

SPRAGUE SCHOOL DISTRICT
Baltic, Connecticut

POLICY REGARDING HOMEWORK

The Sprague Board of Education recognizes that most research shows that students who do appropriate and well planned homework achieve at a higher level than students who do not. Homework can be an effective way to help children learn the material they are responsible for in school. It also helps prepare them to be lifelong learners by helping them develop the skills they need to study independently and to be competitive with their peers around the world.

Purposes of Homework

Teachers assign homework for many reasons:

- Review and practice of material covered in class;
- Preparation for future classes;
- More in-depth exploration of subjects introduced in class;
- Application of skills students already have to new situations; and
- Integration of many different skills on a single task, such as a book report or science project.

Homework also helps students to develop good study habits and positive attitudes. When used effectively, it can:

- Foster independent work;
- Encourage self-discipline, including time management and responsibility; and
- Foster a love for learning

In addition, homework can help:

- Keep parents up-to-date about what is going on in school, and
- Create opportunities for families to participate in their child's education.

To be most effective, homework assignments must:

- Have a specified purpose, although a single homework assignment can serve more than one purpose;
- Come with clear instructions about what needs to be done for the assignment to be completed successfully, including whether help from others is required; and
- Be well-matched to the student's abilities.

If these guidelines are not met, homework should not be assigned.

Purposes of Homework at Different Developmental Levels

Appropriate homework has different purposes at different grade levels.

- For students in the *earliest grades*, it can foster positive attitudes, habits, and character traits; permit appropriate parent involvement; and reinforce the learning of simple skills learned in class.
- For students in *upper elementary grades*, homework can play a more direct role in fostering school achievement.
- In *sixth grade and beyond*, homework can play an important role in improving grades and standardized test scores.

Quantity of Homework

There are no hard and fast rules about exactly how much homework each student will do each night. This will depend on the nature of the material covered. It will also depend on the student. The same assignment going home with different students will take different amounts of time to complete. Also, different assignments may be given to different students.

Still, there are rough guidelines that teachers will follow in assigning homework. These guidelines will be applied considering the amount of time it should take the average student, or the majority of students, in the class to complete the assignment, assuming the student works without interruption.

Based on these principles, the Sprague Board of Education sets these guidelines for frequency and duration of assignments:

Kindergarten to Grade 1 – Three to four assignments per week each lasting no more than 10 minutes.

Grades 2 to 6 – A total average time of 10 minutes per grade level (e.g. 20 minutes for 2nd grade, 30 minutes for 3rd grade, 40 minutes for 4th grade, etc.) each night.

Grades 7 to 8 – Four to five assignments per week in each subject for a maximum 60 to 80 minutes for all subjects combined each night.

Mandatory v. Voluntary Homework

Because homework serves different purposes at different grade levels, some homework will be required for all students. Research suggests that a mixture of mandatory and voluntary homework is most beneficial. Teachers are encouraged to include both types of assignments throughout the year.

Roles and Responsibilities Regarding Homework

Role and responsibilities of teachers:

1. Clearly state the purpose of the assignment.
2. Clearly state how the assignment is related to the topic under study.
3. Clearly state how the assignment might best be carried out.
4. Clearly state what the student needs to do to demonstrate the assignment has been completed successfully.
5. When different teachers teach different subjects to the same students, teachers should coordinate their assignments with each other.
6. Teach students developmentally appropriate organizational skills and practice these skills with them.

Role and responsibilities of students:

1. Knowing what the assignments are, what materials are needed, and bringing all necessary materials home on a daily basis.
2. Completing assignments on time and returning them to school on or before the due date.
3. Completing assignments in an appropriate manner.
4. Letting teachers know if they do not understand an assignment or will have difficulty completing it on time.
5. Letting teachers know what they would like to do on a voluntary basis.

Role and responsibilities of parent(s):

1. Communicate that education and homework are important.
2. Monitor assignment completion.
3. Provide guidance.
4. Talk with teachers to resolve homework problems.
5. Provide basic homework tools including paper, pencils, rulers, craft supplies, etc.
6. Provide a quiet, well-lit spot where the student can work on homework without interruptions.
7. Allow time in the daily schedule each afternoon/evening for homework completion.

Role and responsibilities of administrators:

1. Communicate the district homework policy and school homework procedures to families.
2. Monitor the implementation of the policy.
3. Serve as a mediator should disputes arise between teachers and families regarding homework.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statute 10-221(6)

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