

## INSTRUCTION

Homework

The Lynchburg City School System believes that homework plays a vital role in the educational process of all students. The positive effects of homework are numerous, including increasing retention and understanding; developing effective study and time management skills, along with a sense of independence and responsibility; and fostering the concept that learning can occur anywhere, not just in school. Homework also provides an avenue for parental involvement by affording parents an opportunity to see what their children are learning and to encourage their children in their studies. Ultimately, however, students bear the responsibility for completing homework assignment according to the directions of the teacher.

For homework to be effective, certain principles must be followed consistently. Teachers should assign homework (independent practice) only after thorough explanation and guided practice of the skills necessary for students to complete the assignment successfully. In addition, teachers must stress student's accountability in the homework process by regularly checking homework and providing instructional feedback. Not all homework need be formally evaluated or graded, but that which is, should be assessed promptly and returned to the students.

Finally, teachers must consider student's access to study materials and plan assignments which do not penalize students for lack of available resources. Neither should students be penalized by having to complete several major homework projects within the same time period. Thus, as much as possible, teachers of different subjects should coordinate major projects so that they are spread throughout a semester or year.

Administrators, teachers, parents and students need also remember that homework may have many different purposes. Whatever its purpose, however, the frequency and duration of homework assignments must be adapted to the age and special needs of students. All concerned in the homework process must realize that within any group of students, the time to do a common assignment will vary. Following are guidelines for homework assignments in the Lynchburg City Schools:

1. Primary (Pre K-2)

Homework assigned two to four times per week with the total time per night being no more than thirty minutes. In addition, students practice reading at their independent reading level daily, including weekends, for at least fifteen minutes.

\*Appropriate assignments include extensions of classroom instruction, review of previously achieved skills and information, problem solving applications of classroom skills, writing assignments, spelling and vocabulary review, practice to improve competency, and special projects.

2. Elementary (3-5)

## INSTRUCTION

Homework (continued)

Homework assigned four or five times per week with the total time per night being no more than sixty minutes. In addition, students should practice reading at their independent level daily, including weekends, for fifteen to thirty minutes.

\*Appropriate assignments include those for Pre K-2 with the addition of content reading assignments from texts and reference materials.

3. Middle School (6-8)

Two to four assignments per class per week as appropriate for the subject, each assignment lasting from 15-30 minutes. Additional assignments approximating those given at the high school level may be required of students enrolled in subjects receiving credit toward graduation.

\*Teachers of middle school students are expected to be especially cognizant of the developmental diversity among this group of students. Varied activities that foster critical thinking are highly encouraged as well as the consistent continuation of independent reading.

4. High School (9-12)

Two to five assignments per class per week as appropriate for the subject, each assignment lasting from 20-45 minutes.

\*Assignments longer than forty-five minutes (long reading assignments, essays, research projects, etc.) should be assigned over more than one night.

Students with Disabilities

Homework is an essential component of the educational process for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities should be assigned homework to support the goals and objectives stated in the Individual Education Plan (IEP). The frequency, duration and type of assignments will be determined by the nature of the child's disabilities. State guidelines for the education of students identified as gifted also propose differentiated assignments to meet individual needs. While teachers are expected to provide the gifted students with challenging assignments that encourage inquiry learning and creative thinking and expression, the policy guidelines governing frequency and duration should be followed.

Legal Reference

Virginia Board of Education Regulations, 8-VAC 20-130-220 "Governing the Accreditation of Public Schools in Virginia" at 8 VAC 20-130-220--"Home work shall be governed by a written school board policy developed with the advice of parents and

## INSTRUCTION

Homework (continued)

teachers. The policy shall include guidelines for the amount and timing of homework and shall outline the responsibility of students, teachers, and parents." (January, 1991)

Adopted by School Board: June 19, 1973

Revised by School Board: June 20, 1978

Revised by School Board: February 20, 1990