

# HOMEWORK POLICY

In developing the homework policy for the Barrington Public Schools (BPS), members of the committee adhered to the following mission: *It is the mission of the Barrington Public Schools Homework Committee to empower students to become independent learners through developmentally appropriate opportunities that extend their learning beyond the classroom.* This mission, along with research from over fifty independent research studies, John Hattie's meta-analysis of 800 educational studies, data from the Stanford Student Challenge Success survey, parent, student, and teacher homework surveys, and student and teacher forums drive this policy.

Homework, for the purposes of this policy, includes any work that a student is required to complete outside of the school day. In building on this research, homework types should generally fall into one of the following categories:

**Preparation:** *provides background information, which allows students to gather/organize information before a lesson/instruction.*

**Checking for Understanding:** *provides students and teachers the opportunity to assess students' grasp of newly acquired learning.*

**Practice:** *reinforces newly acquired knowledge and skills.*

**Extension of Learning:** *provides the pursuit of further knowledge and/or higher-level cognitive applications, or a comprehensive assignment in which students have been provided current instruction and should be completed at home.*

To meet the needs of all learners, teachers may differentiate homework to connect content and skills most relevant to the learner. Differentiation of assignments will occur when teachers, using formative assessment strategies, have determined that assigning the same homework assignment to all learners will prevent access to relevant content, require some students to engage in work on which they have already demonstrated mastery, or prevent some students from extending their learning.

## High School Homework Policy

The Homework Committee created the following policies and guidance for Barrington High School based upon prevailing research and stakeholder survey data; 1. Research is voluminous and emphatic that High School students should only be assigned meaningful homework that reinforces and encourages the learning processes. 2. Research and survey data require that homework be assigned in a timely manner to reduce stress upon students. 3. Research and survey data confirm that teachers who teach the same course must be consistent in their practices regarding homework assignments. 4. Research and survey data support that students need instruction on

proper organization and time management of their work so as to reduce daily stress. To meet the objectives outlined here:

- Teachers will assign all homework and requisite materials during the class period.
- Teachers will post or link assigned homework on Aspen.
- Teachers will not assign homework to be completed during school vacations or due on the first school day back from break, with the exception of long-range assignments (for example: process steps in projects that span before and after a school break) and Advanced Placement coursework.
- Homework will constitute no more than ten percent of a student's quarter grade.
- Teachers who teach the same courses will collaboratively develop and provide written homework grading practices and protocols that are consistent within each course at the start of the year/course.
- Homework practices and policies will be outlined in the student handbook.
- *Advanced Placement Courses:* Advanced Placement (AP) curricula and coursework is determined by the College Board. Students will be given a clear outline of expectations for AP homework. On average, students will receive approximately one hour of coursework per night, per course. This average is in addition to any other homework students may receive. Students should consider this strongly when registering for multiple AP courses.

This Homework Committee developed this policy to further support the success of students. Research suggests that high school students should have an average of two hours of homework per night. Because students have a variety of teachers and courses at BHS, the amount of time a student spends per night on homework may vary by individual. Please note that students enrolled in multiple AP Courses are likely to exceed this two-hour maximum. Please refer to the AP Letter from Guidance provided during course registration. Additionally, all students will have training on how to use a digital calendar and digital notifications as a planner during a September advisory. Students are responsible for recording their assignments during class and accessing coursework outside of class.

### **Middle School Homework Policy**

The Homework Committee constructed the below policies and guidelines for Barrington Middle School (BMS) students keeping these, research-based ideas in mind: 1. Homework can positively instill student work habits and autonomy. 2. Homework is an important link between home and school. 3. Homework reinforces critical content knowledge and skill acquisition at the middle school level. 4. Homework provides an

informal assessment of student progress and plan instruction. To meet the objectives outlined here:

- Students may receive up to 10-12 minutes per grade for each grade a student has attended school.
- If a student cannot complete the homework due to lack of understanding or in the above recommended amount of time, students should refer to the protocol articulated in the student handbook.
- Teachers will not assign homework over weekends, long weekends, or vacations.
- Homework practices and policies will be outlined in the student handbook.
- Teachers will not administer tests on the day school resumes after a long weekend or school vacation.
- Teachers will provide timely teacher-directed feedback for any homework assignment.
- All homework and requisite materials must be assigned during the class period.
- Assigned homework will be posted or linked on Aspen.
- Teachers will only grade homework assignments in the homework category.
  - Homework will be worth 10% of the grade each marking period. It will be graded for accuracy/completion/effort for nightly assignments.
  - All teachers will use our school wide process grading scale for homework grading.
  - Elements/individual components of a project assigned as homework will only be graded for completion/effort as a process homework grade.
  - Grades for final products will be independent of the homework associated with it.
  - Any type of assessed writing assignment must be done in the classroom.

### **Upper Elementary Homework Policy (Grades 4-5)**

The Homework Committee created the below policies and guidelines for Upper Elementary School Students keeping these, most prevalent, ideas in mind: 1. Research suggests that homework practice should match what students most need. 2. Research indicates that homework has minimal, but some, effects upon 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade academic achievement. 3. Research also reveals that reading has a positive effect on long-term student growth. 4. Research demonstrates that parent involvement in homework has positive effects for elementary school students. To meet the objectives outlined here:

- Students may read nightly for a minimum of 20 minutes (self-selected or assigned).

- Teachers will assign no more than 40 minutes of homework, including reading, on a nightly basis. Teachers may assign Tenmarks, and/ or other research-based district approved math programs in accordance with this policy.
- If a student cannot complete the homework in the above-recommended amount of time, a student's parent/guardian may attach a note to their work indicating that the student was unable to complete the assignment. Teachers will not penalize students; instead, teachers will utilize this information to support the needs of the individual student.
- Teachers will not grade homework; however, they will provide written or oral feedback and students may be asked to complete their own reflections.
- Each teacher will communicate a clear, written protocol for incomplete homework.
- Grade Levels will develop and provide students and parents with a consistent protocol and implementation of homework practices quarterly.
- Teachers will clearly define and communicate a regular schedule of due dates for assignments as well as how they assign homework to students (planner, Google Docs).
- In lieu of study guides aimed at memorization, teachers will instruct students to achieve mastery through in-school instruction. Teachers will encourage studying and practicing rules and application rather than memorization.
- Teachers will not assign homework over school vacation, weekends, or long weekends.
- Teachers will provide direct instruction on how to complete assignments before assigning homework (for example how to access Tenmarks, Amplifiers, and student assignments).
- Homework practices and policies will be outlined in the student handbook.

### **Lower Elementary Homework Policy (Grades K-3)**

The Homework Committee created the below policies and guidelines for Lower Elementary School Students keeping these research findings in mind: 1. Research suggests that homework at this age does not have a positive effect on student learning, and may in fact, contribute to the start of negative feelings towards school. 2. Home assignments have the most positive impact on reading, math fluency, life skills and real life application activities such as measuring in the kitchen, cooking, and exploring nature. 3. Research demonstrates that when parents read books above reading level to their child, there is a positive effect on increasing student vocabulary, comprehension, and background knowledge. 4. Research also shows that game-based learning is an effective home based strategy. To meet the objectives outlined here:

- Teachers will encourage students to engage in reading 10-20 minutes per night (read independently or read to).
- Teachers will provide and encourage students to engage in reading and math fluency practice and games weekly.
- Teachers will encourage parents to include their children in life skills activities and the application of learning such as measuring in the kitchen, cooking, and exploring nature.
- Teachers will not assign homework over weekends, long weekends, or vacations.
- Homework practices and policies will be outlined in the student handbook.

**Homework Committee Members:** Paula Dillon, Andy Anderson, Dawn August, Stephanie Bailey, Diana Baxter, Ed Daft, Denise DeFanti, Alison Grieco, Jonathan Hackett, Peter McFarland, Nic McGinn, Tracy Miller, Gino Sangiuliano, Sam Schachter, Kayla Testa, Seth Tibbetts, Pat Tolento, and Julia Tutt

### **Major Reference Articles and Research**

Brown Center on Education Policy. (2003). Do students have too much homework? *The Brown Center Report on American Education*. Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution.

Cooper, H. (1989). Synthesis of research on homework. *Educational leadership*, 47(3), 85-91.

Cooper, H. (2010). Homework's diminishing returns. *The New York Times*.

Cooper, H., Robinson, J. C., & Patall, E. A. (2006). Does homework improve academic achievement? A synthesis of research, 1987–2003. *Review of Educational Research*, 76(1), 1-62.

Darling-Hammond, L., & Ifill-Lynch, O. (2006). If they'd only do their work! *Educational Leadership*, 63(5), 8-13.

Donaldson-Pressman, S., Jackson, R., Pressman, R. M., & Pressman, R. (2014). *The learning habit: A groundbreaking approach to homework and parenting that helps our children succeed in school and life*. New York, NY: Penguin Publishing Group.

Eren, O., & Henderson, D. J. (2011). Are we wasting our children's time by giving them more homework? *Economics of Education Review*, 30(5), 950-961.

Fernández-Alonso, R., Suárez-Álvarez, J., & Muñoz, J. (2015). Adolescents' homework performance in mathematics and science: Personal factors and teaching practices. *Journal of Educational Psychology*. Advance online publication.

Gill, B. P., & Schlossman, S. L. (2003). A nation at rest: The American way of homework. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 25(3).

Hattie, J. (2012). *Visible learning for teachers. Maximizing impact on teaching*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Marzano, R.J. & Pickering, D. J. (2007). The Case for and Against Homework. *ASCD*, 64(6), 74-79.

OECD (2014). Does homework perpetuate inequities in education? *PISA in Focus*, No. 46, OECD Publishing, Paris.

Patall, E. A., Cooper, H., & Robinson, J. C. (2008). Parent involvement in homework: A research synthesis. *Review of Educational Research*, 78(4), 1039-1101.

Van Voorhis, F. L. (2003). Interactive homework in middle school: Effects on family involvement and science achievement. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 96(6), 323-338.

Votterott, C. (2009). *Rethinking homework: Best practices that support diverse needs*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.

Walker, J. M., Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., Whetsel, D. R., & Green, C. L. (2004). *Parental involvement in homework: A review of current research and its implications for teachers, after school program staff, and parent leaders*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project.

**Adopted 8/11/2016**