

# Toronto District School Board

Policy P036

Title: **HOMEWORK**

Adopted: November 24, 1999

Revised: **April 16, 2008**

Review:

## TITLE: **HOMEWORK**

### 1.0 **OBJECTIVE**

To establish the Board's belief that homework is an engaging and relevant learning activity  
To establish the Board's commitment to the assignment of homework in a purposefully planned manner that is directly connected to a student's school program and learning expectations of the Ontario Curriculum

### 2.0 **DEFINITIONS**

*Homework* is an out-of-classroom learning experience assigned by a teacher to enhance student learning. Homework should be reviewed by teachers so that they know where students are now and how to better direct them towards their learning goals.

There are four types of commonly assigned homework, each having a different intended outcome as shown below.

<u>Type</u>	<u>Definition</u>	<u>Intended Outcome</u>	<u>Application</u>
Completion	Any work assigned during the school day not completed in class	Helps students keep up to date with the classroom program	The classroom program should be differentiated if a student has completion homework on a regular basis.
Practice	Any work that reviews and reinforces skills and concepts taught in class	Helps students practice newly acquired skills to develop fluency	To be effective, practice homework requires students to already be able to independently perform the skills required.
Preparation	Any work that prepares students for upcoming lessons or classes	Encourages students to acquire background information or to bring their prior knowledge and experiences to upcoming units of study	

Extension	Any work that explores and refines learning in new contexts or integrates and expands on classroom learning	Encourages students to problem solve, think creatively and think critically	To be effective, extension homework does not require a student to learn curriculum content independently. Instead, students deepen understanding and relate learning to the real world.
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### 3.0 POLICY

#### Effective Homework Assignments

- 3.1. Homework assignments shall be clearly articulated and carefully planned, and involve consultation among core, rotary and subject teachers, where appropriate. Also where appropriate, homework assignments shall be differentiated to reflect the unique needs of the child.
- 3.2. The purpose of all types of homework is to ensure it is both effective in promoting high quality student learning and achievement and it nurtures a desire for students to keep learning. Effective homework assignments:
  - (a) are curriculum based and meet the developmental and individual needs of the student through differentiation and modification.
  - (b) should be commented on to provide feedback for future learning.
  - (c) are designed to require no additional teaching outside the classroom and are engaging and relevant to student learning. Students understand what is expected of them before leaving school.
  - (d) do not require resources or technology to which students may not have access.
  - (e) may be designed to involve parents/guardians in supporting their children's learning but should not teach new concepts.

#### Consequences for Incomplete Homework Assignments

- 3.3. Where appropriate, there will be progressive consequences for incomplete homework. Punitive measures are not appropriate as they provide powerful disincentives.

#### Reporting of Homework

- 3.4. Homework is reported on only the Learning Skills Section of the Elementary Provincial Report Card as a part of Independent Work and Homework Completion and on the Secondary Report Card as part of the Works Independently and Work Habits/Homework.

### Timing, Scheduling and Quantity of Homework

The amount of homework assigned to students should be different from elementary, to middle school to high school and that the amount of time a student spends on assigned homework depends on such factors as: the student's needs, learning ability, subject, school schedule, proximity to tests, examinations and assigned homework due dates. Time spent on homework should be balanced with the importance of personal and family wellness and the wide array of family obligations experienced in our society today.

#### 3.5. Kindergarten

Homework should not be assigned to Kindergarten students. There is a strong connection between parental involvement and student achievement. As a result, families are encouraged to engage in early learning activities such as playing, talking and reading together in English or in the family's first language. Teachers may provide resources to support home-based early learning activities.

#### 3.6. Grades 1 to 6

There is a strong connection between reading to or with elementary children every day in English or in one's first language and student achievement. As a result, homework assigned in the early grades shall more often take the form of reading, playing a variety of games, having discussions and interactive activities such as building and cooking with the family. In the late Primary and Junior grades, effective homework may begin to take the form of independent work. In both cases, homework assigned for completion, practice, preparation or extension should be clearly articulated and differentiated to reflect the unique needs of the child.

#### 3.7. Grades 7 to 8

Completion of homework for middle school-aged students can contribute to improved student achievement. Homework assignments for completion, practice, preparation or extension for students in Grades 7 and 8 shall be clearly articulated and carefully planned, in partnership among core and rotary teachers. Estimated completion time should be one hour or less.

#### 3.8. Grades 9 to 12

Completion of homework can contribute to improved student achievement, particularly in the upper grades. Homework assignments for students in Grades 9 to 12 shall be clearly articulated and carefully planned with an estimated completion time of two hours or less. Homework stress is particularly prevalent amongst families with children transitioning between major school levels. As a result, homework, especially for Grade 9 students, should be carefully planned in partnership among subject teachers.

### General

3.9. No homework shall be assigned on scheduled holidays as outlined in the school year calendar or on days of significance.

3.10. Wherever possible, homework assignments shall be assigned to be returned using blocks of time so that families can best support homework completion by balancing the time required to complete homework with extra curricular activities scheduled outside of the school day and activities that support personal and family wellness.

Parents who have concerns with homework expectations for their child shall be encouraged to contact their child's teacher or the school principal to discuss the situation.

3.11. See also policy P063: Pre-examination Moratorium on Major Assignments and Activities, adopted June 27, 2007

### Homework During Extended Absences

3.12. Teachers shall not be expected to provide detailed classroom work and homework assignments for students who are away for extended periods of time as a result of family- or parent-initiated absences. For absences due to extended illness, parents may contact the school principal to discuss available options.

### Roles and Responsibilities

3.13. A positive and open school-home partnership will have a positive impact on student success in the homework process.

(a) School staff are responsible for:

- (i) communicating school homework guidelines early in the school year for use by teachers, parents and students;
- (ii) coordinating school wide resources and practices that support homework, e.g. use of agenda, library facilities, academic support programs, ensuring effective communication between rotary teachers so that a reasonable amount of homework is being assigned; and
- (iii) providing information to parents on the purpose of effective homework and sharing practices that will help families support their children (for example: newsletters, open houses, and websites).

(b) Teachers are responsible for:

- (i) encouraging a partnership with family and students that promotes timely, regular communication and supports families in the homework process;

- (ii) designing homework assignments that clearly articulate their purpose and expected outcome;
  - (iii) sharing expectations for homework with students and parents early in the school year;
  - (iv) ensuring any homework assigned is directly related to classroom instruction and consists of clear, purposeful and engaging activities;
  - (v) assigning homework that is appropriate to the student's age, developmental level, learning style, skills and individual needs;
  - (vi) teaching the skills necessary for the student to complete the homework and become successful independent learners; and
  - (vii) articulating and carefully planning homework in partnership with core and rotary teachers.
- (c) Students are responsible for:
- (i) ensuring that he/she clearly understands the homework assigned, i.e. assignments, criteria, and timelines, and asks for clarification or assistance from the teacher when homework assignments or the expectations are not clear;
  - (ii) recording assignments in his/her agenda or student planner;
  - (iii) regularly completing assigned homework in a timely manner to the best of his/her ability; and
  - (iv) managing time and materials, e.g. by bringing home necessary materials.
- (d) The family is responsible for:
- (i) reading in English, French (French Immersion) and/or the family's first language throughout the elementary years of their children's education;
  - (ii) providing an environment, i.e. workplace, block of uninterrupted time, usually in the home or in an alternative setting such as a homework club for homework to be done;
  - (iii) providing encouragement and appropriate support without doing the homework for their child;
  - (iv) providing a healthy balance between homework, co-curricular activities and family commitments;
  - (v) stopping their child from continuing to complete homework at bedtime, even if the child is not done; and

- (vi) contacting the classroom teacher if their child is not consistently able to do the homework by him/herself or if challenges or questions arise.

#### **4.0 SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES**

The Director of Education is authorized to issue operational procedures to implement this policy.