

PROCEDURAL MANUAL
POLICY 6306: HOMEWORK
(Based upon policy, as approved on 2/18/09 by the School Board)

HOMEWORK

The School Board recognizes the importance of assigning meaningful and quality homework to students.

Research indicates that schools in which homework is routinely assigned and assessed tend to have higher achieving students. Homework fosters student achievement, independence, and responsibility and serves as a vital link between school and home. Therefore, it is the policy of Broward County Schools that meaningful and quality homework is required at all grade levels in all schools.

*The purpose of this procedural manual is to provide school personnel and other interested parties with both the current Homework Policy as well as the related procedural guidelines. The information in black **bolded** and italicized type is the policy as approved by the School Board. The information in red is related procedural information that is intended to assist in clarifying and implementing the policy. The policy cannot be changed without School Board approval. The procedural information will be updated periodically collaboratively by the Division of Curriculum and the Division of Student Support Services. Suggestions and questions are welcomed and should be sent to one of the following Executive Directors:*

Diane Carr, Core Curriculum

Leah Kelly, Student Support Services & Exceptional Student Education

Sayra Hughes, Multicultural & ESOL Program Services Education

Leslie Brown, Educational Programs

RULES:

1. DEFINITION:

Homework is defined as meaningful and quality work assigned to students that is intended to be completed during non-instructional hours.

Homework should be a positive experience that may take place in a variety of settings in the home or in the community. When children complete homework, they consolidate and reinforce the learning from in-school experiences in a practical and meaningful way.

2. PURPOSE:

Homework should:

- a. **Reinforce principles, skills, concepts, and information taught in the classroom.**
Homework is not intended to be the medium for introducing new materials, but rather as an extension of what has already been taught. It may also include additional related reading.
- b. **Be meaningful and appropriate to the ability and instructional level of students.**
The types and quantity of homework assigned should reflect the wide variation in students' academic ability and should not unduly overburden the student.
- c. **Support creative, logical, critical and analytical thinking.**
- d. **Foster self-discipline, self motivation and the wise and orderly use of time.**
- e. **Be adequately explained by teachers and clearly understood by parents.**

Note: Assignments that require going to the public library will include a weekend to accommodate working families.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES:

Administrators shall:

- a. **Communicate SBBC policy in regards to homework and its appropriateness to parents, teachers and students.**
Homework guidelines should be included in parent, teacher, and student handbooks. This information should be outlined during the teacher pre-planning days. Specific guidelines should be given to homework assignments given during school breaks (e.g., winter break, spring break, etc.) Be considerate of other school activities that may go on during homework assignments on a case-by-case basis.
- b. **Provide teachers the time for professional development when utilizing homework as a strategy for learning.**
Consideration should be given to utilizing early release days, professional development days, and teacher planning days for mini sessions on effective use of homework.
- c. **Monitor the effective use of homework given by teachers.**
- d. **Support and allow time for the collaboration among teachers, students, and parents in the effective implementation of the homework policy.**
Opportunities should be provided for, and encouragement of team planning and coordination of homework usage. Guidelines should be developed and communicated to faculty on methods of collaboration to ensure there is no homework overload.
- e. **Provide teachers with access to all essential tools.**

Teachers shall:

- a. ***Set clear standards and expectations for the quality of work based on the needs of students.***

- b. ***Create an effective system for communicating homework guidelines to parents and students.***

If homework is to be a part of the course requirements, parents and students must be given homework guidelines at the beginning of the course. These guidelines should be included in the course syllabus.

- c. ***Review homework and provide timely and appropriate feedback regarding the completion of assignments as a step toward mastery of standards.***

Students need to know if they are completing assignments correctly in order to continue with the pace of the course of study. Verbal or written feedback should be given within two class periods following the due date. In accordance with Section 1002.22, (3)(c) Florida Statutes, academic work completed shall be provided to parents upon request. (This clarification was provided in a memorandum from the Office of the School Board Attorney on June 9, 2003).

- d. ***Coordinate projects so that all students have access to research and resource materials including textbooks and digital tools such as flash drives, electronic textbooks and websites.***

When possible, time should be provided during the school day to use classroom and/or media center resources for research. If the project involves the use of textbooks, supplemental materials, or equipment, these items should be made available for home use. Have sensitivity to students not being able to access a computer within the school day. Be sure that if homework is on-line, it is also available in hard copy. Be aware that technologies other than computers can be used to access homework assignments (e.g., ipods and cell phones). Because the cost of some project materials can create an economic burden for parents, teachers are expected to be sensitive to any associated costs and undue time commitment associated with projects. Material costs for project development should be reflected in a minimum out-of-pocket expense to parents/guardians and should not be a factor in grading. Consideration should be given to the student's developmental level of learning and creative interpretation when grading standards are established. A rubric should be developed and implemented for student projects that will focus heavily on quality of content rather than aesthetics.

- e. ***Assign homework that is academically challenging and developmentally appropriate to the student's level of competence.***

- f. ***Design quality homework, which is relevant to the curriculum and/or tied to mastery.***

- g. ***Allow for varied learning styles by including choices in types of assignments when possible.***

Careful consideration should be given to modification of expectations

and/or quantity of assigned work according to the individual needs of the students. Implement differentiated instructional strategies when giving homework assignments.

- h. ***Provide students with a reasonable estimate of the amount of time necessary to complete each homework assignment.***

As the complexity of homework assignments vary, so will the amount of time needed to complete each assignment. To assist parents and students with time management, it is suggested that each assignment include an estimation of time required for completion. A best practice for maximum time for homework is 10 minutes times the grade level (i.e., 1st grade=10 mins., 4th grade=40 mins., 7th grade=70 mins., 11th grade=110 mins., etc.). Please note that these times are for the **total** amount of homework for any given day, not per class or subject.

- i. ***Provide specific written explanation, rubric or model, of long term assignments so that the requirements, expectations and timelines are clearly understood by the students.***

When extended projects are assigned it may be helpful to include homework guidelines as a reminder for students and parents. On long-term projects, there should be some type of intermediate update, opportunities for questions and/or re-clarification of the assignment prior to the final due date. Reinforce the fact that the homework must be completed and turned in.

- j. ***Provide students the opportunity to ask questions to clarify assignments before leaving class.***

Assignments should be given in enough time before the class ends to make sure that students have a clear understanding of the assignment. Provide a sample of the expected results. Assignments should be posted in a conspicuous place in the classroom. Be considerate of other school activities that maybe going on during homework assignments on a case by case basis.

- k. ***Evaluate group projects based upon a predefined rubric which includes individual student participation and group process and allow time in class for individuals and groups to work on projects.***

Expectations of group projects should be clearly defined, being careful to indicate penalties or consequences for poor participation. Stress importance of each student doing his/her share of the group project.

- l. ***Collaborate between teachers at the secondary level regarding when homework would be assigned. There should be a balance of projects so they are not assigned at the same time.***

When projects or intensive assignments are given, teachers should check with those teaching other subject areas to be sure not to overload students.

- m. ***Be considerate when assigning homework due the day after a religious holiday and district assigned school breaks and weekends.***

Many families plan vacations and activities based on the school calendar. Be aware of this when giving homework assignments at

these times. Consider making the due date the second or third class meeting after an extended weekend, school break, or holiday. Students should not be given homework assignments on single days off that are associated with religious holidays. If there is a break that includes additional days beyond the religious holiday, homework may be assigned, but should be limited.

- n. **Ensure that students receive feedback on each assignment so that students comprehend their level of understanding of the learning.**

Students and parents can monitor progress and clearly see areas of weakness when homework is graded on a regular basis.

- o. **Create an effective mechanism or system to communicate homework assignments. If appropriate and accessible, place homework assignments on the teacher's website for further clarification.**

It is the School District's goal that every teacher maintain a website and all homework assignments be listed on these sites.

- p. **Suggest time limits on homework at the elementary level.**

The amount of time a student should spend on homework will depend on his/her unique abilities and needs. Suggested times: K-2nd grade 15-20 minutes; grades 3-5, 30-50 minutes. It is recommended that kindergarten students are read to a minimum of 15 minutes daily. Adhere to his suggested times is strongly urged and may be monitored.

- q. **Modifications for ESE and ESOL students will be addressed through the IEP or the student's PMP.**

For students receiving ESE services, the accommodations defined within the student's IEP or 504 plan should be honored. For English Language Learners (ELLs), teachers should take into consideration a student's level of English language proficiency when assigning homework and due dates. Students with special needs may require modifications to their homework so that they are successful and do not encounter additional frustration. Be aware that a student with a learning disability may take 2 to 3 times longer to complete an assignment than a regular education student and adjust assignments accordingly.

Students shall:

- a. **Understand that homework is part of the course requirement.**

Homework is a percentage of the student's final grade. The results of homework assignments are used to determine the overall grade for the course. Homework should be written in daily planner or agenda.

- b. **Ask questions to clarify homework assignments before leaving class.**

The student must assume the responsibility of making sure that he/she understands the assignment expectations before leaving class.

- c. **Complete and submit homework assignments by the due date.**

If a student is absent on the day that homework is assigned, the guidelines established in Attendance Policy #5.5, Section I, Makeup Work, page 10, apply -- “Students have 2 class days to make up the work for each class day absent, **not including the day of return.** However, previously assigned work is due the day of return.”

- d. **Complete all assignments honestly in accordance with the teacher’s directions.**

The same guidelines that apply to individual work completed in the classroom apply to homework. The student is to complete the assignment independently following instructions given by the teacher. There should be minimal support from parents.

Parents shall:

- a. **Provide a suitable environment for homework.**

It is important to choose a comfortable, pleasant location where the student can complete homework. Some children need a location that is relatively free from distractions while others need a quiet place that is still close enough to others that they don’t feel isolated.

- b. **Remind students that homework is their responsibility.**

Developing good study habits and a sense of responsibility will aid the student throughout his/her school years. Students should be encouraged to routinely work on homework assignments when they are given. Praise or reward should be given to the child for starting and completing his/her homework on time and without a reminder.

- c. **Guide or assist in homework when unusual difficulties arise but never do the homework for their child.**

The child’s homework should be reviewed, suggesting to the child that he/she double check for completeness and accuracy and to make sure that he/she followed directions given by the teacher.

- d. **Encourage students to ask their teacher(s) clarifying questions concerning their homework.**

- e. **Communicate with the teacher(s).**

Parents should communicate with teacher(s) about how homework related information can be communicated most effectively.

Parents should provide feedback to the teacher (s) on the process of completing specific homework assignments to aid in planning for his/her child.

- f. **Monitor activities so that sufficient time is provided for homework.**

Efforts should be made to have a set time when homework will be completed. It helps if you can establish a time where every family member works on homework or some kind of learning project together. If a family member (including the adults) doesn’t have any homework to do, encourage that person to read for fun.

- g. **Prohibit cheating, plagiarism and any other dishonest practices in the completion of homework.**

This is an excellent opportunity to convey the importance of ethical practices and character building.