

Homework

MSAD 51 is committed to excellence in instructional programs while taking into consideration the unique developmental stages of children. The District recognizes the value of meaningful homework in fostering academic achievement, good study habits and communication between the classroom and the home. In recognition that meaningful homework is a shared responsibility among teachers, parents and students, the District shall provide guidance on how to effectively employ homework to enable students to meet or exceed the District's Benchmarks and Outcomes.

Homework is defined as any work or task planned by the teacher to be completed by the student outside of the regular classroom without immediate and direct teacher involvement. Homework is a continuation of a learning process developed in the classroom to meet individualized learning needs. Its effectiveness depends upon careful planning and timely and appropriate feedback by the teacher, as well as supportive parental involvement. Among the important purposes of homework are:

- To develop independent work procedures, time management skills and study habits;
- To prepare for school work;
- To acquire knowledge;
- To master skills;
- To encourage creative efforts and pursuit of individual interests; and
- To aid in the connection between what is learned in and outside of school.

The District also recognizes the importance of having opportunities for growth and development provided by families for their children outside school hours. In an effort to balance academic excellence, recreational activities, family life and demands, and the health of the students, the following guidelines on homework are presented.

General Guidelines for All Levels

The District encourages students and their parents to recognize the importance of their academic studies when making family commitments and planning extracurricular activities. Students are responsible for planning ahead, managing their workloads, and developing good time management skills. When giving assignments, teachers shall keep in mind that students during the after school hours generally must balance academic responsibilities, extracurricular activities, family commitments and personal well-being and, therefore, should strive to avoid work overloads.

Guidelines for Homework at Specific Levels:

Elementary Level The amount of homework between school days reasonably may be expected to increase as the student advances through school, from a few minutes in grade 1 to a maximum of 60 minutes of concentrated effort in grade 5 for all subjects combined.

Middle School Level Homework assignments will be coordinated across disciplines so that middle school students in general are not routinely expected to do more than two concentrated hours of homework between school days for all subjects combined.

High School Level An increasing amount of independent work is considered necessary and is expected of students at the high school level. Homework assignments in high school courses will vary in amount and time required depending on courses, curricula, assessment schedules and special events. In general, high school students taking an average of five courses should not routinely be expected to do more than three concentrated hours of homework between school days for all subjects combined.

Long Term Assignments

Long-term assignments, such as book reports, notebooks, research papers, special course projects and electives may at times add to these limits at all grade levels, and especially at the high school level. Students are responsible for managing long term assignments so that they may be completed within the general time guidelines contained in this policy.

Summer Homework

It is a goal of the District for each student to become a lifelong learner. In support of that goal, the District encourages reasonable summer reading requirements for all students. Additional summer homework may be assigned to high school students in order for students to be prepared for the first week of school provided:

- The assignment contains clear expectations, directions, rubrics, grading explanations and statement of the purpose of the work;
- The assignment provides an estimate of the time it reasonably should take to complete the work and a list of resources needed;
- During the summer, any questions on the assignment should be directed to the principal; and

- The assignment provides an important foundation critical for preparing students for the start of the course.

In making assignments to be completed over the summer vacation, teachers should be respectful of the fact that vacation allows students to participate in valuable enrichment opportunities and experiential learning, develop lifetime skills and explore workplace experiences, and enjoy the benefits of relaxation and unstructured time that are an integral part of the vacation experience.

Cross Reference: **IHBA - Individual Education Plans**

Adopted: **June 1, 1987**

Amended: **May 7, 2001**