

The Practices and Effects of Homework in the Commack Elementary Schools: A Case Study Analysis



A Report Presented to the Board of Education and the Commack Community

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Table of Contents

District Mission Statement	3
Related Board of Education Goals	3
Introduction	3
Background, Research, and Rationale.....	3
Research Methodology.....	4
Guiding Questions.....	4
Theory of Action	4
Data Collection and Analysis	5
Key Findings	6
Parent Focus Groups Findings.....	6
Teacher Survey and Connector Group Findings	7
Data Validation.....	8
Recommendations (Best Practices for Homework).....	8
Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation	9
Implementation Plan.....	9
Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.....	9
Acknowledgements	9
References	10
Appendices.....	12
Appendix 1: Parent Focus Groups – Demographics	12
Appendix 2: Teacher Connector Group Agendas.....	13
Appendix 3: Board of Education Goals Workshop Presentation – Elementary Homework.....	14
Appendix 4: Board of Education Presentation - Homework Update	15
Appendix 5: Teacher Survey Data	16
Appendix 6: Guidelines for Homework Best Practice, Grades K to 5.....	17
Appendix 7: Board of Education Public Workshop Presentation – Elementary Homework	18

District Mission Statement

Within the context of a caring community of learners, our primary mission is to provide an exemplary learning experience that will allow each child to acquire the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values to become a successful, contributing member within our school community and greater society.

Beyond the District Mission Statement, the Commack Public Schools aim is to develop each student's academic, civic, social, and emotional competencies by providing an overall well-rounded program. As stated by Dr. Donald James, Superintendent of Schools, *"Our aim in Commack is to prepare every student for whatever they want and need to achieve at their next level of learning while simultaneously maintaining and enhancing the educational program and academic achievement, as we define it, that Commack is known for and the community expects."*

Related Board of Education Goals

The following are the adopted 2017-18 Board of Education goals related to curriculum, instruction, and assessment and elementary homework.

- Continue to support a curriculum that is developmentally-appropriate to allow for each student to accomplish their individual goals and become prepared with the skills to achieve at their next level of learning.
- Continue to provide for an education in which all students learn social, emotional, academic, and physical competencies.

Introduction

As is our general practice, the Commack UFSD engages in the formal and informal review of its educational programs along with their various components on a year-in and year-out basis. During the 2015-16 school year and as a result of the mandated implementation of the Common Core State Learning Standards and associated curriculum, the area of homework was identified for review. Since then the District has engaged in conversations, research, and the study of its homework practices. What follows is information regarding the background and rationale that led to this review, the research and findings, recommendations for homework best practice, plans for implementation, monitoring, and evaluation, as well as communication.

Background, Research, and Rationale

As has been common educational practice since the early 1900s, students across the nation have brought school home with them through homework. Educators have assigned a wide variety of homework assignments to engage students in learning after school and with a variety of purposes. Further, and as a result, parents and caregivers have reinforced children's education as "homework helpers" and supporters of neighborhood schools and teachers.

Our review of the literature was focused on three key questions: (1) How is homework defined?; (2) what is the purpose and/or benefits of homework?; and, (3) what are the research-based best practices for designing effective homework? A wide-variety of scholarly research including books, journal articles, and web-based articles have provided an overabundance of information regarding these topics. Some researchers have drawn practical conclusions whereas others have drawn no clear conclusion regarding homework practices and effects.

As a result of this literature review, we have found, much like the researchers, that a further need to study homework exists to determine homework's impact on students, academically and otherwise. Robert Marzano and Debra Pickering (2007) provide historical context to the homework debate in this 2007 ACSD Educational Leadership publication, *Special Topic – The Case For and Against Homework*:

Homework has been a perennial topic of debate in education, and attitudes toward it have been cyclical (Gill & Schlossman, 2000). Throughout the first few decades of the 20th century, educators commonly believed that homework helped create disciplined minds. By 1940, growing concern that homework interfered with other home activities sparked a reaction against it. This trend was reversed in the late 1950s when the Soviets' launch of Sputnik led to concern that U.S. education lacked rigor; schools viewed more rigorous homework as a partial solution to the problem. By 1980, the trend had reversed again, with some learning theorists claiming that homework could be detrimental to students' mental health.

The literature cited in the references section of this report provides information relevant to both sides of the homework debate. Our review of the literature investigates research-based best practices for homework that can enhance teaching and learning in our schools.

Research Methodology

Guiding Questions

- How does homework effect the home life of Commack families?
- What are the current homework practices of Commack teachers?
- To what extent does alignment of homework practices occur between classrooms, grade levels, and schools?
- How do the current homework practices of Commack teachers align to the research on best-practices for homework?

Theory of Action

- If we remain in a state of inquiry and consistently review our educational program, then we can assure that students are receiving the best possible education.
- If we engage teachers by providing the opportunity to share their voices regarding matters of the school system, then the review of our educational programming and the results of that review ensure that students receive the best possible education.

- If we engage parents by providing the opportunity to share their voices regarding matters of the school system, then the review of educational programming and the results of that review ensure that the school system understands how school effects a student's home life.
- If we seek to strike a balance between published research and internal action research, then we provide the best-possible educations for our students.

Data Collection and Analysis

The following are the various methods in which data was collected between September 2017 and November 2017.

- **Parent Focus Groups:** A sample of parents were invited to participate in structured focus groups. An email to the parents of school-aged children in our six (6) elementary schools solicited interest. As a result, one hundred and forty-nine (149) parents responded to this invitation and were provided an opportunity to be heard. However, not all attended. There were a total of four (4) focus groups initially planned, but a determination was made to expand the total number of focus groups to eight (8) in order to capture a larger representation of the voice of the community. Each focus group had no more than fifteen (15) participants. At these focus groups parents were informed about the District's current state of homework and were provided the opportunity to share *how homework affects their home life* and other thoughts about homework. Various scenarios were presented as prompts and as a means to provide structure. Parent responses were scribed and later analyzed using a coding methodology to identify common themes and patterns. Parents who participated in the focus groups also completed a short "paper and pencil" survey regarding "last week's homework." Aggregated demographic summary data regarding participants can be found in Appendix 1.
- **Teacher Connector Groups:** A sample of teachers were invited to voluntarily participate in structured connector group meetings. An email was sent to school principals explaining that all teachers were invited to participate and to solicit this interest on the District's behalf. As a result, twenty-six (26) teachers responded to the invitation which represented all six (6) grade levels and all six (6) Commack elementary schools. The teachers who volunteered were informed of the commitment necessary and the mission of the group. This teacher connector group met at least eight (8) times and performed a variety of functions, including the validation of a staff survey, analysis of building-level survey data, collection of anecdotal data from colleagues, and engaging in research about homework. Agendas from each of these Teacher Connector Group meetings can be found in Appendix 2.
- **Board of Education Goal Development Workshops:** During the September 28, 2017, Board of Education Goals Development Workshop, a related action associated with the Boards' and Superintendents' Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment goals included a component regarding homework. This presentation can be found in Appendix 3.

- **Board of Education Meetings:** During the October 19, 2017, Regular Board of Education Meeting, the Administrative Report provided an update on the progress related to our research on homework. This presentation can be found in Appendix 4.
- **Staff Survey:** An online staff survey was distributed, via email, to all Commack elementary school teachers. A total of 112 responses were collected between October 5, 2017, and October 11, 2017. This represents approximately 70% of the general education and special education teaching staff. District-level survey questions and aggregate data can be found in Appendix 5.

Key Findings

Parent Focus Groups Findings

Parent focus group participants responded to the question of *How does homework effect your family life?* The analysis of the focus group data includes the search for common themes and trends regarding parent comments regarding how homework effects their home life.

The most common finding from the parent focus group is the parental perspective for the need for communication. As the focus groups unfolded, the term communication evolved to a call from parents for help to understand purpose and expectations of homework. The following are topics identified by parents that are in need of additional clarification:

- Definition of homework;
- Meaning of “student independence” at each grade-level;
- Alignment of homework assignments from class-to-class or school-to-school;
- Purpose/meaning of homework
 - Parents generalized that their current understanding is that the purpose of homework should be:
 - Reinforcement
 - Skill development
 - A window into my child's learning;
- Role of the parent, student, and teacher in supporting students with their homework;
- Balance between homework and family/extracurricular time;
- Differentiated homework to meet each child where he/she is; and
- Quality homework feedback.

Further, the following are the common parental-perceived benefits of homework:

- Homework provides a home-to-school connection (“*a window into my child's learning*”);
- Homework provides opportunities to develop executive functioning skills such as:
 - Time management,
 - Responsibility and accountability, and
 - Confidence.

Teacher Survey and Connector Group Findings

All elementary school teachers were invited to participate in a district-developed survey regarding homework. The survey included a myriad of questions related to homework, which sought to develop a system-wide understanding of homework practices from grade-to-grade and building-to-building.

The survey data was analyzed by the teacher connector group. Following this analysis, the teacher connect group engaged their colleagues in conversations about the data to develop a deeper understanding of the data. The following are the commonalities that surfaced as a result of the survey and subsequent anecdotal data collection.

- More than 98% of teachers assign homework Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday night. Less than 4% assign homework on Friday and less than 1% assign homework on Saturday or Sunday.
- Math (90%), independent reading (80%), and spelling (72%) are the most commonly assigned homework assignments.
- According to 77% of teachers, 30 minutes of homework or less, written or otherwise, is an appropriate amount of homework for students at their grade level and 68% of teachers responded that no homework is an appropriate amount of homework over the weekend.
- Teachers (97%) report that students are often or always able to complete the homework as designed and 85% report students can do so independently.
- Elementary teachers report that students have difficulty completing homework independently because students cannot focus or are too tired (78%) or because there are too many distractions at home (86%).
- Elementary teachers (84%) report that the primary circumstance as to why students cannot complete homework is that students are engaged in extracurricular activities that leave little time for homework.
- Elementary teachers report that the purpose of homework is reinforcement (92%), homework is one of many forms of home-school communication (80%), homework teaches responsibility (74%), and homework aids in the development of routine for future grade levels (70%).
- Elementary teachers report their professional beliefs of homework include reinforcement (92%), one of the many forms of home-school communication (80%), homework teaches responsibility (74%), and homework aids in the development of routine for future grade levels (70%).
- Elementary teachers report that the purpose of homework is practice (93%), a means of home-school communication (68%), processing knowledge learned in class (68%), and to check for understanding (60%).
- Elementary teachers report that the purpose of homework is not prelearning (3%) or to assess for a grade (2%).
- When asked how homework practices can change to enhance teaching and learning, elementary teachers responded that meaningful (93%) and differentiated (58%) homework should be given as well as quality feedback (44%).

- Elementary teachers report that they believe parents should contact the teacher as necessary regarding homework and both the parent (73%) and the teacher share the responsibility of communicating about homework (86%).

Data Validation

Validation of the parent and teacher data allows for alignments and misalignments of the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding homework to be identified. The following are the common alignments and common misalignments between parent and teacher perceptions of homework. It is important to note that although both groups were asked different questions, commonalities still surfaced.

The following are common areas where teacher and parent perceptions aligned:

- Homework's primary purpose should be for meaningful reinforcement of what was learned in class;
- Tools and resources are necessary in order for parents to effectively support their child with homework;
- Flexibility for homework completion and the differentiation of homework to match each student's needs is key; and
- An age-appropriate amount of homework is necessary as is age-appropriate types and formats of homework.

The following are common areas where teacher and parent perceptions did not align:

- The parents see homework, in one of its primary forms, as a method of communication ("*a window into their child's learning*") whereas teachers perceived communication as a secondary purpose of homework after reinforcement
- The teachers primary view of homework is academic and social-emotional in nature whereas parents primary view of homework as a factor of family dynamics and a window into classroom;
- The parents perceive the return of homework with feedback provides parents with an opportunity to understand their child's strengths and weaknesses;
- It is not clear if parents or teachers agree if independent reading is homework;
- It is not clear if teachers and parents agree what "independent" means; and
- It is not clear if teachers and parents agree on what an appropriate amount of homework at each grade level is.

Recommendations (Best Practices for Homework)

Our team of teachers and administrators developed *Guidelines for Homework Best Practices* that reflect the findings of this study as well as the research on homework best practice. The Commack educator determined *Guidelines for Homework Best Practices* and exemplars for each grade level can be found in Appendix 6. The accompany presentation to the Board can be found in Appendix 7.

Implementation, Monitoring, Evaluation

Implementation Plan

- Draft *Guidelines for Homework Best Practices* will be distributed to the staff and staff will be engaged in the development of “exemplars.”
- Final *Guidelines for Homework Best Practices* will be distributed to staff and subsequent, introductory professional development.
- Formal presentation of findings and *Guidelines for Homework Best Practices* during Board of Education Workshop.
- *The Practices and Effects of Homework in the Commack Elementary Schools: A Case Study Analysis* sent to the Board of Education.
- Engage in ongoing professional development.
- *The Practices and Effects of Homework in the Commack Elementary Schools: A Case Study Analysis* distributed for public consumption through various means.
- Parent workshop on the topic of elementary homework to be held on November 28, 2017.

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

Monitoring

- Principals and Assistant Principals are the primary administrators that will monitor the efficacy of the new *Guidelines for Homework Best Practices*. Throughout the school year, these administrators will engage teachers in conversation to solicit feedback regarding the new *Guidelines for Homework Best Practices* on a day-in and day-out basis. Principals will choose from multiple methods to engage in this monitoring such as classroom observations, grade-level meetings, faculty-meetings, etc.
- District Office administration will engage in the monitoring of homework via principal meetings, informal classroom observations, other grade-level meetings, etc. as appropriate.

Evaluation

- Teachers will be engaged in an evaluation of the new *Guidelines for Homework Best Practices* in the spring of 2017. The resulting evaluation will drive any changes, if appropriate.

Acknowledgements

This work would not be possible without the professional support of the Commack UFSD teachers and administrators. In particular, we thank the Elementary Homework Teacher Connector group for their pivotal role in this internal action research. We are grateful to Board of Education and the Commack Community for their ongoing support of our work to continue the tradition of “Excellence in Education” that Commack is known for. We appreciate the partnership of the PTA and SEPTA, and are grateful to the Commack families for their active participation, dialogue, and feedback regarding this work.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Parent Focus Groups – Demographics

Elementary HW Parent Focus Group
October 16, 2017
Sawmill Intermediate School
12 p.m.

Moderators: Dr. Donald James, Mrs. Amy Ryan
 Data Scribes: Dr. Michael Inforna, Ms. Sari Goldberg
 Number of parents in attendance: 11
 Number of parents invited: 15

Participant Demographics

Participant Number	Grade of Child(ren)	Age of Child(ren)	School Attending
1	2		WP
2	3		SM
3		8y.o., 9.5 y.o.	SM
4		11 y.o., 7 y.o.	
5	K, 3, 5		
6	K		WP
7	1		NR
8		9 y.o., 5 y.o.	
9	K	4y/o	IH
10	K	4y/o	IH
11		6 y.o., 9 y.o.	

Elementary HW Parent Focus Group
October 18, 2017
Sawmill Intermediate School
6 p.m.

SESSION A

Moderator: Mrs. Amy Ryan
Data Scribe: Dr. Michael Inforna
Number of parents in attendance: 13
Number of parents invited: 15

Participant Demographics

Participant Number	Grade of Child(ren)	Age of Child(ren)	School Attending
1	2,4		SM
2	4		
3	2,5		NR, BR
4	1		RH
5	5		SM
6	K		NR
7	K, 1		NR
8	K		NR
9	2, 4		IH, BR
10	5		BR
11	5		SM
12	2		IH
13	2		IH
14			RH
15			RH

Elementary HW Parent Focus Group
October 18, 2017
Sawmill Intermediate School
6 p.m.

SESSION B

Moderator: Dr. Donald James

Data Scribe: Ms. Sari Goldberg

Number of parents in attendance: 11

Number of parents invited: 15

Participant Demographics

Participant Number	Grade of Child(ren)	Age of Child(ren)	School Attending
1	3 & 5		Burr
2	2 & MS		WP
3	1 & 3		NR & Burr
4	1 & 3		IH & Burr
5	K & 2		NR
6	4, 5, & MS		SM
7	2 & 4		NR & Burr
8	1 & 4		IH & Burr
9	2		NR
10	Pre K & 2		WP
11	5		Burr

Elementary HW Parent Focus Group
October 26, 2017
Burr Intermediate School
2 p.m.

Moderators: Dr. Donald James, Mrs. Amy Ryan
Data Scribes: Dr. Michael Inforna, Ms. Sari Goldberg
Number of parents in attendance: 13
Number of parents invited: 15

Participant Demographics

Participant Number	Grade of Child(ren)	Age of Child(ren)	School Attending
1	1, 3		IH, BR
2	K, 5		IH, BR
3	1, 5		NR, BR
4	3, 5		BR
5	1		IH
6	2		WP
7			BR & MS
8	3, 4		BR
9	2, 4		
10	1, 5		IH, BR
11	K, 2, 5		RH, SM
12	K, 2		IH
13	2, 6		WP, MS

Elementary HW Parent Focus Group
October 30, 2017
Sawmill Intermediate School
12 p.m.

Moderators: Dr. Donald James, Mrs. Amy Ryan
 Data Scribes: Dr. Michael Inforna, Ms. Sari Goldberg
 Number of parents in attendance: 15
 Number of parents invited: 48

Participant Demographics

Participant Number	Grade of Child(ren)	Age of Child(ren)	School Attending
1	K, 4		NR, BR
2	2, 4		RH, SM
3	2, 4		NR, BR
4	2, 4		NR, BR
5	K, 5		NR, BR
6	3		BR
7	1,3,4		NR, BR
8	1		WP
9	5		BR
10	5		SM
11	K		WP
12	K		RH
13	4		BR
14	2,3		WP, SM
15	4		BR

Elementary HW Parent Focus Group
October 30, 2017
Sawmill Intermediate School
6 p.m.

Moderators: Dr. Donald James, Mrs. Amy Ryan
 Data Scribes: Dr. Michael Inforna, Ms. Sari Goldberg
 Number of parents in attendance: 8
 Number of parents invited: 31

Participant Demographics

Participant Number	Grade of Child(ren)	Age of Child(ren)	School Attending
1	1,4,6		IH, Burr, CMS
2	K,K, 5		NR, Burr
3	4		SM
4	2,5		WP, SM
5	K		IH
6	2		IH
7	1,4		WP, SM
8	3		WP
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			

Appendix 2: Teacher Connector Group Agendas

Elementary Homework Teacher Connector Group

September 29, 2017

Sawmill I.S.

AGENDA

- Purpose
- Process
- Next Steps

Next Meeting: October 6, 2017

Elementary Homework Teacher Connector Group

October 6, 2017

Sawmill I.S.

AGENDA

- Validation of Survey
- Next Steps

Next Meeting: October 12, 2017

Elementary Homework Teacher Connector Group

October 12, 2017

Sawmill I.S.

AGENDA

- Survey Results Analysis and Connector Processes (Model)
- Survey Results Analysis and Connector Processes (Building-Level)
- The Role of the Connector and Research in HW Practices
- Next Steps

Next Meeting: October 19, 2017



Homework
Teacher Connector Group
Thursday, October 26, 2017

- Welcome
- Connector Report – Unpack Survey Feedback

Next Meeting: Thursday, November 2, 2017



Homework
Teacher Connector Group
Thursday, November 2, 2017

- Welcome
- Share and Discuss Research

Next Meeting: Thursday, November 9, 2017



Homework
Teacher Connector Group
Thursday, November 9, 2017

- Welcome
- Share and Discuss Practitioner Findings
- Define Homework
- Identify Purpose and Benefits of Homework

Next Meeting:

Grade Level Connector Group Meetings:

Monday, November 13, 2017

Grade 1

Grade 4

Tuesday, November 14, 2017

Kindergarten

Grade 2

Grade 3

Grade 5



Homework
Teacher Connector Group
Thursday, November 16, 2017

- Welcome
- Final Share
- Thank you!

Appendix 3: Board of Education Goals Workshop Presentation – Elementary Homework

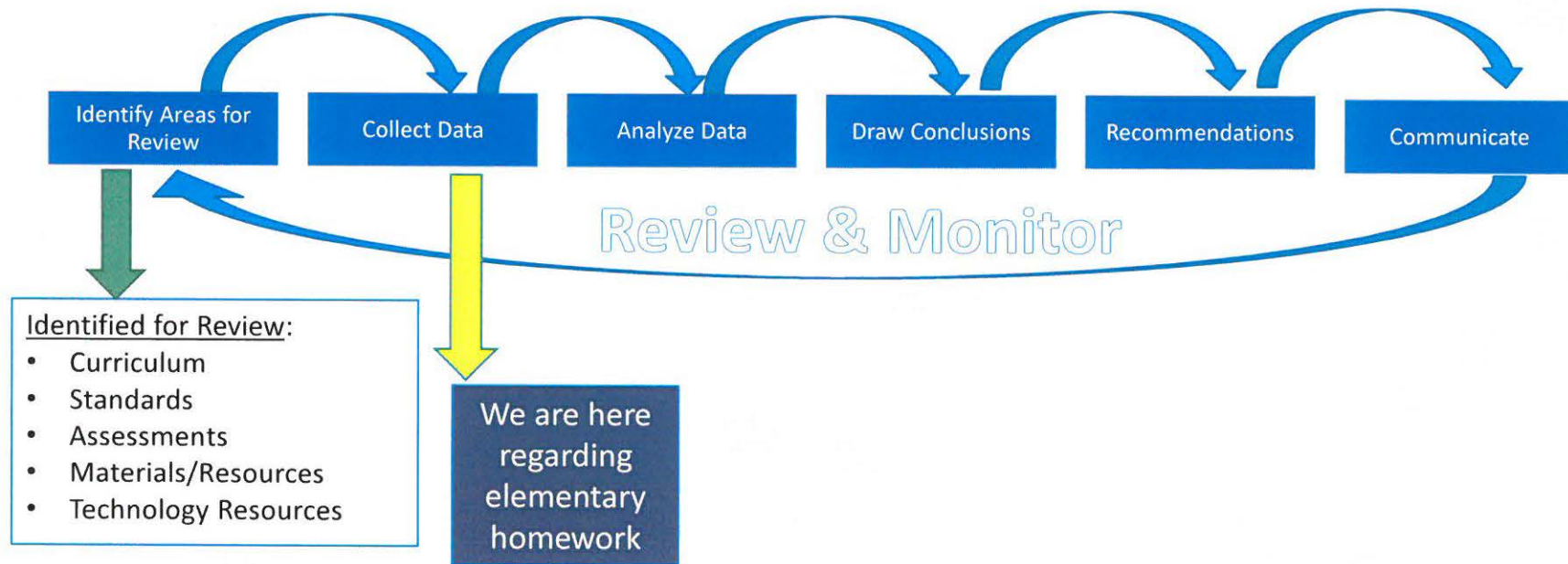


Board of Education Goals Public Workshop

SEPTEMBER 28, 2017



Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment: Elementary Homework



Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment: Elementary Homework



Guiding Principles:

Homework assignments should be developmentally-appropriate, reinforce opportunities that promote a home-school connection, offer meaningful experiences that promote student achievement, and provide differentiation for students.

Desired Outcomes:

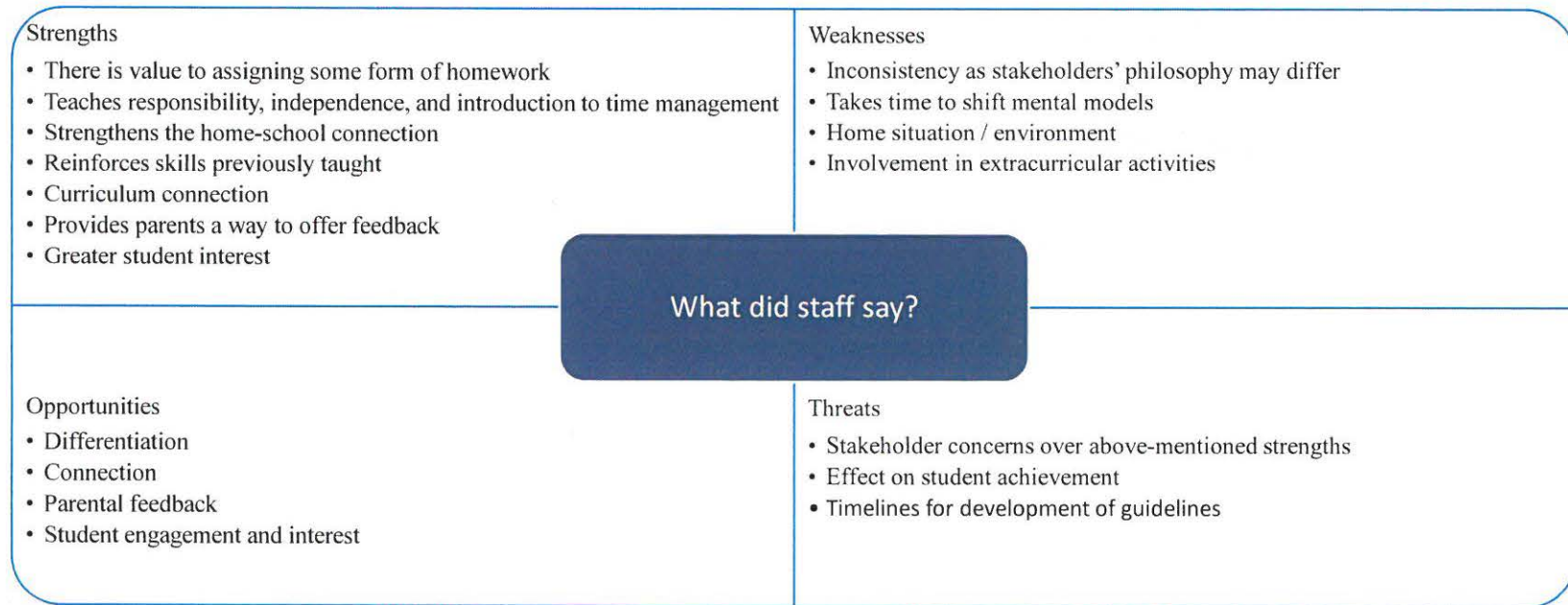
Homework protocols/guidelines that are grade specific, Grades K to 5, that may include, but are not limited to, purpose, form, duration, and frequency.



Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment: Elementary Homework



Engaging with Stakeholders in Conversations about Elementary Homework



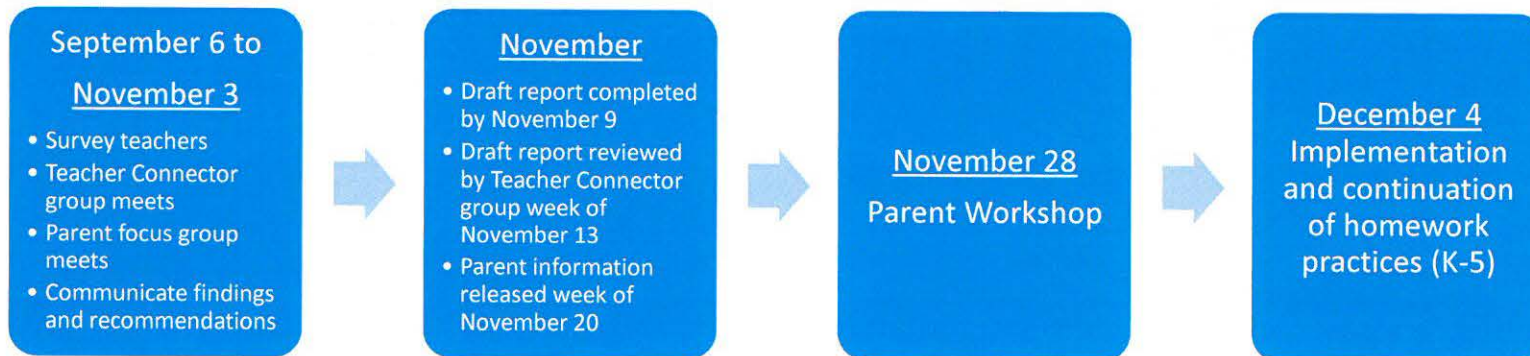


Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment: Elementary Homework

Related Actions:

- Examination of current practices, research, teacher input, and parent input as a means to collect information and data. This may include teacher connector groups, parent focus groups, research, and surveys. *This review may result in no changes to current practice.*

Deliverables:



These dates are subject to change

Appendix 4: Board of Education Presentation - Homework Update

Board of Education Public Meeting

October 19, 2017



Update of Elementary HW

Completed Related Actions (Spring 2017 – Today)

- Teacher Connector group meetings x 4
 - Survey development and validation
 - Survey administered to teaching staff
 - Analysis of survey data
 - Engage in conversation with colleagues about current practice and survey data
 - Conducting research on best practices related to developmentally-appropriate, meaningful homework
- Parent Homework Focus Group x 3
 - How does homework effect your home life?

Anticipated Future Related Actions

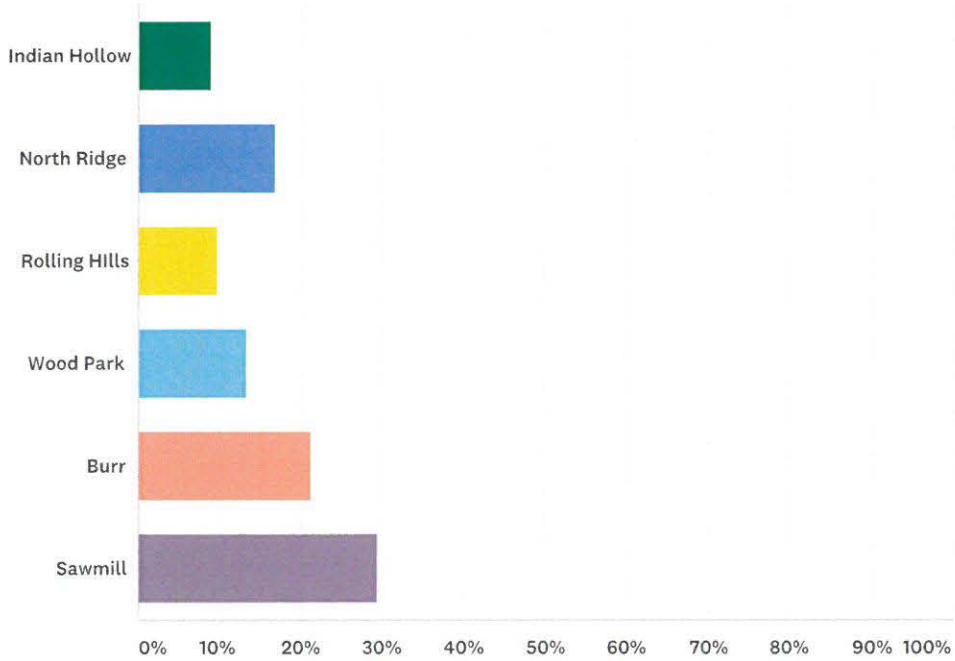
- Parent Homework Focus Group x3
- Teacher Connector Group x3
- Utilize data and research to determine draft recommendations
- Recommendations distributed and discussed amongst faculty
- Determination about possible adjustments
- Share recommendations with BOE no later than Nov. 17
- Share recommendations with parents: Nov. 27 through Dec. 1
- Parent Workshop - November 28th

Appendix 5: Teacher Survey Data

Homework Survey - Teacher

Q1 Which of our schools do you teach in? (If you teach at more than one school, choose the school where most of your students are enrolled)

Answered: 112 Skipped: 0

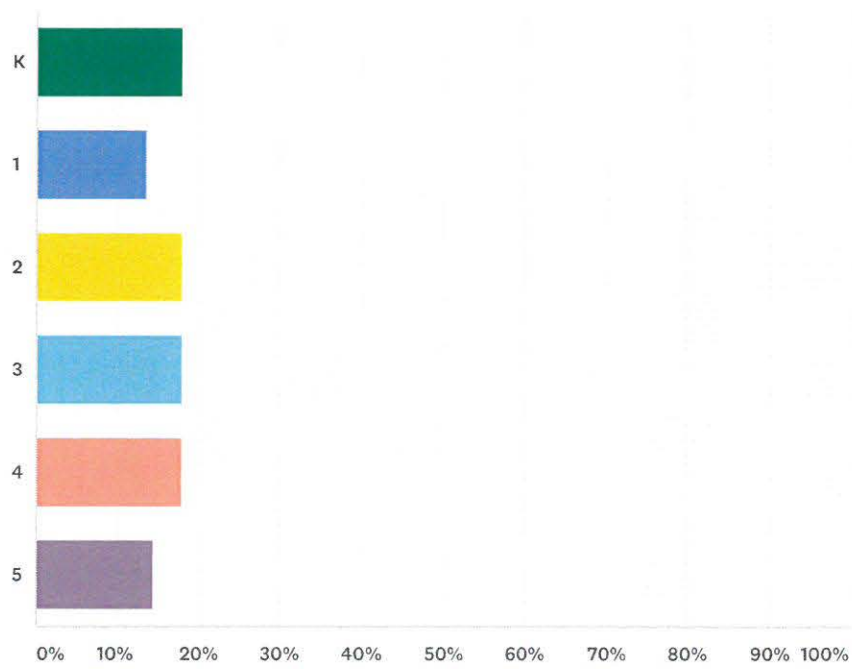


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Indian Hollow	8.93%	10
North Ridge	16.96%	19
Rolling Hills	9.82%	11
Wood Park	13.39%	15
Burr	21.43%	24
Sawmill	29.46%	33
TOTAL		112

Homework Survey - Teacher

Q2 What grade-level do you primarily teach?

Answered: 111 Skipped: 1

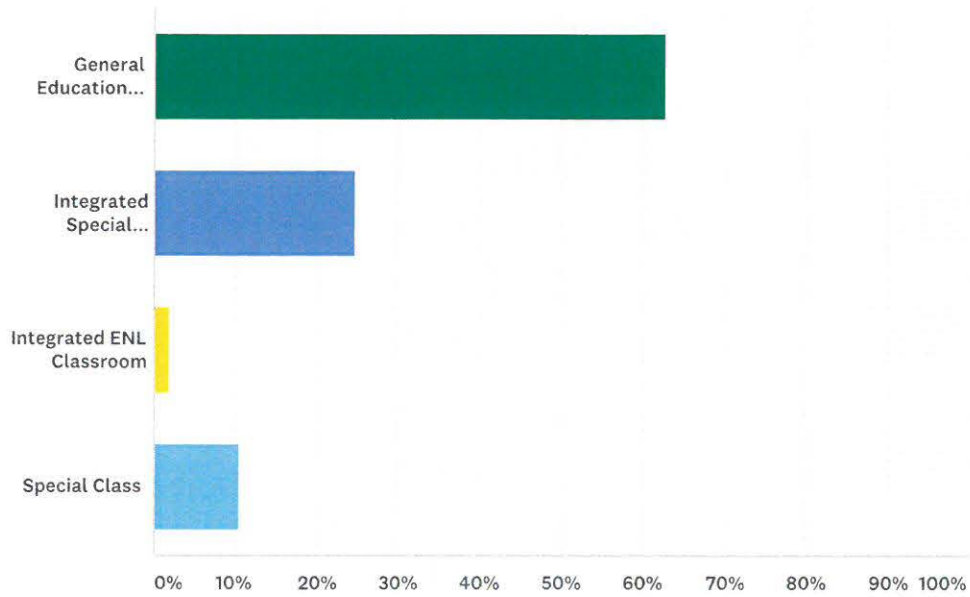


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
K	18.02%	20
1	13.51%	15
2	18.02%	20
3	18.02%	20
4	18.02%	20
5	14.41%	16
TOTAL		111

Homework Survey - Teacher

Q3 If applicable, please select the option below that best describes your class.

Answered: 105 Skipped: 7

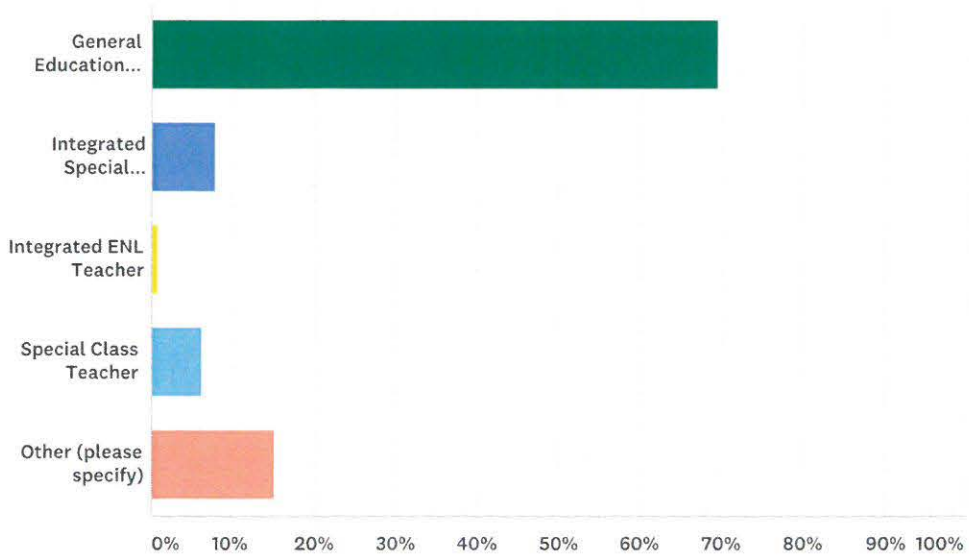


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
General Education Classroom	62.86%	66
Integrated Special Education Classroom	24.76%	26
Integrated ENL Classroom	1.90%	2
Special Class	10.48%	11
TOTAL		105

Homework Survey - Teacher

Q4 In class, I am the....

Answered: 112 Skipped: 0

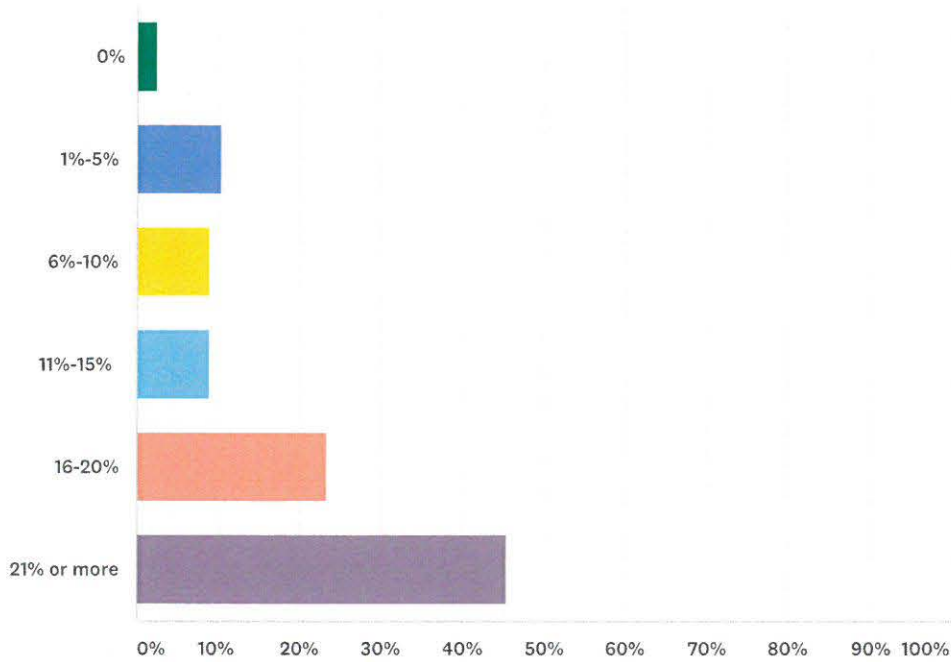


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
General Education Teacher	69.64%	78
Integrated Special Education Teacher	8.04%	9
Integrated ENL Teacher	0.89%	1
Special Class Teacher	6.25%	7
Other (please specify)	15.18%	17
TOTAL		112

Homework Survey - Teacher

Q5 What percentage of your second through fifth grade class currently receive AIS Reading services? (Kindergarten and first grade teachers should skip this question)

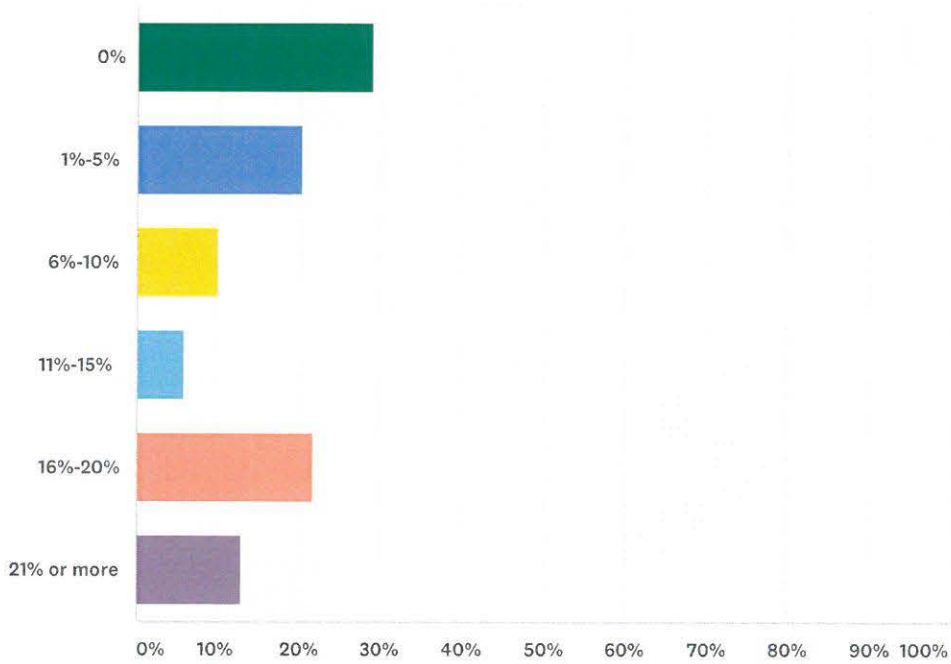
Answered: 77 Skipped: 35



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
0%	2.60% 2
1%-5%	10.39% 8
6%-10%	9.09% 7
11%-15%	9.09% 7
16-20%	23.38% 18
21% or more	45.45% 35
TOTAL	77

Q6 What percentage of your second through fifth grade class currently receive AIS Math services? (Kindergarten and first grade teachers should skip this question)

Answered: 69 Skipped: 43

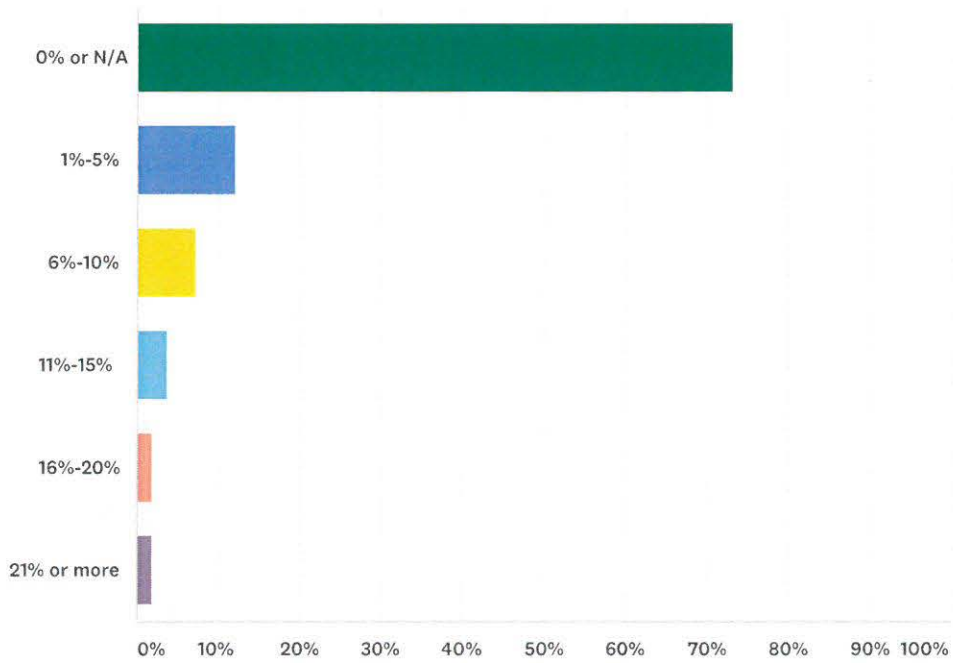


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0%	28.99%	20
1%-5%	20.29%	14
6%-10%	10.14%	7
11%-15%	5.80%	4
16%-20%	21.74%	15
21% or more	13.04%	9
TOTAL		69

Homework Survey - Teacher

Q7 What percentage of your class currently receives ENL services?

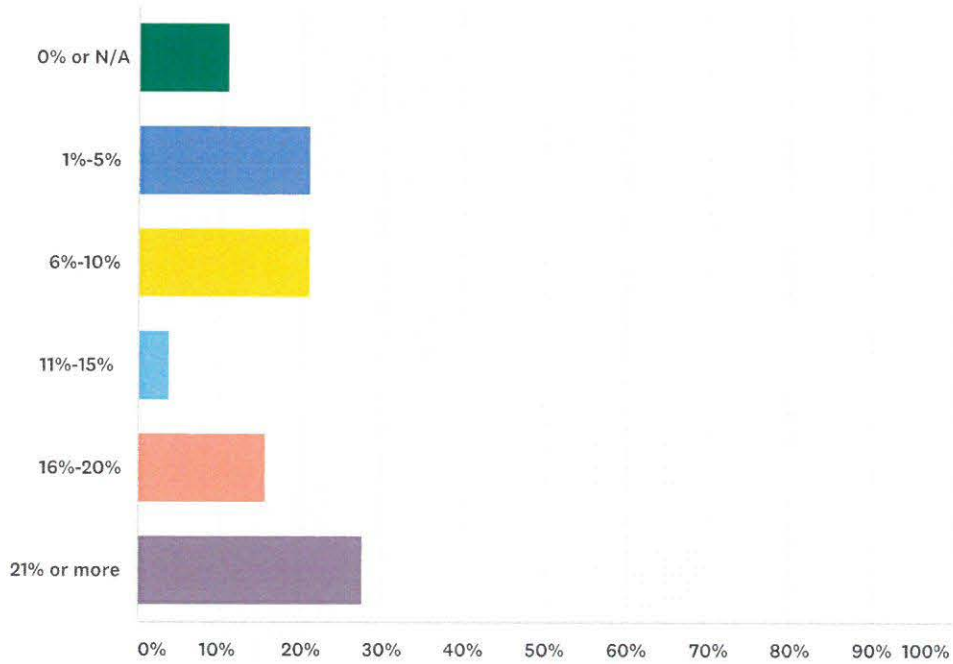
Answered: 108 Skipped: 4



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0% or N/A	73.15%	79
1%-5%	12.04%	13
6%-10%	7.41%	8
11%-15%	3.70%	4
16%-20%	1.85%	2
21% or more	1.85%	2
TOTAL		108

Q8 What percentage of your class currently has an IEP for related services or resource room?

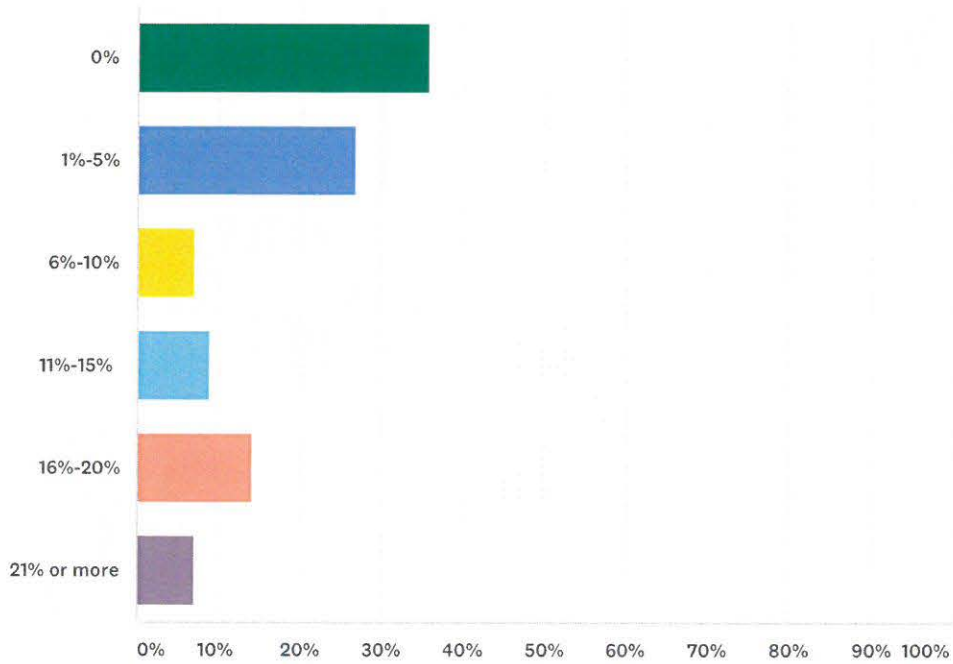
Answered: 109 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0% or N/A	11.01%	12
1%-5%	21.10%	23
6%-10%	21.10%	23
11%-15%	3.67%	4
16%-20%	15.60%	17
21% or more	27.52%	30
TOTAL		109

**Q9 At the intermediate level only, what percentage of your class is currently enrolled in the full-day Challenge and Discovery program?
(primary school teachers should skip this question)**

Answered: 56 Skipped: 56

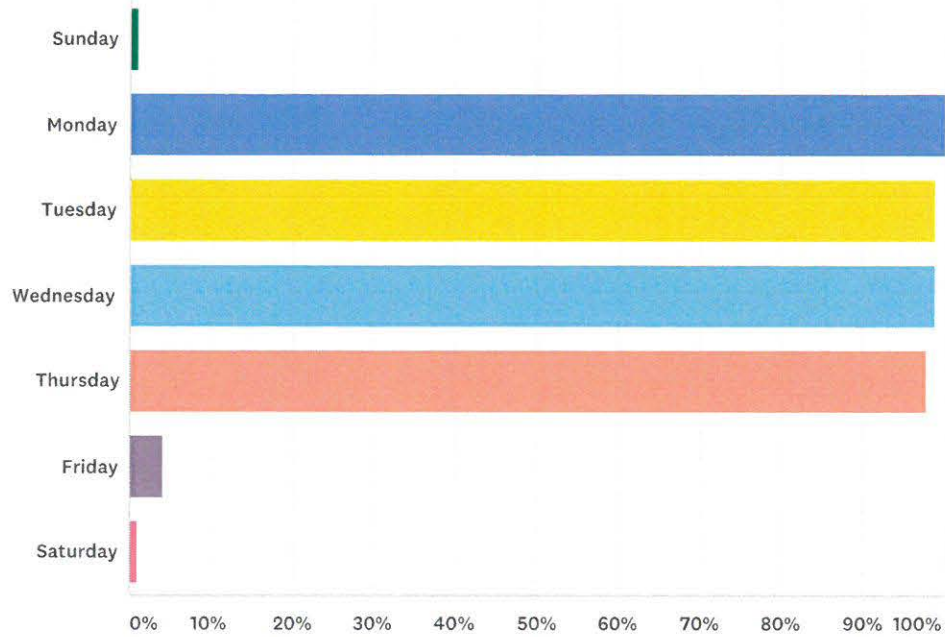


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0%	35.71%	20
1%-5%	26.79%	15
6%-10%	7.14%	4
11%-15%	8.93%	5
16%-20%	14.29%	8
21% or more	7.14%	4
TOTAL		56

Homework Survey - Teacher

Q10 Which days of the week do you assign homework?

Answered: 98 Skipped: 14

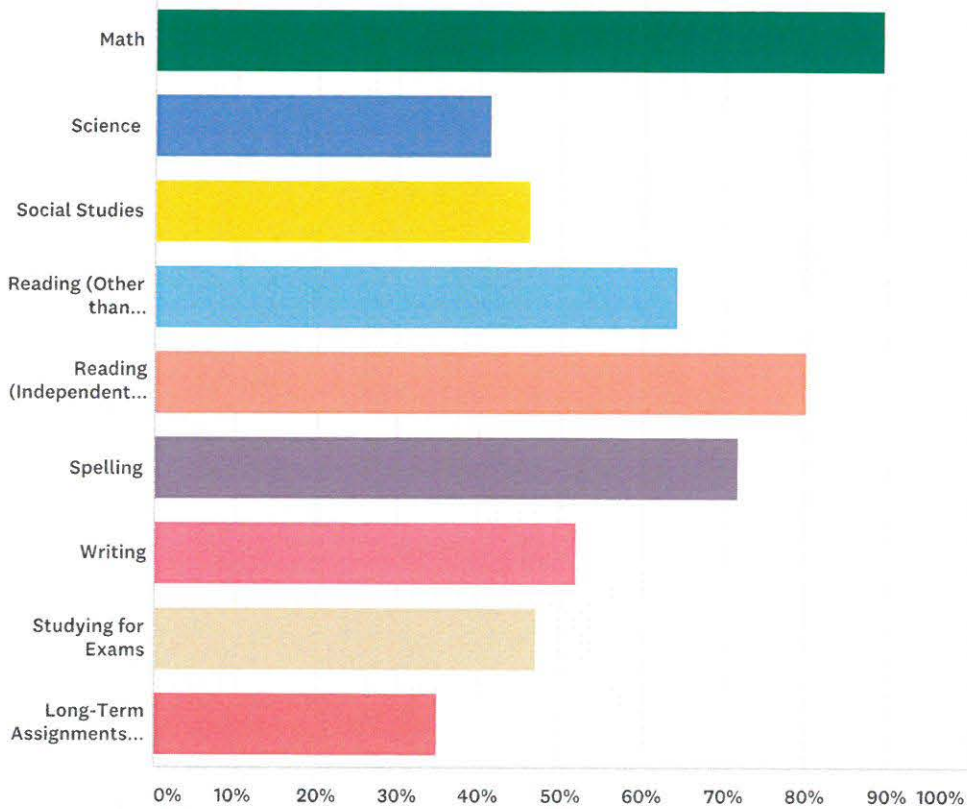


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Sunday	1.02%	1
Monday	100.00%	98
Tuesday	98.98%	97
Wednesday	98.98%	97
Thursday	97.96%	96
Friday	4.08%	4
Saturday	1.02%	1
Total Respondents: 98		

Homework Survey - Teacher

Q11 At any point during the school year, in which subject areas do you assign homework? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 106 Skipped: 6

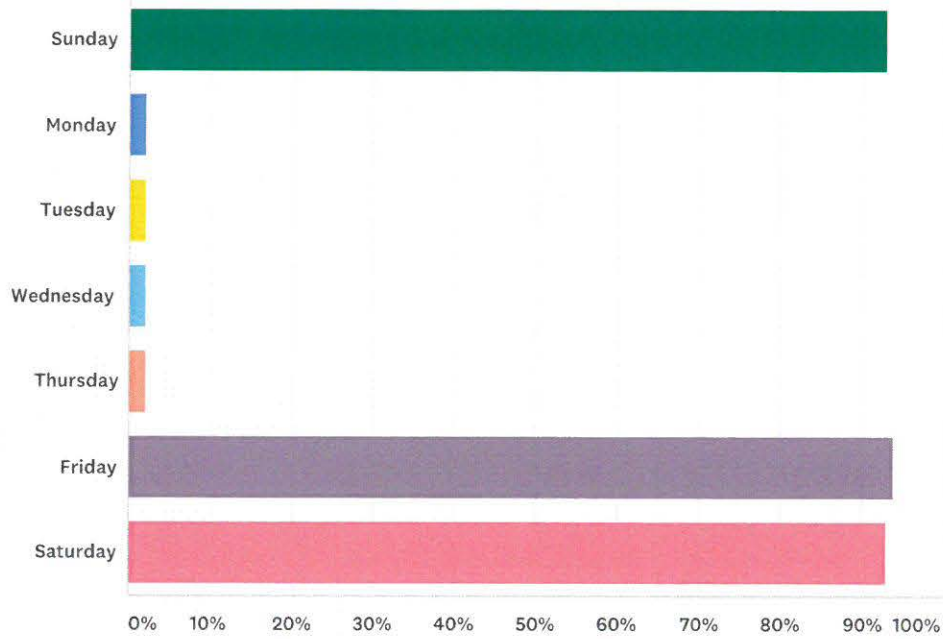


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Math	89.62%	95
Science	41.51%	44
Social Studies	46.23%	49
Reading (Other than Independent Reading)	64.15%	68
Reading (Independent Reading Only)	80.19%	85
Spelling	71.70%	76
Writing	51.89%	55
Studying for Exams	47.17%	50
Long-Term Assignments (i.e. Book Reports, Projects)	34.91%	37
Total Respondents: 106		

Homework Survey - Teacher

Q12 Which days of the week do you never assign homework?

Answered: 100 Skipped: 12

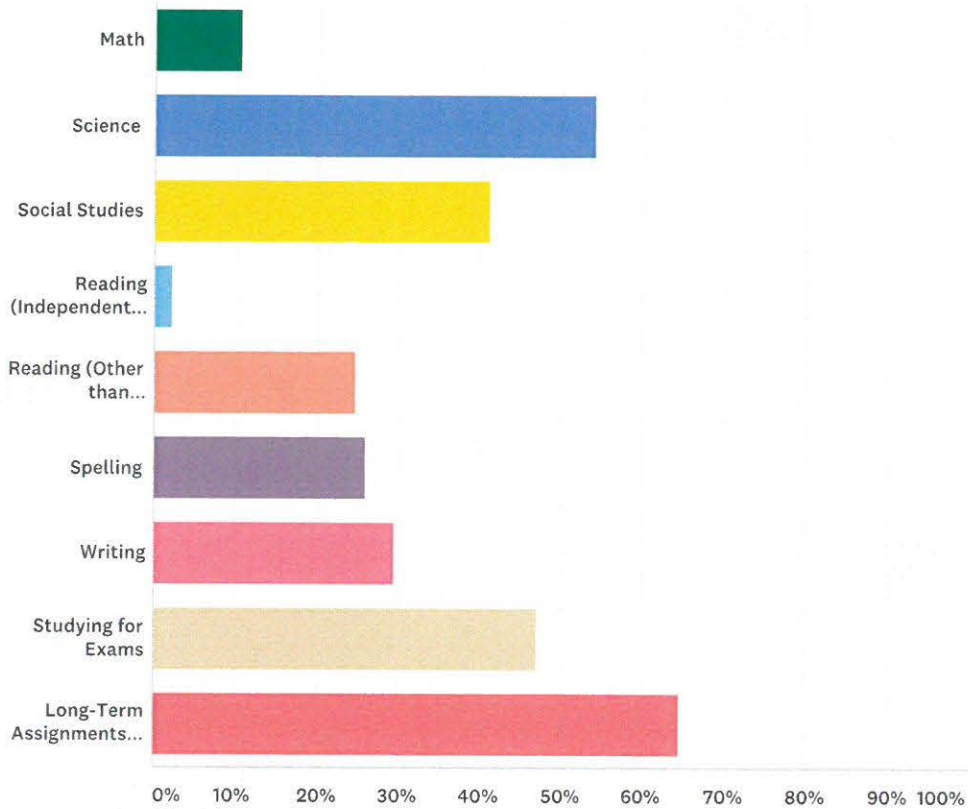


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Sunday	93.00%	93
Monday	2.00%	2
Tuesday	2.00%	2
Wednesday	2.00%	2
Thursday	2.00%	2
Friday	94.00%	94
Saturday	93.00%	93
Total Respondents: 100		

Homework Survey - Teacher

Q13 At any point during the school year, in what subject areas do you not assign homework? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 85 Skipped: 27

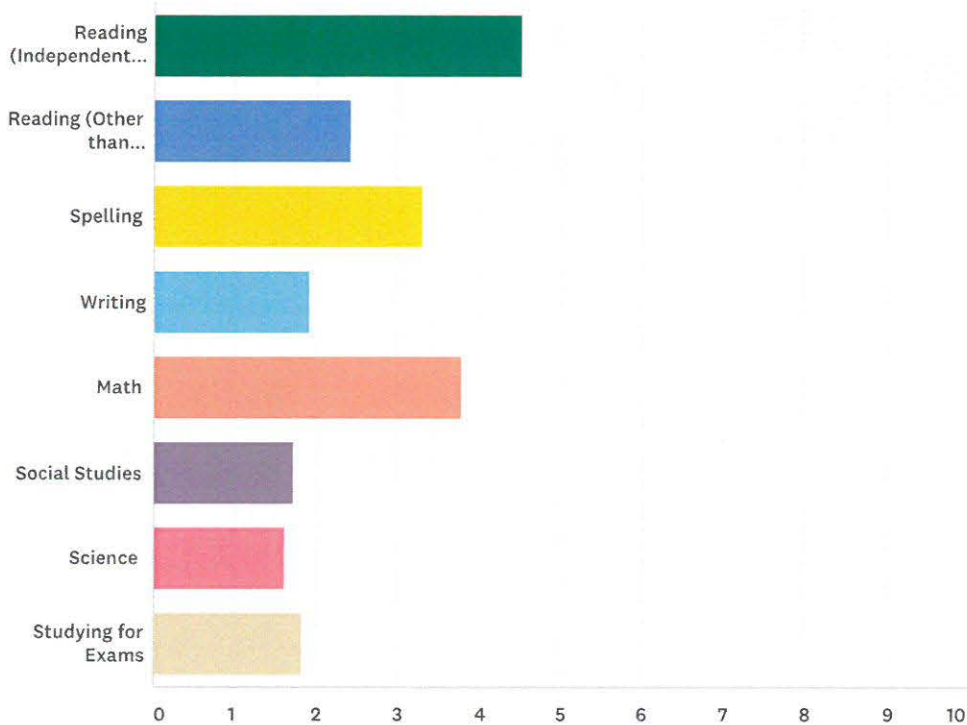


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Math	10.59%	9
Science	54.12%	46
Social Studies	41.18%	35
Reading (Independent Reading Only)	2.35%	2
Reading (Other than Independent Reading)	24.71%	21
Spelling	25.88%	22
Writing	29.41%	25
Studying for Exams	47.06%	40
Long-Term Assignments (i.e. Book Reports, Projects)	64.71%	55
Total Respondents: 85		

Homework Survey - Teacher

Q14 For each of the following subject areas, how many times per week do you assign homework?

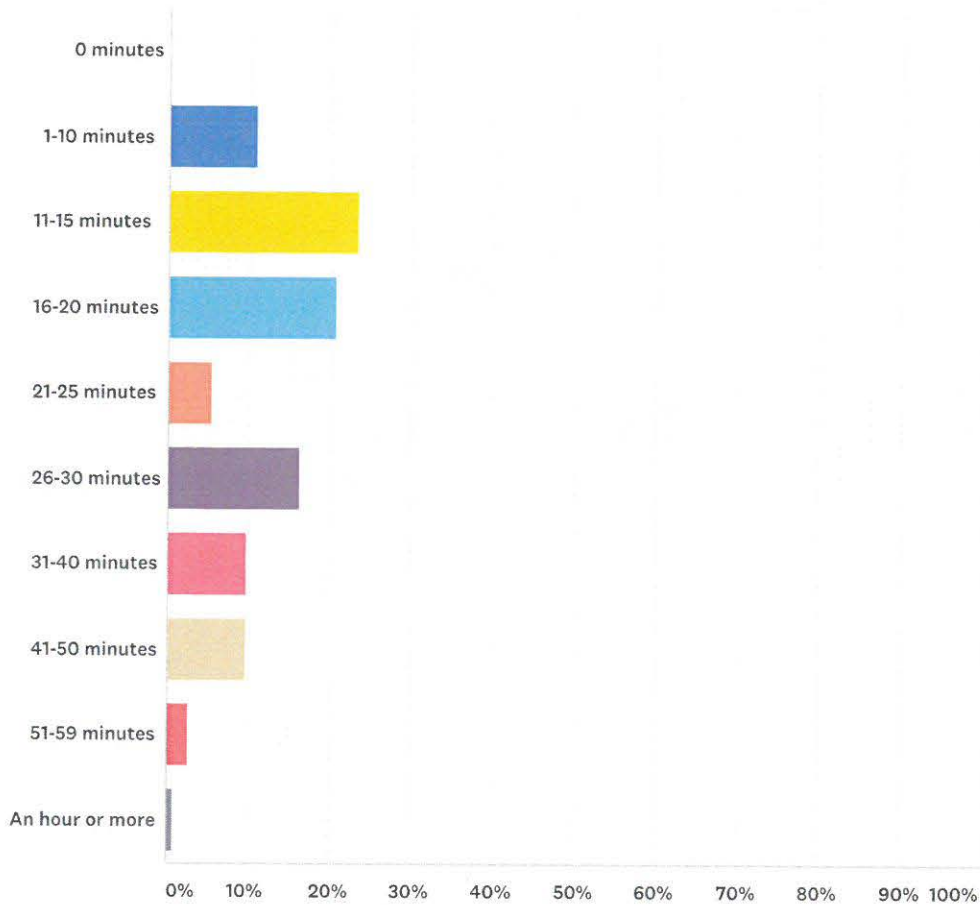
Answered: 107 Skipped: 5



	N/A	LESS THAN ONCE PER WEEK	ONCE PER WEEK	TWICE PER WEEK	THREE NIGHTS PER WEEK	FOUR NIGHTS PER WEEK	FIVE NIGHTS PER WEEK	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Reading (Independent Reading Only)	10.00% 10	1.00% 1	3.00% 3	1.00% 1	11.00% 11	58.00% 58	16.00% 16	100	4.51
Reading (Other than Independent Reading)	19.57% 18	19.57% 18	21.74% 20	23.91% 22	6.52% 6	8.70% 8	0.00% 0	92	2.43
Spelling	24.00% 24	10.00% 10	5.00% 5	7.00% 7	16.00% 16	37.00% 37	1.00% 1	100	3.30
Writing	28.89% 26	28.89% 26	25.56% 23	13.33% 12	1.11% 1	2.22% 2	0.00% 0	90	1.93
Math	11.43% 12	2.86% 3	10.48% 11	12.38% 13	11.43% 12	51.43% 54	0.00% 0	105	3.78
Social Studies	34.07% 31	46.15% 42	14.29% 13	4.40% 4	0.00% 0	1.10% 1	0.00% 0	91	1.74
Science	41.11% 37	42.22% 38	14.44% 13	1.11% 1	0.00% 0	1.11% 1	0.00% 0	90	1.63
Studying for Exams	43.02% 37	18.60% 16	23.26% 20	9.30% 8	1.16% 1	3.49% 3	1.16% 1	86	1.84

Q15 In your professional opinion, what is an appropriate amount of time, on average, for students at your grade-level should be spending on homework, written or otherwise, each night of the week?

Answered: 111 Skipped: 1



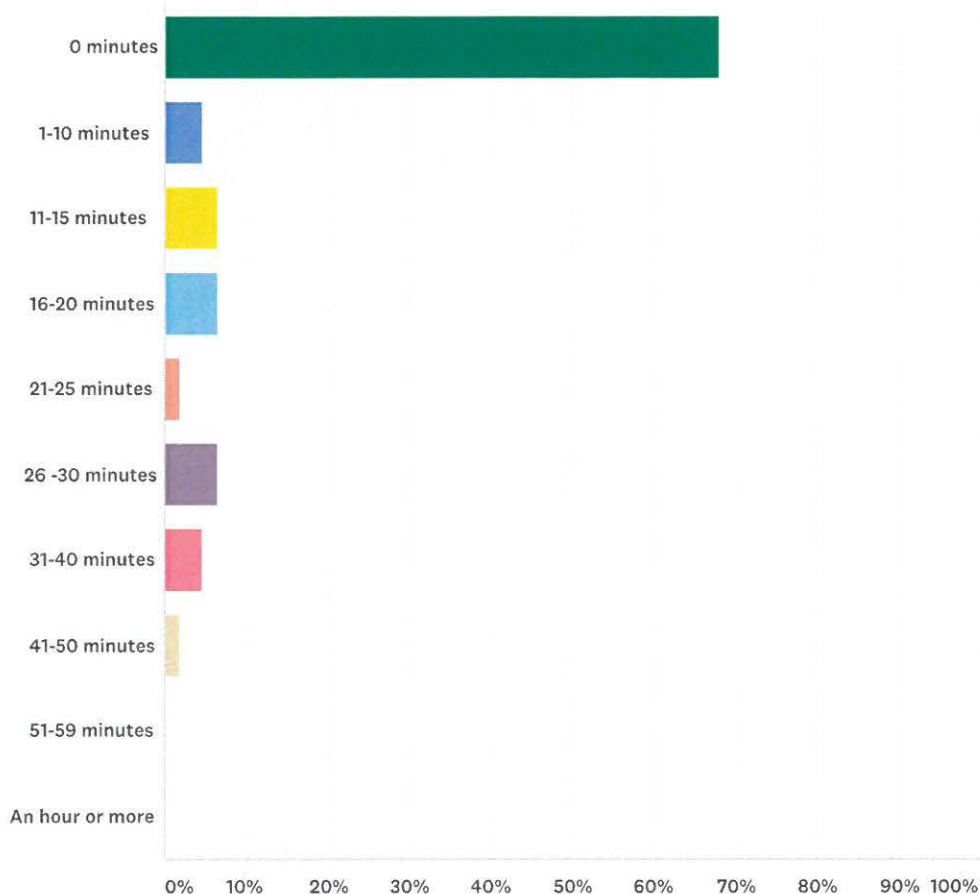
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0 minutes	0.00%	0
1-10 minutes	10.81%	12
11-15 minutes	23.42%	26
16-20 minutes	20.72%	23
21-25 minutes	5.41%	6
26-30 minutes	16.22%	18
31-40 minutes	9.91%	11
41-50 minutes	9.91%	11
51-59 minutes	2.70%	3
An hour or more	0.90%	1

TOTAL

111

Q16 In your professional opinion, what is an appropriate amount of time, on average, for students at your grade-level should be spending on homework, written or otherwise, over the weekend?

Answered: 109 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
0 minutes	67.89%	74
1-10 minutes	4.59%	5
11-15 minutes	6.42%	7
16-20 minutes	6.42%	7
21-25 minutes	1.83%	2
26-30 minutes	6.42%	7
31-40 minutes	4.59%	5
41-50 minutes	1.83%	2
51-59 minutes	0.00%	0
An hour or more	0.00%	0

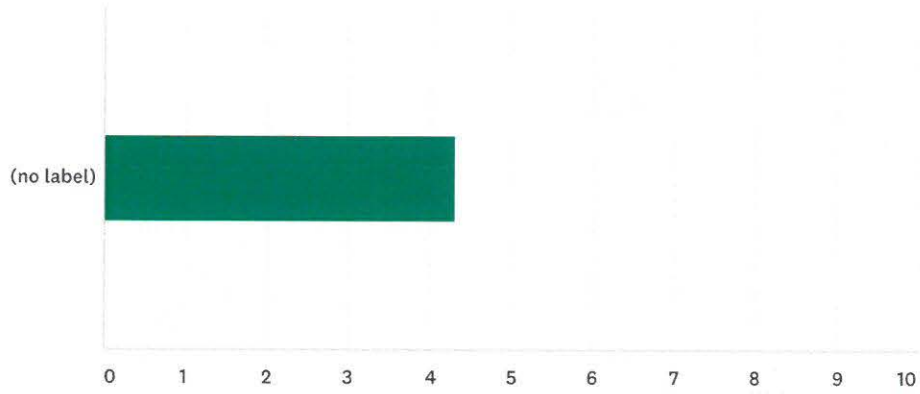
TOTAL

109

Homework Survey - Teacher

Q17 How often do your students complete their homework as you design it?

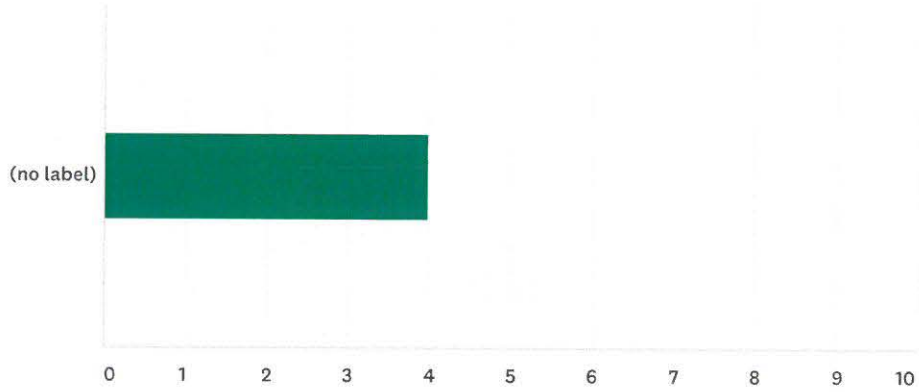
Answered: 105 Skipped: 7



	NEVER	SELDOM	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	ALWAYS	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	2.86% 3	64.76% 68	32.38% 34	105	4.30

Q18 How often do you think your students can complete the homework independently?

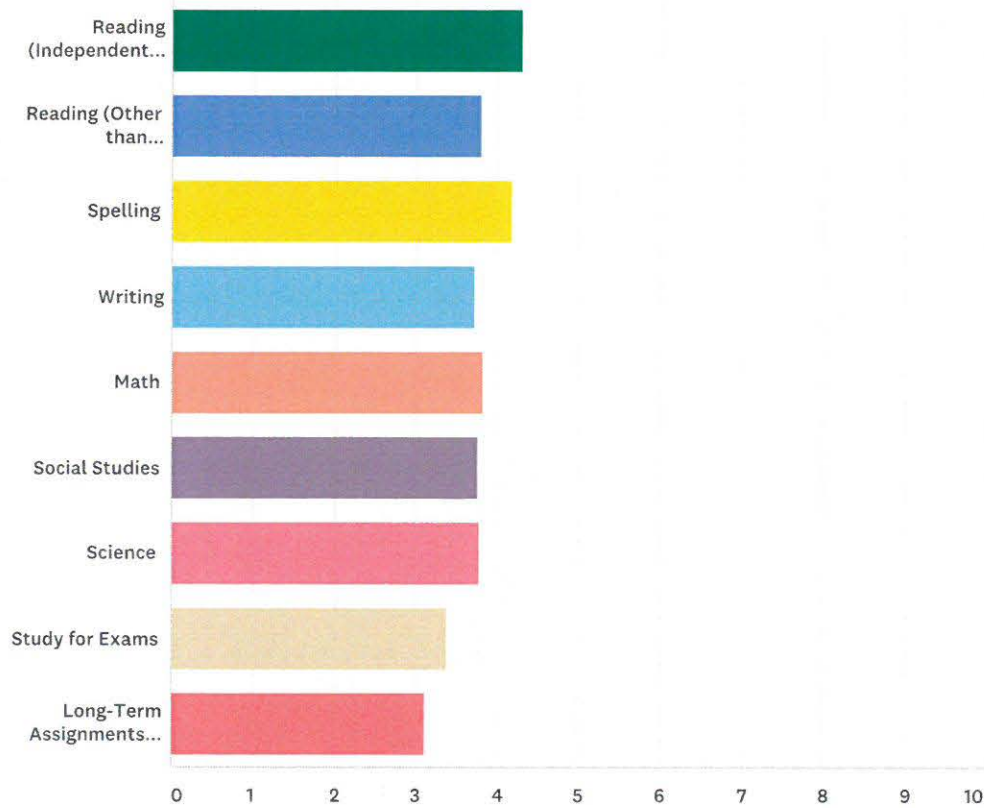
Answered: 109 Skipped: 3



	NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	ALWAYS	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	0.00% 0	1.83% 2	12.84% 14	69.72% 76	15.60% 17	109	3.99

Q19 For each of the following subject areas, to what extent would you agree with the following statement? "My students, on average, can complete the homework assigned to them independently (with NO help)."

Answered: 110 Skipped: 2



	NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	ALWAYS	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Reading (Independent Reading Only)	0.96% 1	1.92% 2	9.62% 10	39.42% 41	48.08% 50	104	4.32
Reading (Other than Independent Reading)	3.37% 3	5.62% 5	14.61% 13	59.55% 53	16.85% 15	89	3.81
Spelling	4.55% 4	0.00% 0	9.09% 8	44.32% 39	42.05% 37	88	4.19
Writing	5.88% 5	4.71% 4	20.00% 17	50.59% 43	18.82% 16	85	3.72
Math	3.00% 3	1.00% 1	18.00% 18	66.00% 66	12.00% 12	100	3.83
Social Studies	5.88% 4	5.88% 4	16.18% 11	50.00% 34	22.06% 15	68	3.76
Science	6.15% 4	4.62% 3	15.38% 10	52.31% 34	21.54% 14	65	3.78

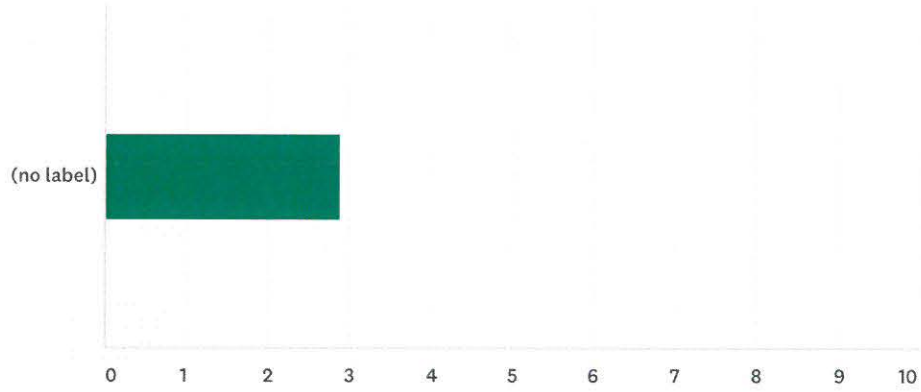
Homework Survey - Teacher

Study for Exams	7.81% 5	6.25% 4	37.50% 24	37.50% 24	10.94% 7	64	3.38
Long-Term Assignments (i.e. Book Reports, Projects)	13.79% 8	8.62% 5	36.21% 21	34.48% 20	6.90% 4	58	3.12

Homework Survey - Teacher

Q20 How often do you think your students' parents have to assist their children with their homework?

Answered: 109 Skipped: 3

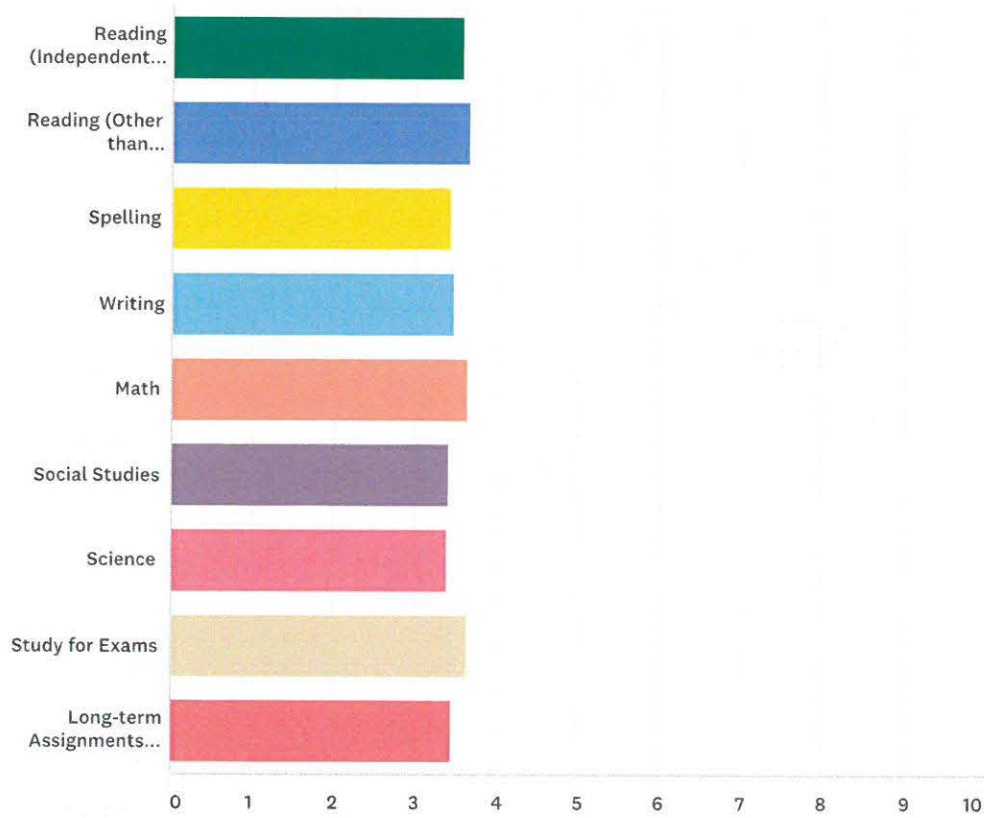


	NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	ALWAYS	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
(no label)	0.00%	28.44%	58.72%	9.17%	3.67%	109	2.88
	0	31	64	10	4		

Homework Survey - Teacher

Q21 For each of the following subject areas, to what extent would you agree with the following statement? "My students, on average, can complete the homework assigned to them with SOME help."

Answered: 102 Skipped: 10



	NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	ALWAYS	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Reading (Independent Reading Only)	12.37% 12	14.43% 14	16.49% 16	17.53% 17	39.18% 38	97	3.57
Reading (Other than Independent Reading)	4.76% 4	15.48% 13	26.19% 22	15.48% 13	38.10% 32	84	3.67
Spelling	12.66% 10	17.72% 14	18.99% 15	15.19% 12	35.44% 28	79	3.43
Writing	8.86% 7	16.46% 13	27.85% 22	12.66% 10	34.18% 27	79	3.47
Math	3.26% 3	13.04% 12	29.35% 27	23.91% 22	30.43% 28	92	3.65
Social Studies	7.81% 5	23.44% 15	23.44% 15	10.94% 7	34.38% 22	64	3.41
Science	8.06% 5	22.58% 14	25.81% 16	9.68% 6	33.87% 21	62	3.39

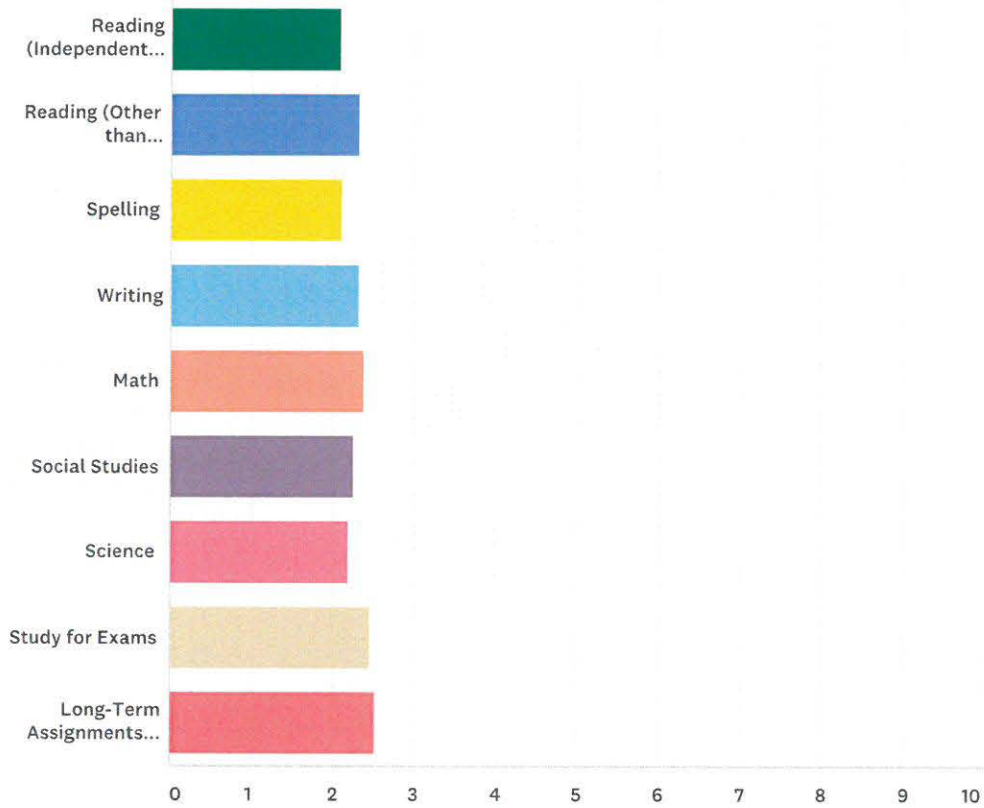
Homework Survey - Teacher

Study for Exams	5.00%	8.33%	36.67%	18.33%	31.67%		
	3	5	22	11	19	60	3.63
Long-term Assignments (i.e. book reports, projects, etc.)	8.93%	8.93%	35.71%	19.64%	26.79%		
	5	5	20	11	15	56	3.46

Homework Survey - Teacher

Q22 For each of the following subject areas, to what extent would you agree with the following statement? "My students, on average, can complete the homework assigned to them with A GREAT DEAL of help."

Answered: 96 Skipped: 16



	NEVER	RARELY	SOMETIMES	OFTEN	ALWAYS	TOTAL	WEIGHTED AVERAGE
Reading (Independent Reading Only)	52.22% 47	20.00% 18	10.00% 9	1.11% 1	16.67% 15	90	2.10
Reading (Other than Independent Reading)	39.24% 31	27.85% 22	12.66% 10	2.53% 2	17.72% 14	79	2.32
Spelling	46.75% 36	28.57% 22	6.49% 5	2.60% 2	15.58% 12	77	2.12
Writing	39.47% 30	27.63% 21	10.53% 8	5.26% 4	17.11% 13	76	2.33
Math	36.36% 32	27.27% 24	15.91% 14	3.41% 3	17.05% 15	88	2.38
Social Studies	43.75% 28	26.56% 17	7.81% 5	4.69% 3	17.19% 11	64	2.25
Science	45.90% 28	26.23% 16	6.56% 4	4.92% 3	16.39% 10	61	2.20

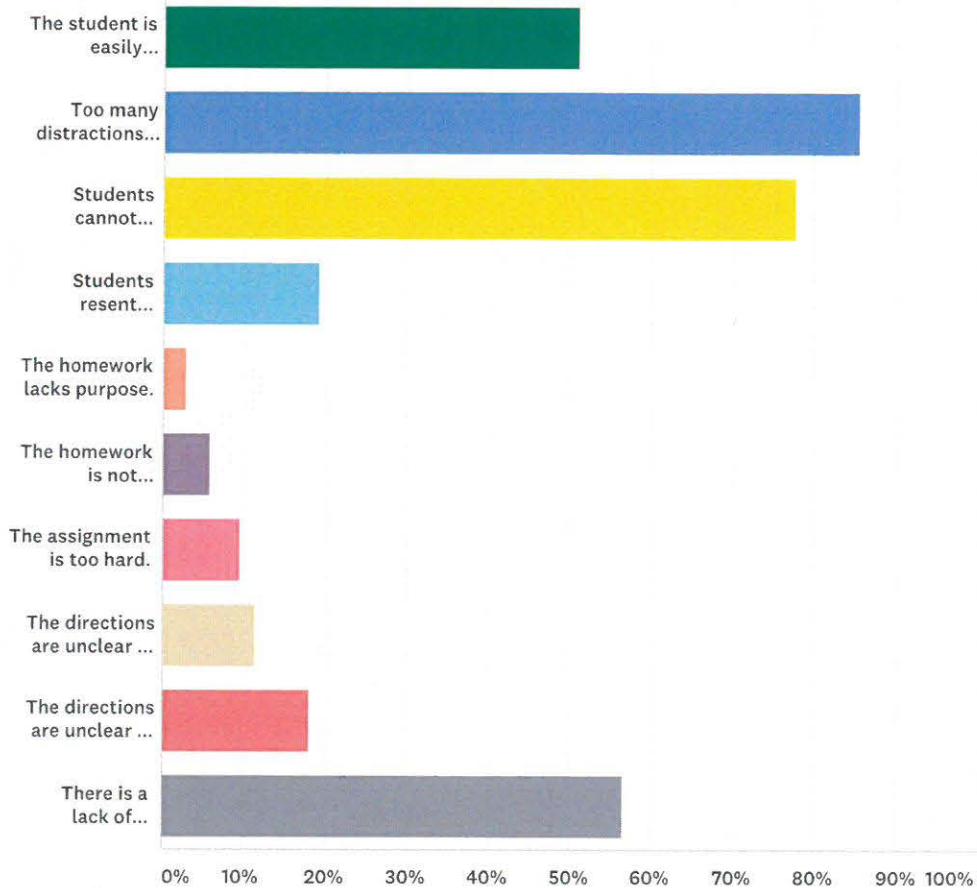
Homework Survey - Teacher

Study for Exams	40.00%	18.18%	16.36%	5.45%	20.00%		
	22	10	9	3	11	55	2.47
Long-Term Assignments (i.e. Book Reports, Projects)	40.00%	18.18%	14.55%	3.64%	23.64%		
	22	10	8	2	13	55	2.53

Homework Survey - Teacher

Q23 Why do you think some students may have difficulty completing homework independently? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 104 Skipped: 8



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
The student is easily frustrated by the homework.	50.96%	53
Too many distractions at home.	85.58%	89
Students cannot focus/too tired.	77.88%	81
Students resent homework.	19.23%	20
The homework lacks purpose.	2.88%	3
The homework is not engaging.	5.77%	6
The assignment is too hard.	9.62%	10
The directions are unclear or confusing for the student.	11.54%	12
The directions are unclear or confusing for the parent who is trying to help the student.	18.27%	19
There is a lack of homework help at home.	56.73%	59

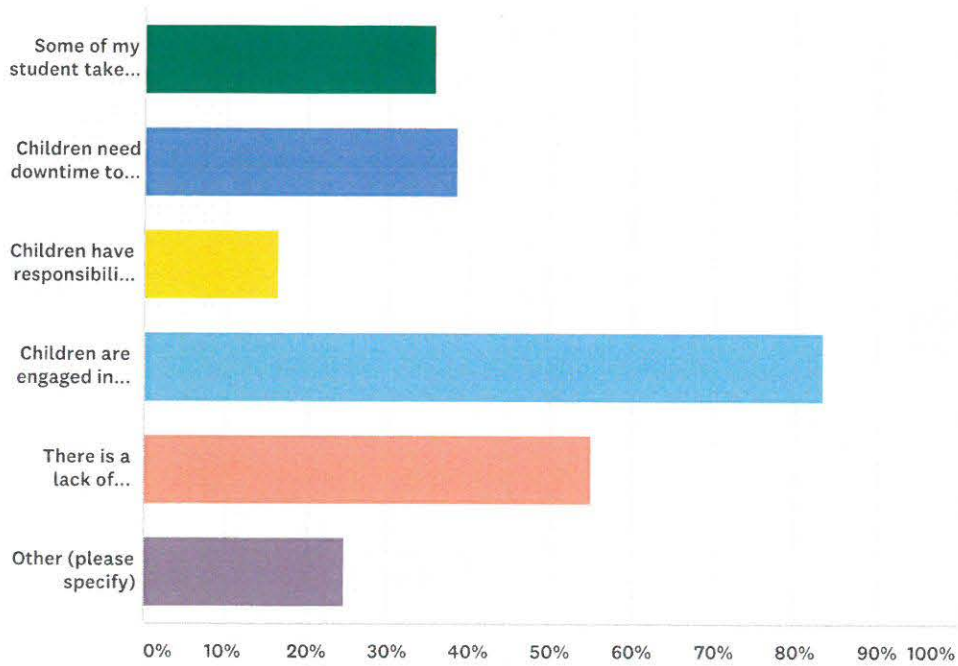
Homework Survey - Teacher

Total Respondents: 104

Homework Survey - Teacher

Q24 What special circumstances do you believe contributes to your students' inability to complete their homework? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 109 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES

RESPONSES

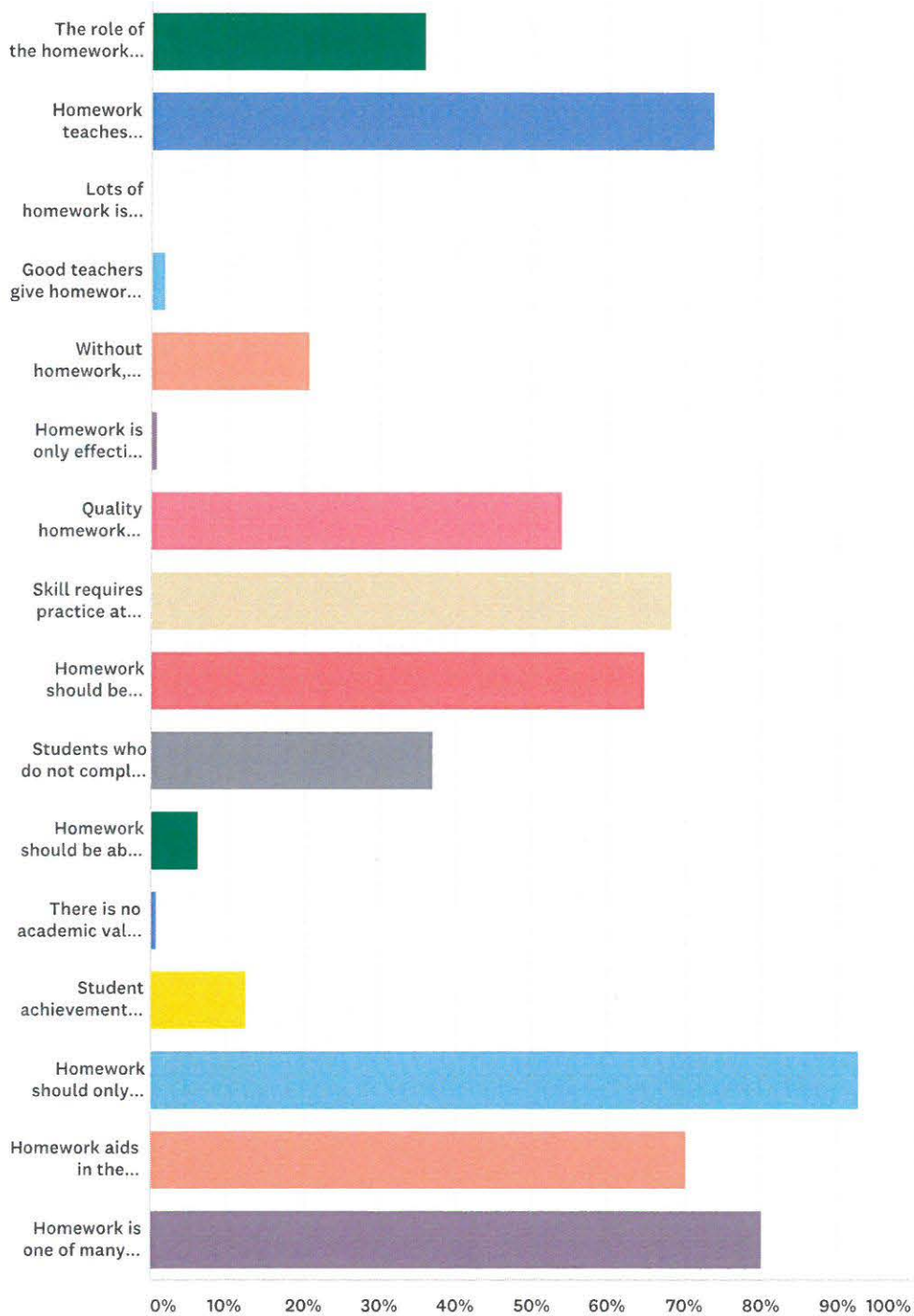
Some of my student take medication that has worn off before homework is done.	35.78%	39
Children need downtime to relax after school.	38.53%	42
Children have responsibilities at home that leave little time for homework.	16.51%	18
Children are engaged in extracurricular activities that leave little time for homework.	83.49%	91
There is a lack of homework help at home.	55.05%	60
Other (please specify)	24.77%	27

Total Respondents: 109

Homework Survey - Teacher

Q25 Which of the below reflect your professional beliefs about homework. (Check all that apply)

Answered: 111 Skipped: 1



ANSWER CHOICES

RESPONSES

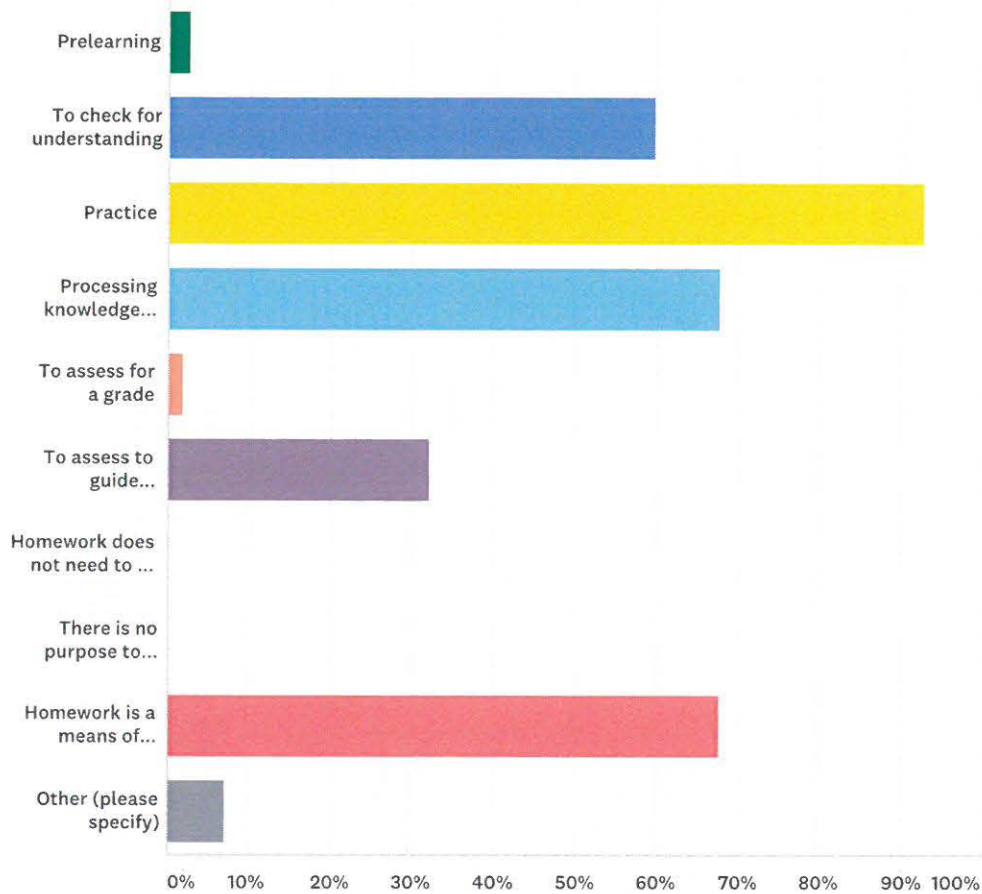
Homework Survey - Teacher

The role of the homework is to extend learning beyond the classroom.	36.04%	40
Homework teaches responsibility.	73.87%	82
Lots of homework is reflective of a rigorous curriculum.	0.00%	0
Good teachers give homework and good students do homework.	1.80%	2
Without homework, student achievement would decrease.	20.72%	23
Homework is only effective for older students.	0.90%	1
Quality homework matters.	54.05%	60
Skill requires practice at home.	68.47%	76
Homework should be differentiated to meet student where they are.	64.86%	72
Students who do not complete homework should be held accountable.	36.94%	41
Homework should be about skill and drill.	6.31%	7
There is no academic value to assigning homework.	0.90%	1
Student achievement increases when more homework is assigned.	12.61%	14
Homework should only reinforce what was taught in school, not introduce new concepts.	92.79%	103
Homework aids in the development of routine for future grade levels.	70.27%	78
Homework is one of many forms of 'Home-School' connection/communcation.	80.18%	89
Total Respondents: 111		

Homework Survey - Teacher

Q26 Which of the following align(s) with your professional beliefs about the purpose of homework? The purpose of homework is.... (Check all that apply)

Answered: 112 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Prelearning	2.68%	3
To check for understanding	59.82%	67
Practice	92.86%	104
Processing knowledge learned in class	67.86%	76
To assess for a grade	1.79%	2
To assess to guide instruction (not for a grade)	32.14%	36
Homework does not need to be purposeful	0.00%	0
There is no purpose to assigning homework	0.00%	0
Homework is a means of 'Home-School' connection/communication	67.86%	76
Other (please specify)	7.14%	8

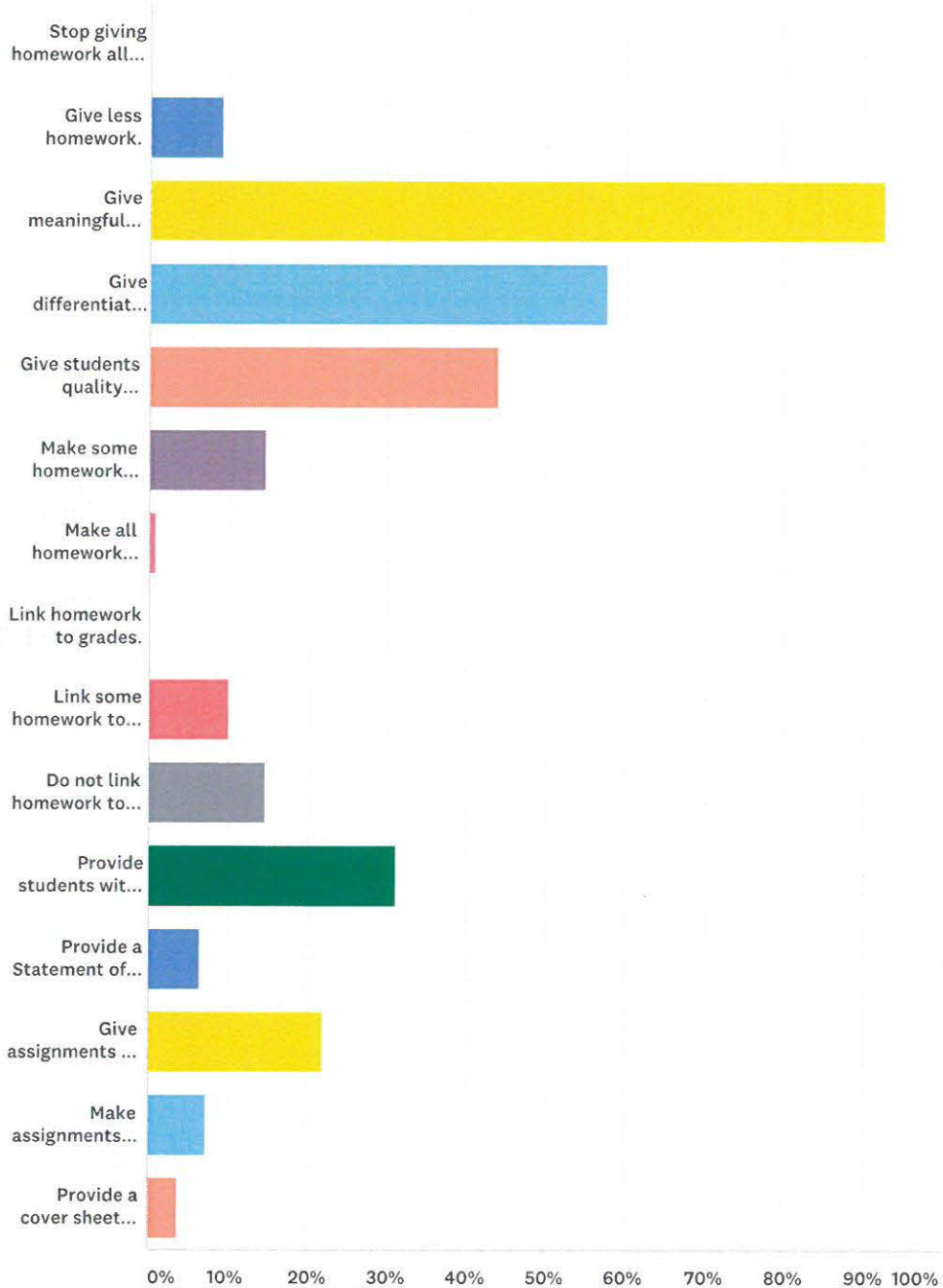
Homework Survey - Teacher

Total Respondents: 112

Homework Survey - Teacher

Q27 Which of the following do you think can enhance teaching and learning in regard to homework. (Check all that apply)

Answered: 109 Skipped: 3



ANSWER CHOICES

RESPONSES

Stop giving homework all together.	0.00%	0
Give less homework.	9.17%	10

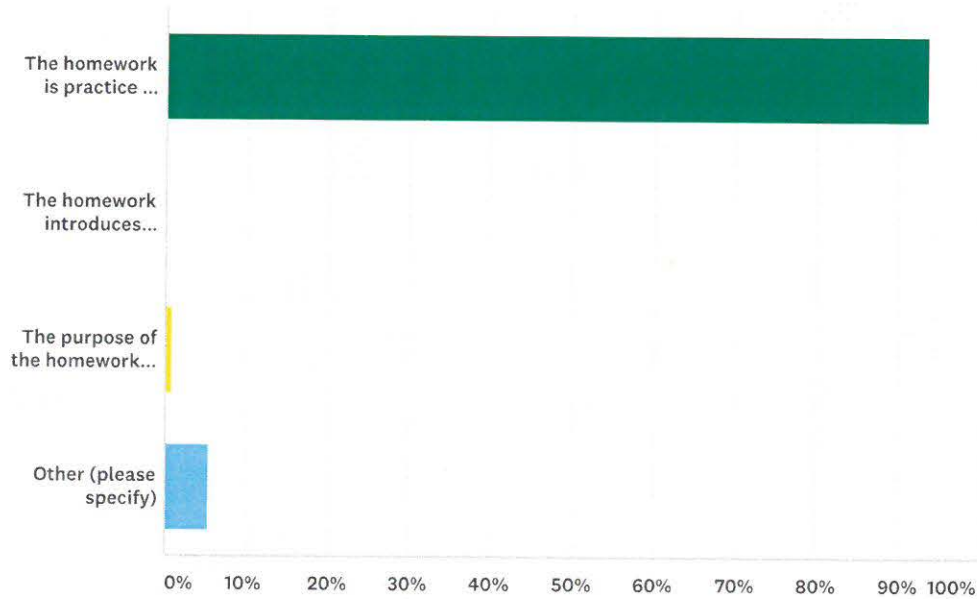
Homework Survey - Teacher

Give meaningful homework.	92.66%	101
Give differentiated homework assignments.	57.80%	63
Give students quality feedback on their homework.	44.04%	48
Make some homework optional.	14.68%	16
Make all homework optional.	0.92%	1
Link homework to grades.	0.00%	0
Link some homework to grades.	10.09%	11
Do not link homework to grades.	14.68%	16
Provide students with clearer homework instructions.	31.19%	34
Provide a Statement of Purpose on each homework assignment.	6.42%	7
Give assignments in advance of due date.	22.02%	24
Make assignments accessible from homework via the internet.	7.34%	8
Provide a cover sheet with each assignment that provides a statement of the purpose of the homework and clear instructions.	3.67%	4
Total Respondents: 109		

Homework Survey - Teacher

Q28 Which of the following do you believe reflects your students perception of homework? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 110 Skipped: 2

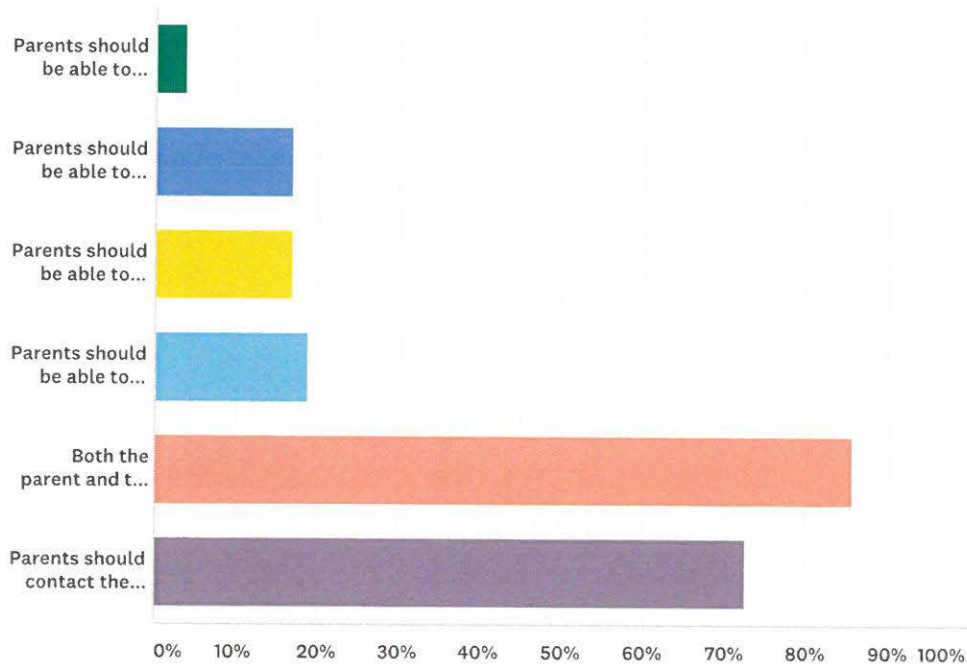


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
The homework is practice of something I learned in class that day.	93.64%	103
The homework introduces something I will learn the next day.	0.00%	0
The purpose of the homework is unclear to me	0.91%	1
Other (please specify)	5.45%	6
TOTAL		110

Homework Survey - Teacher

Q29 Please check below those that align with your professional opinion (check all that apply).

Answered: 106 Skipped: 6



ANSWER CHOICES

RESPONSES

Parents should be able to limit the amount of homework their children receive.	3.77%	4
Parents should be able to modify the amount of homework their children receive.	16.98%	18
Parents should be able to request additional homework as they see fit.	16.98%	18
Parents should be able to excuse their child from homework at their discretion without their child being penalized.	18.87%	20
Both the parent and the teacher share the responsibility of communication about homework.	85.85%	91
Parents should contact the teacher regarding homework as necessary.	72.64%	77

Total Respondents: 106

Appendix 6: Guidelines for Homework Best Practice, Grades K to 5

Guidelines for Homework Best Practice: Commack UFSD

Kindergarten-Specific Guidelines

The following *Guidelines for Homework Best Practices* have been designed by Commack educators. Classroom teachers make important instructional decisions every day. These decisions are based on the specific needs of each child and can result in individualized differentiated homework assignments that may vary from, but continue to reflect, the guidelines as necessary and appropriate.

Homework Defined

Any assignment, written or otherwise, to be completed outside the classroom.

Purpose and Benefits of Homework

The purpose of homework is the reinforcement, extension, and/or application of content and skills previously taught at school.

Homework may provide further benefits to students and their families. These may include the following:

- Providing families with insight regarding each child's learning;
- Developing responsibility and accountability;
- Fostering independent learning;
- Offering opportunities for confidence building; and
- Strengthening executive functioning skills (time management and organization).

What Does Homework Look Like For A Kindergarten Student In Commack?

- Homework reinforces concepts/skills taught in the classroom. Some homework assignments are directly related to current topics of study and some are designed as review for previously taught concepts/skills. Homework is developmentally appropriate with clear directions and well-defined expectations. Clear directions should be provided so families can provide support.
- Homework may include a continuation of classwork, for example, questions #1 through #5 were completed in class and examples #6 and #7 will be completed for homework.
- Homework takes a variety of forms and structures. Typical daily assignments for a kindergarten student in Commack may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Math

- Teacher-Selected Math Worksheets or Workbook Pages (publisher or teacher-created); and
- Math Manipulatives (i.e. counters, games, cubes, and other materials);

English Language Arts (ELA)

- Worksheet (publisher or teacher-created);
- Writing activity (i.e. draw a picture and label it, draw a picture and write a sentence to match);
- Reading (independently, to a friend or sibling, to an adult);
- Listening to an adult or other family member read; and
- Sight word practice (i.e. bingo, memory, word rings, Go Fish, etc.).

Other Content and/or Skill Areas

- Science and social studies concepts are often reinforced through ELA activities outlined above as well as activities such as the following:
 - “discussion” such as social studies, field trip, current event, science topic, video, etc.
- Social and Emotional Learning is often reinforced through ELA activities outlined above as well as activities such as the following:
 - Drawing pictures, games, discussions, etc.
- Fine motor skills and language development are often reinforced through ELA activities outlined above as well as activities such as the following:
 - Cutting, pasting, drawing, coloring and games that require students to follow directions etc.
 - Handwriting and letter formation practice.

Long-term projects are defined as an activity assigned and due back at a certain date in the future rather than the next day. Such assignments will likely require additional adult supervision and support. Such assignments should include a clearly-stated purpose and expectations for completion.

Important Notes About Kindergarten Homework

- As the year progresses, the children grow and mature. They develop more skills and gain stamina. Therefore, it is appropriate that homework may look differently in June than it does in September. Homework may change in frequency and complexity.
- Other than specifically-designed, long-term assignments, homework is intended to be completed on a daily basis and reviewed by the teacher in a timely manner.
- Although children all work at different paces, kindergarten homework is generally intended to add approximately ten to fifteen minutes of academic reinforcement outside the classroom. This means that on nights when homework is assigned, kindergarteners may spend approximately ten to fifteen minutes on daily homework assignments. This is inclusive of written assignments, activities, and/or reading. Homework may or may not be assigned every night.
- Families are encouraged to contact the teacher directly regarding any difficulties with homework (too challenging, not challenging enough, time spent on assignments, unable to complete).

Family Resources:

- Classwork (keep a completed classwork folder for reference);
- Examples provided on each homework assignment;
- Newsletter from teacher highlighting concepts/skills and/or other classroom updates; and
- ThinkCentral.com (website for Math in Focus).

Student Technology-Based Resources:

- ThinkCentral.com (website for Math in Focus); and
- RAZ-Kids (website).

Guidelines for Homework Best Practice: Commack UFSD

First Grade-Specific Guidelines

The following *Guidelines for Homework Best Practices* have been designed by Commack educators. Classroom teachers make important instructional decisions every day. These decisions are based on the specific needs of each child and can result in individualized differentiated homework assignments that may vary from, but continue to reflect, the guidelines as necessary and appropriate.

Homework Defined

Any assignment, written or otherwise, to be completed outside the classroom.

Purpose and Benefits of Homework

The purpose of homework is the reinforcement, extension, and/or application of content and skills previously taught at school.

The Commack School District recognizes that homework may provide further benefits to students and their families. These may include the following:

- Providing families with insight regarding each child's learning;
- Developing responsibility and accountability;
- Fostering independent learning;
- Offering opportunities for confidence building; and
- Strengthening executive functioning skills (time management and organization).

What Does Homework Look Like For A First Grader In Commack?

- Homework reinforces concepts/skills taught in the classroom. Some homework assignments are directly related to current concepts of study and some are designed as review for concepts/skills taught earlier in the year. Homework is developmentally appropriate with clear directions and well-defined expectations. Clear directions should be provided so families can provide support.
- Homework takes a variety of forms and structures. Typical daily assignments for a first grade student in Commack may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Math

- Math worksheet/workbook page (published or teacher created);
- Math activities with manipulatives (ex. ten frame and cubes, number bond and chips); and
- Math games (ex. card games, board games, dice games).

English Language Arts (ELA)

- ELA worksheet/workbook page (published or teacher created); and
- ELA activities (ex. games, word cards, tactile activities).

Other content and/or skill areas

- Science and social studies concepts are often reinforced through ELA activities outlined above as well as activities such as the following:
 - “data collection” such as weather watching, interviews of family members, drawing pictures and charts etc.
- Social and emotional learning is often reinforced through ELA activities outlined above as well as activities such as the following:
 - Drawing pictures, games etc.
- Fine motor skills and language development are often reinforced through ELA activities outlined above as well as activities such as the following:
 - Cutting, pasting, drawing, coloring, and games that require students to follow directions etc.

Long term projects are defined as an activity assigned and due back at a certain date in the future rather than the next day. Such assignments will likely require additional adult supervision and support. Such assignments should include a clearly stated purpose and expectations for completion.

Important Notes Regarding First Grade Homework

- As the year progresses, the children grow and mature. They develop more skills and gain stamina. Therefore, it is appropriate that homework may look different in June than it does in September. Homework may change in frequency and complexity.
- Other than specifically-designed, long-term assignments, homework is intended to be completed on a daily basis and reviewed by the teacher in a timely manner.
- Although children all work at different paces, first grade homework is generally intended to add approximately fifteen to twenty minutes of academic reinforcement outside the classroom. This means that on nights when homework is assigned, first graders may spend approximately fifteen to twenty minutes on daily homework assignments. This is inclusive of written assignments, activities, and/or reading. Homework may or may not be assigned every night.
- Parents are strongly encouraged to contact teachers if first graders are consistently spending less than ten minutes or more than twenty minutes on daily homework.

Family Resources:

- ThinkCentral.com (website for *Math in Focus*);
- Weekly spelling words; and
- Newsletter from teacher highlighting concepts/skills and/or other classroom updates.

Student Technology-Based Resources:

- ThinkCentral.com (website for Math in Focus);
- XtraMath.com (website to provide math practice activities); and
- RAZ-Kids (website).

Guidelines for Homework Best Practice: Commack UFSD

Second Grade-Specific Guidelines

The following *Guidelines for Homework Best Practices* have been designed by Commack educators. Classroom teachers make important instructional decisions every day. These decisions are based on the specific needs of each child and can result in individualized differentiated homework assignments that may vary from, but continue to reflect, the guidelines as necessary and appropriate.

Homework Defined

Any assignment, written or otherwise, to be completed outside the classroom.

Purpose and Benefits of Homework

The purpose of homework is the reinforcement, extension, and/or application of content and skills previously taught at school.

The Commack School District recognizes that homework may provide further benefits to students and their families. These may include the following:

- Providing families with insight regarding each child's learning;
- Developing responsibility and accountability;
- Fostering independent learning;
- Offering opportunities for confidence building; and
- Strengthening executive functioning skills (time management and organization).

What Does Homework Look Like For A Second Grader In Commack?

- Homework reinforces concepts/skills taught in the classroom. Some homework assignments are directly related to current concepts of study and some are designed as review for topics/skills taught earlier in the year. It is developmentally-appropriate with clear directions and well-defined expectations. Clear directions should be provided so students have the ability to complete homework assignments with minimal assistance.
- Homework takes a variety of forms and structures. Typical daily assignments for a second grade student in Commack may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Math

- Math worksheet/workbook page (published or teacher created); and
- Math Activities with manipulatives (place value chart, ones /tens blocks, rulers, dice, money, clocks).

English Language Arts (ELA)

- English Language Arts worksheet/workbook pages (published or teacher created);

- Spelling flash cards, coupons, notebook work, activities; and
- Other content areas such as science, social studies, and social-emotional learning are often reinforced through ELA activities.

Long-term projects as defined as an activity assigned and due back at a certain date in the future that may require adult supervision and support. The project will have a clear stated purpose and expectations.

Important Notes About Second Grade Homework

- As the year progresses, the children grow and mature. They develop more skills and gain stamina. Therefore, it is appropriate that homework may look different in June than it does in September. Homework may change in frequency and complexity.
- Other than specifically-designed, long-term assignments, homework is intended to be completed on a daily basis and reviewed in a timely manner.
- Although children all work at different paces, second grade homework is generally intended to add approximately twenty to twenty-five minutes of academic reinforcement outside the classroom. This means that on nights when homework is assigned, second graders may spend approximately twenty to twenty-five minutes on daily homework assignments. This is inclusive of written assignments, activities, and/or reading. Homework may or may not be assigned every night.
- Parents are strongly encouraged to contact the teacher if second graders are consistently spending more than twenty-five minutes on daily homework.

Family Resources

- ThinkCentral.com (website); and
- Math workbook.

Student Technology-Based Resources

- XtraMath.com (website); and
- Reading A-Z (website).

Guidelines for Homework Best-Practice: Commack UFSD

Third Grade-Specific Guidelines

The following *Guidelines for Homework Best Practices* have been designed by Commack educators. Classroom teachers make important instructional decisions every day. These decisions are based on the specific needs of each child and can result in individualized differentiated homework assignments that may vary from, but continue to reflect, the guidelines as necessary and appropriate.

Homework Defined

Any assignment, written or otherwise, to be completed outside the classroom.

Purpose and Benefits of Homework

As defined by the Commack School District, the purpose of homework is the reinforcement, extension, and/or application of content and skills previously taught at school.

The Commack School District recognizes that homework may provide further benefits to students and their families. These may include the following:

- Providing families with insight regarding each child's learning;
- Developing responsibility and accountability;
- Fostering independent learning;
- Offering opportunities for confidence building; and
- Strengthening executive functioning skills (time management and organization).

What Does Homework Look Like For A Third Grader In Commack?

Homework for third grade students should be a developmentally-appropriate extension of concepts and skills taught in the classroom. Clear directions should be provided so students have the ability to complete homework assignments independently or with minimal assistance. Homework will be reviewed in a timely manner.

Homework takes a variety of forms and structures. Typical daily assignments for a third grade student in Commack may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Math

- Workbook pages;
- Worksheets (teacher-made or published);
- Fact fluency practice;
- Math games/hands-on activities;
- Studying for tests or quizzes; and
- Review sheets.

English Language Arts (ELA)

- Independent reading (with or without extension activities);
- Reading response or log;
- Reading comprehension worksheets (teacher made or published);
- Spelling/grammar practice (workbook, worksheets, notebook); and
- Studying for test or quizzes.

Social Studies or Science:

- Vocabulary activities;
- Studying for test or quizzes;
- Reading in the content area (published or teacher-made worksheets); and
- Review sheets.

Long-term projects are defined as an activity assigned and due back at a certain date in the future rather than the next day. Such assignments will likely require additional adult supervision and support. Such assignments should include a clearly stated purpose and expectations for completion.

Important Notes Regarding Third Grade Homework

- As the year progresses the children grow and mature. They develop more skills and gain stamina. Therefore, it is appropriate that homework may look different in June than it does in September. Homework may change in frequency and complexity.
- Other than specifically-designed, long-term assignments, homework is intended to be completed on a daily basis and reviewed in a timely manner.
- Although children all work at different paces, third grade homework is generally intended to add approximately thirty to thirty-five minutes of academic reinforcement outside the classroom. This means that on nights when homework is assigned, third graders may spend approximately thirty to thirty-five minutes on daily homework assignments. This is inclusive of written assignments, activities, and/or reading. Homework may or may not be assigned every night.
- Families are encouraged to contact the teacher directly regarding any difficulties with homework (too challenging, not challenging enough, time spent on assignments, unable to complete).

Family Resources

- ThinkCentral.com (website for *Math in Focus*);
- Samples of completed classwork; and
- Workbook.

Student Resources for Skill Reinforcement

- XtraMath.com (fluency math practice); and
- Reading A-Z (website).

Guidelines for Homework Best Practice: Commack UFSD

Fourth Grade-Specific Guidelines

The following *Guidelines for Homework Best Practices* have been designed by Commack educators. Classroom teachers make important instructional decisions every day. These decisions are based on the specific needs of each child and can result in individualized differentiated homework assignments that may vary from, but continue to reflect, the guidelines as necessary and appropriate.

Homework Defined

Any assignment, written or otherwise, to be completed outside the classroom.

Purpose and Benefits of Homework

As defined by the Commack School District, the purpose of homework is the reinforcement, extension, and/or application of content and skills previously taught at school.

The Commack School District recognizes that homework may provide further benefits to students and their families. These may include the following:

- Providing families with insight regarding each child's learning;
- Developing responsibility and accountability;
- Fostering independent learning;
- Offering opportunities for confidence building; and
- Strengthening executive functioning skills (time management and organization).

What Does Homework Look Like For A Fourth Grader In Commack?

Homework for fourth grade reinforces the classroom learning. Homework is a developmentally-appropriate application and extension of the concepts and skills taught in the classroom. Clear directions and well-defined expectations are provided so students have the ability to complete assignments independently or with minimal assistance. Homework will be reviewed in a timely manner.

Homework takes a variety of forms and structures. Typical daily assignments for a fourth grade student in Commack may include, but are not limited to, the following:

Math

- Worksheets (teacher-created, publisher-provided worksheets, review sheets);
- Workbook/textbook pages (reteach, extra practice, enrichment);
- Math journal;
- Hands-on activities;

- Review activities (studying math facts, studying for tests, etc.); and
- Computer games, such as XtraMath.com, ThinkCentral.com.

English Language Arts

- Spelling/Vocabulary (workbook pages, teacher created materials, choice boards and studying for tests);
- Grammar (teacher-created worksheets, publisher provided worksheets, studying for tests);
- Reading (comprehension activities, reading independently with or without an extension activity); and
- Writing (brainstorming, editing and revision activities).

Science

- Vocabulary activities;
- Lab extension;
- Review sheets; and
- Studying for tests.

Social Studies

- Vocabulary activities;
- Pre-read and read content area materials;
- Skill building activities- reading maps, extension of ELA skills;
- Workbook pages;
- Worksheets (teacher created, publisher provided, document-based questions);
- Review sheets; and
- Studying for tests.

Long-term projects are defined as an activity assigned and due back at a certain date in the future rather than the next day. Such assignments will likely require additional adult supervision and support. Such assignments should include a clearly-stated purpose and expectations for completion.

Important Notes Regarding Fourth Grade Homework

- As the year progresses, the children grow and mature. They develop more skills and gain stamina. Therefore, it is appropriate that homework may look differently in June than it does in September. Homework may change in frequency and complexity.
- Other than specifically-designed, long-term assignments, homework is intended to be completed on a daily basis and reviewed in a timely manner.
- Although children all work at different paces, fourth grade homework is generally intended to add approximately forty-five minutes of academic reinforcement outside the classroom. This means that on nights when homework is assigned, fourth graders may spend approximately forty-five minutes on daily homework assignments. This is

inclusive of written assignments, activities, and/or reading. Homework may or may not be assigned every night.

- Parents are encouraged to contact the teacher (via email, in the agenda planner, or write on the assignment itself) directly if the homework assignment is too challenging, time consuming and/or should they have any questions regarding homework assignment.

Family Resources

- ThinkCentral.com (website for *Math in Focus*);
- Samples of completed classwork; and
- Workbook.

Student Resources for Skill Reinforcement

- XtraMath.com (fluency math practice); and
- Reading A-Z (website).

Guidelines for Homework Best Practice: Commack UFSD

Fifth Grade-Specific Guidelines

The following *Guidelines for Homework Best Practices* have been designed by Commack educators. Classroom teachers make important instructional decisions every day. These decisions are based on the specific needs of each child and can result in individualized differentiated homework assignments that may vary from, but continue to reflect, the guidelines as necessary and appropriate.

Homework Defined

Any assignment, written or otherwise, to be completed outside the classroom.

Purpose and Benefits of Homework

As defined by the Commack School District, the purpose of homework is the reinforcement, extension, and/or application of content and skills previously taught at school.

The Commack School District recognizes that homework may provide further benefits to students and their families. These may include the following:

- Providing families with insight regarding each child's learning;
- Developing responsibility and accountability;
- Fostering independent learning;
- Offering opportunities for confidence building; and
- Strengthening executive functioning skills (time management and organization).

What Does Homework Look Like For A Fifth Grader In Commack?

Homework for fifth grade reinforces the classroom learning. Homework is a developmentally-appropriate application and extension of the concepts and skills taught in the classroom. Clear directions and well-defined expectations are provided so students have the ability to complete assignments independently or with minimal assistance. Homework will be reviewed in a timely manner.

Homework takes a variety of forms and structures. Typical daily assignments for a fifth grade student in Commack may include, but are not limited to, the following:

English Language Arts (ELA)

- Independent reading with or without extension;
- Reading comprehension/skill practice activities;
- Vocabulary building (worksheets, etc.);
- Spelling activities/workbook;
- Grammar activities (worksheets, etc.); and

- Writer’s Workshop process (brainstorming, drafting, revising, editing).

Math

- Worksheets/workbook (published or teacher-created);
- Journals;
- Games;
- Online activities;
- Review sheets; and
- Studying for tests and quizzes.

Social Studies/Science

- Content-area reading;
- Content-area writing;
- Content-area worksheets;
- Data collection;
- Review sheets; and
- Studying for tests and quizzes.

Long-term projects are defined as an activity assigned and due back at a certain date in the future rather than the next day. Such assignments will likely require additional adult supervision and support. Such assignments should include a clearly-stated purpose and expectations for completion.

Important Notes Regarding Fifth Grade Homework

- As the year progresses, the children grow and mature. They develop more skills and gain stamina. Therefore, it is appropriate that homework may look different in June than it does in September. Homework may change in frequency and complexity.
- Other than specifically-designed, long-term assignments, homework is intended to be completed on a daily basis and reviewed in a timely manner.
- Although children all work at different paces, fifth grade homework is generally intended to add approximately fifty minutes of academic reinforcement outside the classroom. This means that on nights when homework is assigned, fifth graders may spend approximately fifty minutes on daily homework assignments. This is inclusive of written assignments, activities, and/or reading. Homework may or may not be assigned every night.
- Parents are encouraged to contact the teacher directly if their child is consistently struggling or consistently exceeding fifty minutes.

Family Resources

- ThinkCentral.com (website for *Math in Focus*);
- Samples of completed classwork;
- Workbook;

- Textbook;
- Trueflix; and
- Destiny Library Catalog from Home.

Student Resources for Skill Reinforcement

- XtraMath.com (fluency math practice); and
- Reading A-Z (website).

Appendix 7: Board of Education Public Workshop Presentation – Elementary Homework

Practices and Effects of Homework in the Commack Elementary Schools

Presented to the Board of Education at the
Board of Education Public Workshop
November 15, 2017

Agenda

A Comprehensive Review of Elementary Homework

(As part of the 7-Year Review process started during previous years)

Introduction,
Background,
and Rationale

Key
Questions

Data
Collection
and Analysis

Key Findings

Review of the
Research

Data
Validation

Outcomes

Board of Education Goals

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

BOE Goal: Continue to support a curriculum that is developmentally-appropriate to allow for each student to accomplish their individual goals and become prepared with the skills to achieve at their next level of learning.

Supt. Goal: Provide the instructional leadership, resources, and structures to support a developmentally-appropriate curriculum that is the focus of ongoing review for efficacy to allow for each student to achieve their next level of learning.

BOE Goal: Continue to provide for an education in which all students learn social, emotional, academic, and physical competencies.

Supt. Goal: Provide the instructional leadership, resources, and structures to support a developmentally-appropriate curriculum that is the focus of ongoing review for efficacy to allow for each student to achieve their next level of learning.

Board of Education Goals

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

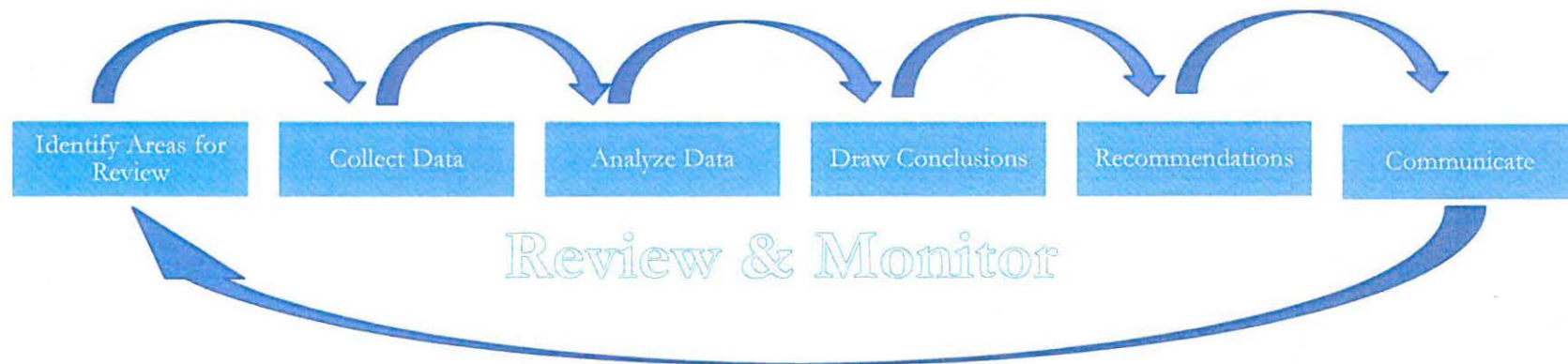
BOE Goal: Ensure that students have the access and the opportunity to engage in diverse curricular and extracurricular opportunities.

Supt. Goal: Engage students and staff in conversation and review of data regarding curricular and extracurricular opportunities to ensure efficacy and interest.

BOE Goal: Provide for continuous and diverse professional development opportunities for staff that will translate to enhanced teaching and learning.

Supt. Goal: Engage in a review of professional development to ensure efficacy and translation into enhanced teaching and learning.

A Comprehensive Review of Elementary Homework: Introduction and 7-Year Review Methodology



A Comprehensive Review of Elementary Homework: Three Key Questions

How is homework defined?

What is the purpose/benefit of homework?

What are the best practices for designing effective homework?



Data Collection

Parent Focus Groups

- How does homework effect the home life?
 - At least 6 Parent Focus Groups
 - More than 135 Parents

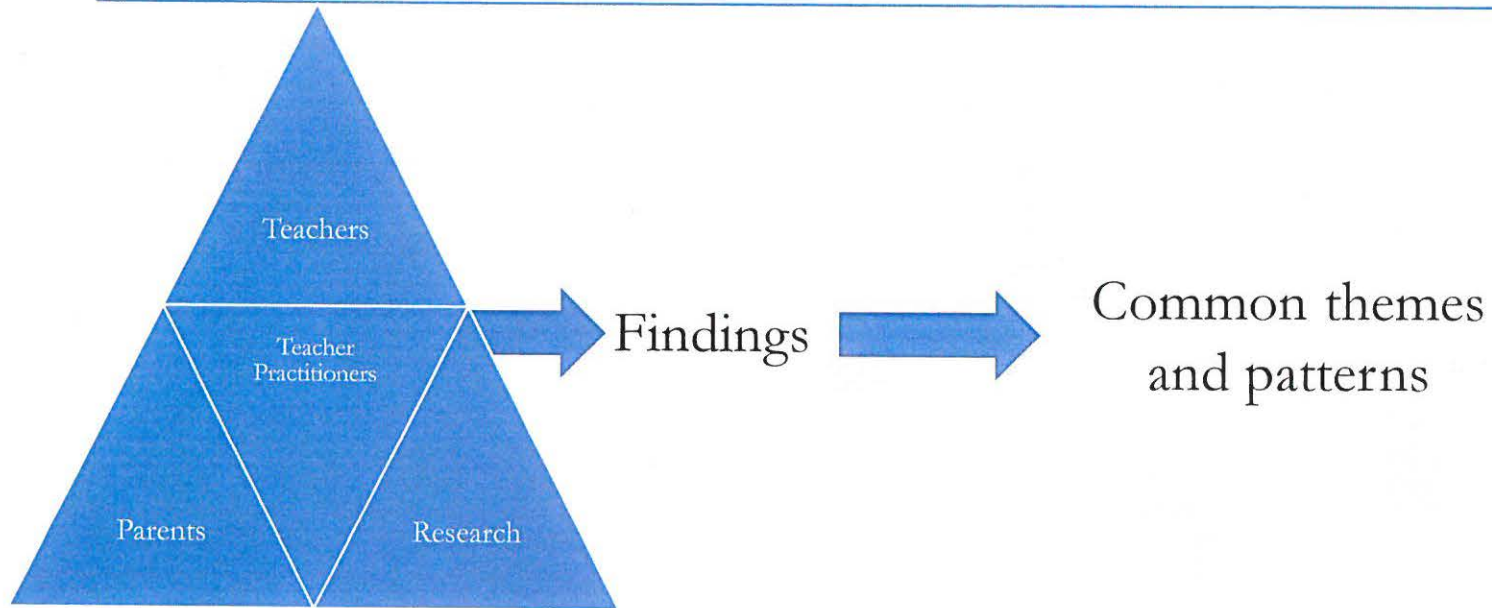
Teacher Connector Group

- Validation of staff survey
- Analysis of building- level survey data
- Collection of anecdotal teacher data
- Review of literature
- Development of grade-specific homework guidelines

Practitioner Group

- Data analysis of Parent Focus Group data and teacher survey and anecdotal data

Data Analysis



Key Findings: Parent Focus Groups

How does homework effect your family life?

Parents most asked for clarification on the following homework topics:

Definition of homework

Meaning of “student independence” at each grade-level

Alignment of homework assignments from class-to-class or school-to-school

Purpose/meaning of homework

Role of the parent, student, and teacher

Balance between homework and family/extracurricular time

Differentiated homework to meet each child where he/she is

Meaningful homework feedback

Key Findings: Parent Focus Groups

How does homework effect your family life?

Parents perceived the following as benefits of homework:

Homework provides a
Home-to-School
Connection
*("a window into my child's
learning")*

Homework provides
opportunities to develop
executive functioning skills
such as time management
and organization

Homework develops
responsibility and good
work habits

Homework provides
opportunities to foster
self-confidence

Key Findings: Teacher Connector Group and Staff Survey

Majority of teachers reported the following:

Purpose of homework is reinforcement (92%)

Math is the most commonly assigned homework with Reading and Spelling following

Homework is assigned Monday through Thursday

Most students are able to complete homework “independently”

Over-scheduling and fatigue are the main challenges for students relative to the successful completion of homework

Key Findings: Teacher Connector Group and Staff Survey

Majority of teachers reported the following regarding homework best-practices:

- Three most important factors in enhancing the effectiveness of homework:
 - must be meaningful (93%);
 - should be differentiated based on the needs of individual students (58%); and,
 - meaningful and timely feedback is essential (44%).
- Parents and teachers share the responsibility for communicating about homework (86%).
- Parents should contact teachers with concerns and questions about homework (73%).

Our Review of the Research

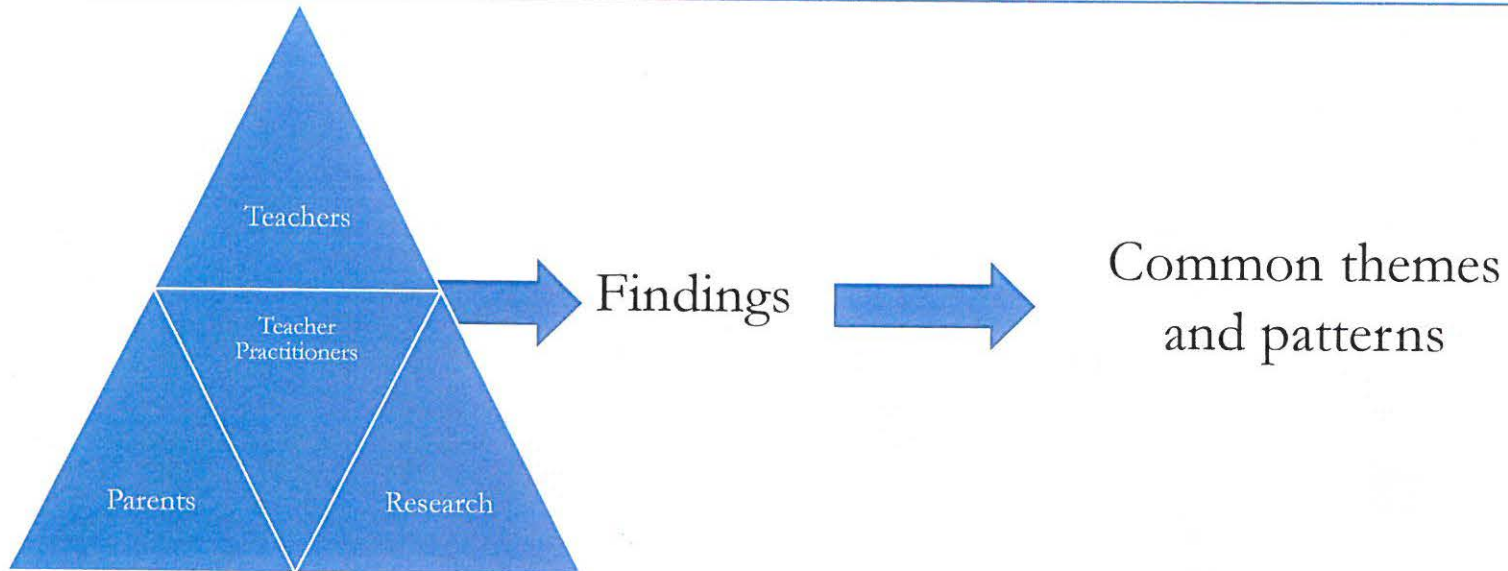
- Our research included over 25 scholarly, peer-reviewed articles and professional sources and were treated as the primary sources for best-practice.
- Common sources such as *Time Magazine* and other popular publications were consulted.

C. Vatterott, Author	H. Cooper, Prominent Researcher	Theory Into Practice (Journal)	Universal Journal of Educational Research
ASCD Express	Educational Leadership	International Journal for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning	Educational Psychologist (Journal)
	Review of Educational Research (Journal)	...and more.	

Our Review of the Research

- Our review of the literature was focused on three key questions:
 - (1) How is homework defined ?
 - (2) What is the purpose and/or benefits of homework ?
 - (3) What are the research-based best practices for designing effective homework?
- A wide-variety of scholarly research including books, journal articles, and web-based articles have provided an overabundance of information regarding these topics. ***Some researchers have drawn practical conclusions whereas others have drawn no clear conclusion regarding homework practices and effects.***
- Our Teacher Connector Group used the research in developing best-practice guidelines.

Data Analysis



Data Validation

Parent/Teacher Alignment

- Homework's primary purpose should be reinforcement of what was learned in class
- Resources are necessary in order for parents to support their child at home
- Flexibility and differentiation of homework to match the needs of each student
- An age-appropriate amount, type, and format of homework is necessary

Parent/Teacher Misalignment

- The parents see homework as a method of communication ("a window into their child's learning")
- The teachers primary view of homework is academic while the parents primary view of homework is as a factor of family dynamics and a "window into the classroom"
- Teacher-to-Parent Feedback vs Teacher-to-Student Feedback

Parent/Teacher Alignment Unclear

- It is not clear if parents or teachers agree if independent reading is homework
- It is not clear if teachers and parents agree what "independent" means
- It is not clear if teachers and parents agree on what an appropriate amount of homework at each grade-level

From Findings to Best-Practice

Guidelines For Homework Best-Practice

A Definition of Homework:
Developed Through Internal, Action Research

*Any assignment, written or otherwise, to be
completed outside the classroom.*

The Purpose of Homework:
Developed Through Internal, Action Research

The purpose of homework is the reinforcement, extension and/or application of content and skills previously taught at school.

The Benefits of Homework: Developed Through Internal, Action Research

- *Provides families with insight regarding each child's learning*
- *Develops responsibility and accountability*
- *Fosters independent learning*
- *Offers opportunities for confidence building*
- *Strengthens executive functioning skills (time management, organization etc.)*

Unpacking Common Vocabulary

- “Families” (parents, siblings, caregivers, other adults, etc.)
- “Independent Reading”
- “Independently”
- “Daily Assignments”
- Etc....

What Does Homework look like in a Kindergarten Classroom?

Developed Through Internal, Action Research

Guidelines for Homework Best-Practice: Commack UFSD

Kindergarten-Specific Guidelines

The following *Guidelines for Homework Best-Practices* have been designed by Commack educators. Classroom teachers make important instructional decisions every day. These decisions are based on the specific needs of each child and can result in individualized differentiated homework assignments that may vary from but continue to reflect the guidelines as necessary and appropriate.

Homework Defined

Any assignment, written or otherwise, to be completed outside the classroom.

Purpose and Benefits of Homework

What Does Homework look like in a First Grade Classroom?

Developed Through Internal, Action Research

Guidelines for Homework Best-Practice: First Grade

The following *Guidelines for Homework Best-Practices* have been designed by Commack educators. Classroom teachers make important instructional decisions every day. These decisions are based on the specific needs of each child and can result in individualized differentiated homework assignments that may vary from but continue to reflect the guidelines as necessary and appropriate.

Homework Defined

Any assignment, written or otherwise, to be completed outside the classroom.

Purpose and Benefits of Homework

The purpose of homework is the reinforcement, extension, and/or application of content and skills previously taught at school.

What Does Homework look like in a Second Grade Classroom?

Developed Through Internal, Action Research

Guidelines for Homework Best-Practice: Second Grade

The following *Guidelines for Homework Best-Practices* have been designed by Connack educators. Classroom teachers make important instructional decisions every day. These decisions are based on the specific needs of each child and can result in individualized differentiated homework assignments that may vary from but continue to reflect the guidelines as necessary and appropriate.

Homework Defined

Any assignment, written or otherwise, to be completed outside the classroom.

Purpose and Benefits of Homework

The purpose of homework is the reinforcement, extension, and/or application of content and skills previously taught at school.

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Document
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What Does Homework look like in a Third Grade Classroom?

Developed Through Internal, Action Research

Guidelines for Homework Best-Practice: Second Grade

The following *Guidelines for Homework Best-Practices* have been designed by Commack educators. Classroom teachers make important instructional decisions every day. These decisions are based on the specific needs of each child and can result in individualized differentiated homework assignments that may vary from but continue to reflect the guidelines as necessary and appropriate.

Homework Defined

Any assignment, written or otherwise, to be completed outside the classroom.

Purpose and Benefits of Homework

The purpose of homework is the reinforcement, extension, and/or application of content and skills previously taught at school.

What Does Homework look like in a Fourth Grade Classroom?

Developed Through Internal, Action Research

Guidelines for Homework Best-Practice: Fourth Grade

The following *Guidelines for Homework Best-Practices* have been designed by Commack educators. Classroom teachers make important instructional decisions every day. These decisions are based on the specific needs of each child and can result in individualized differentiated homework assignments that may vary from but continue to reflect the guidelines as necessary and appropriate.

Homework Defined

Any assignment, written or otherwise, to be completed outside the classroom.

Purpose and Benefits of Homework

As defined by the Commack School District, the purpose of homework is

What Does Homework look like in a Fifth Grade Classroom?

Developed Through Internal, Action Research

Guidelines for Homework Best-Practice: Fifth Grade

The following *Guidelines for Homework Best-Practices* have been designed by Commack educators. Classroom teachers make important instructional decisions every day. These decisions are based on the specific needs of each child and can result in individualized differentiated homework assignments that may vary from but continue to reflect the guidelines as necessary and appropriate.

Homework Defined

Any assignment, written or otherwise, to be completed outside the classroom.

Purpose and Benefits of Homework

As defined by the Commack School District, the purpose of homework is the reinforcement, extension, and/or application of content and skills previously taught.

Next Steps

Professional Development

- Building meetings
- Grade level meetings
- On-going throughout the school year

Reporting Out

- Parent Workshop
- November 28th - 6:00 PM at Sawmill Intermediate School
- Report Publication

Ongoing Monitoring

Spring Evaluation and Review

Thank you!

Key Stakeholders and Participants:

Teacher
Connectors

Teaching
Staff-at-Large

Teacher
Practitioners

Elementary
Principals

Parents,
Guardians, and the
Community-at-
Large

Questions from the Board of Education?

