity. They should be assigned an appropriate amount to increase their skill. Homework which includes unfamiliar content may produce misconceptions and/or error.
 - 2.2 Homework is often assigned for preparation and elaboration, particularly at upper levels of schooling. Preparatory homework provides opportunities for students to gain background information to be better prepared for classroom instruction.
 - 2.3 Homework assignments which encourage students to pursue knowledge individually and imaginatively extend learning and may respond to needs for differentiation of interest or readiness.
- 3.0 The parent role in homework is to facilitate and support the activity and not to solve content problems for students. Depending upon the age of the student, parent assistance could range from helping children with instructions, acquiring resources, helping older children get organized, or conferring with their child on the purpose and understanding of the task.

IMPLEMENTATION

- 1.0 The Superintendent, through designees, shall be responsible for implementation of policy and development and implementation of procedures.
- 2.0 Procedures at the District level and by levels at schools should include purposes of homework, amounts of homework or range of time appropriate by grade level, consequences for not completing homework, general expectations for when homework is or isn't included in grades, a description of expectations of parents to support homework, and how this information will be communicated.

Cross References:

Policy 612: Differentiation

Adopted: May 18, 2006