

5.11 -- HOMEWORK POLICY

In the Van Buren School District, each child is viewed as a special individual with unique potential, needs, and interests. The district believes it is appropriate to require students to complete reasonable academic work outside the regular instructional day. Such homework shall derive from the philosophy of the district and shall be an extension of classroom instruction.

The purpose of homework shall be to reinforce learning through independent practice. Homework shall not be utilized as initial instruction to new student learning. The following Guiding Principles are hereby established to support teachers and students regarding homework.

Guiding Principles

- Homework must be relevant to instruction in the classroom; its use shall reinforce learning through independent practice.
- Homework should be tailored to the needs of the individual student.
- Prior to being assigned as homework, skills should be taught in the classroom.
- Homework assignments should be reasonable in length considering the age, grade level, and individual needs of the student. Students should not be overwhelmed with homework assignments which are unreasonable in length.
- Students should not be burdened with formal classroom assessments in three or more subjects per day,
- Homework should be purposeful – not busywork.
- Homework assignments should be planned and communicated to students and parents at the beginning of each grading period.
- Homework shall not be assigned for punitive reasons.
- Systems shall be established in each school to monitor the quality, use, and effectiveness of homework.

Homework Monitoring Systems

Under the leadership of the principal, each school shall adopt homework guidelines and procedures as noted below. It is the responsibility of both principal and teacher to ensure that the following homework systems are fully implemented. Monitoring systems will be implemented to ensure balance in homework assigned to students, to ensure assessment practices which do not require students to take multiple tests in any single student day, and to ensure full implementation of the district homework policy.

A. Grades K-4

- a. K-2 students should be assigned no more than 20 minutes of combined homework* per day.
- b. Grade 3-4 students should be assigned no more than 40 minutes of combined homework per day.
- c. Students should not be overwhelmed with multiple classroom assessments on the same day; therefore, grade-level teachers will work with principals and curriculum coaches to ensure that student learning is not formally assessed in more than one content area per day (excluding standardized tests).
- d. Homework will be worth no more than 20% of a student's grade.
- e. Grade-level teachers will work together to ensure that homework assignments and classroom assessments are implemented within the established limits of this policy.

B. Grades 5-6

- a. Grade 5-6 students should not be assigned more than 60 minutes of combined homework per day.
- b. Grade-level teachers will work together to ensure that homework is scheduled and communicated to parents in writing at the beginning of each grading period.
- c. Grade-level teachers will work together to ensure that student learning is not formally assessed in more than one content area per day (excluding standardized tests). Students should not be overwhelmed with multiple classroom assessments on the same day.
- d. Homework will be worth no more than 20% of a student's grade.
- e. Grade-level teachers will work together to ensure that homework assignments and formal classroom assessments are implemented within the established limits of this policy.

C. Grades 7-8

- a. Grade 7-8 students should not be assigned more than 80 minutes of combined homework per day.
- b. Grade-level and subject area teachers will work together to ensure that student learning is not formally assessed in more than two content areas per day (excluding standardized tests and nine-weeks or semester exams). Students should not be overwhelmed with multiple classroom assessments on the same day.
- c. Grade 7-8 teachers will develop a syllabus for each subject taught. The syllabus will include a course description, grading scale, and schedule for homework and formal classroom assessments for each grading period. It is

understood that scheduling may be affected by outside events, so some variation in schedules for homework and tests is expected; however, the intent of this system is for teachers to work together to ensure that students are not overwhelmed with homework and/or formal classroom assessments on any single day.

- d. In the development of the course syllabus with its homework and assessment schedules, teachers, curriculum coaches, and principals should ensure that homework assignments in subject areas do not go beyond the 80-minute limit for combined homework.
- e. Homework will be worth no more than 20% of a student's grade.
- f. Grade-level and/or content-area teachers will work together to ensure that homework assignments and formal classroom assessments are implemented within the established limits of this policy.
- g. Long-term student projects will not be considered daily homework; however, teachers will ensure that special projects are given ample time to complete.

D. Grades 9-12

- a. Grade 9-12 students should not be assigned more than 100 minutes of combined homework per day.
- b. Grade-level teachers will work together to ensure that student learning is not formally assessed in more than two content areas per day (excluding standardized tests and semester exams). Students should not be overwhelmed with multiple classroom assessments on the same day.
- c. Grade 9-12 teachers will develop a syllabus for each subject taught. The syllabus will include a course description, grading scale, and schedule for homework and tests for each grading period. It is understood that scheduling may be affected by outside events, so some variation in schedules for homework and tests is expected; however, the intent of this system is for teachers to work together to ensure that students are not overwhelmed with homework and classroom assessments on any given day.
- d. In the development of the course syllabus with its homework and assessment schedules, teachers, curriculum coaches, and principals should ensure that homework assignments in subject areas do not go beyond the 100-minute limit for combined homework.
- e. Homework will be worth no more than 20% of a student's grade.
- f. Grade-level and/or content-area teachers will work together to ensure that homework assignments and formal classroom assessments are implemented within the established limits of this policy.
- g. Long-term student projects will not be considered daily homework; however, teachers will ensure that special projects are given ample time to complete.

Parent Support

The district recognizes that academic achievement is a joint responsibility among the teacher, principal, student, and parent. In all levels of schooling, parents are encouraged to be supportive of student learning and become a partner in independent practice activities designed to help develop student learning. Parents can establish a supportive learning environment in the home by helping establish good study conditions, monitoring the child's study habits, demonstrating a positive attitude toward student work, and providing other support to the child as needed.

Parents may be asked to sign a document verifying reading logs, agendas, or other student expectations; however, whether the parent signs the document will have no impact on the student receiving credit for the homework or other assignment.

*For the purposes of this policy, combined homework is defined as the total amount of homework assigned to a student in all subject areas in one day.

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