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Homework Practices That Need a Change

Kim Ontiveros

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Homework Practices That Need a Change

Kim Ontiveros

Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of
Doctor of Education

National College of Education
National Louis University

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DISSERTATION ORGANIZATION STATEMENT

Dissertation Organization Statement

This document is organized to meet the three-part dissertation requirement of the National Louis University (NLU) Educational Leadership (EDL) Doctoral Program. The National Louis Educational Leadership EdD is a professional practice degree program (Shulman et al., 2006).

For the dissertation requirement, doctoral candidates are required to plan, research, and implement three major projects, one each year, within their school or district with a focus on professional practice. The three projects are:

- Program Evaluation
- Change Leadership Plan
- Policy Advocacy Document

I have learned to identify areas of strength and weakness within my school building. Through the Program Evaluation, I was able to critique our current formative assessment system by using data points and surveying teachers. This compilation identified gaps that allowed me to create a strategic Change Plan to institute a stronger approach to our current formative assessment system, which led me comfortably to the Policy Advocacy relating to the change in homework.

For the **Program Evaluation** candidates are required to identify and evaluate a program or practice within their school or district. The “program” can be a current initiative; a grant project; a common practice; or a movement. Focused on utilization, the evaluation can be formative, summative, or developmental (Patton, 2008). The candidate must demonstrate how the evaluation directly relates to student learning.

In the **Change Leadership Plan** candidates develop a plan that considers organizational possibilities for renewal. The plan for organizational change may be at the building or district level. It must be related to an area in need of improvement with a clear target in mind. The candidate must be able to identify noticeable and feasible differences that should exist as a result of the change plan (Wagner et al., 2006).

In the **Policy Advocacy Document** candidates develop and advocate for a policy at the local, state or national level using reflective practice and research as a means for supporting and promoting reforms in education. Policy advocacy dissertations use critical theory to address moral and ethical issues of policy formation and administrative decision making (i.e., what ought to be). The purpose is to develop reflective, humane and social critics, moral leaders, and competent professionals, guided by a critical practical rational model (Browder, 1995).

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this change policy is to bring to light an issue that is facing schools, teachers and students nationwide. Homework plagues students and families every night throughout the school year. It impedes on their family time, creates frustration for students and parents, all the while not producing the sense of achievement most people would think. Kohn (2012), Parker (2014), and Shumaker (2016) support the idea the elementary students do not sustain achievement or measurable learning because of homework. A change in district policy would allow for more flexibility in the process, procedures and learning that should take place within the school day, rather than learning taking place at home.

PREFACE

A consistent question that arises with homework is-this just busy work, or content extension? Advocates of homework believe that homework teaches responsibility, holds them accountable and makes them smarter. While others believe, it interferes with family time, is only given for grades and does not substantial contribute to learning. Practicing skills taught all day in school is appropriate, but should not be assessed or mandatory.

My proposed change allows for teachers to send home what is necessary as a skill reinforcement, but should only be used to support students within their learning. Their main task will be focused on assessing student learning throughout the day, and making appropriate and immediate corrections when students are struggling to apply the skill.

With any change, it becomes imperative to be transparent and have s strategic plan in place for the change. Teachers will go through professional development and book studies to support more formative assessments within their day to replace the grades used from homework, and support learning in a more productive and immediate way. Parents will also be informed of the change and provided additional activities they can do at home with students to support learning and growth.

I have seen many changes fall flat because of the lack of communication, support and a plan that was not well developed or implemented. This policy allows all students no matter what socioeconomic status or race to demonstrate learning and understanding within the school day instead of being dependent on outside support.

I am proud to be part of a school that values the sense of family, while still making decisions that are the best of students. Learning for students becomes an asset and not something that just happens to them by mistake. It is intentional, direct and constant, which creates a life-long process.

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SECTION ONE: VISION STATEMENT

Introduction to the Problem

Homework has been a topic of debate these days within many districts. “Throughout the decades of educational reform cycles, the value of homework has proven either meaningful or meaningless depending on the reforming framework” (Watkins & Stevens, 2013, p. 80). The idea that homework is fundamentally necessary for producing exceptional students has yet to be proven. Curriculum is devised to teach, assess, and monitor students’ learning cycles. The consistent questions that arise from homework stem from the question of, “Is this just busy work, or content extension?” Homework then becomes embedded within the school culture and changing that belief becomes a critical turning point within schools and districts.

In my experience, homework that encourages practicing skills that instructors taught that day is appropriate, but should not be mandated. Teachers should be able to assess student understanding or misunderstanding throughout the day, so they can immediately intervene. This is my professional observation as someone with more than 12 years of experience as an administrator. Of course, there are two sides to this debate. The advocates of homework believe that homework is for accountability, teaches students responsibility, and simply makes students smarter. The other side debates that homework interferes with family time, is given only for grades, and is not a substantial contributor to instruction; additionally, this side believes that student assessments should take place in the classroom rather than at home. In my school, a homework discussion took place within grade-level teams. Some agreed that homework is important, while others said it

was insignificant. Parents were emailing and contacting teachers about how their fourth-grade student had homework every night, but their second grader had nothing. It became obvious to me, as the administrator, that there were significant disparities within the building regarding the belief about homework, how much homework is given (if any), and how teachers assessed or used homework for instructional purposes.

This cause for concern became a School Improvement Day activity with the staff to figure out how we stood on this issue, and what we could do to contribute to a cohesive, consistent message about and approach to homework, as well as the current school board policy that was guiding us. The activity consisted of several questions posted around the room pertaining to homework and its impact on students and teachers. Teachers were in groups of four and had to write down their beliefs based on every question hung around the room. Once the activity was completed, we debriefed on each of the questions and the answers provided. What followed was a lengthy discussion about our own personal beliefs regarding homework, student learning, and assessing learning. We agreed to pilot a “practice” policy for the remainder of the year. This policy encouraged students to *practice* anything sent home with them, instead of turning it in the next day for a grade. Our primary purpose was to ensure what went home was important and helpful to students, since “busy work, by its very nature, discourages learning and instead promotes doing homework simply to get points” (Parker, 2014, p. 3).

Critical Issue

My current district has a policy about homework that reads as such:

Homework is a part of the District’s instructional program and has the overarching goal of increasing student achievement. Homework is assigned to further a student’s educational development and is an application or adaption of a classroom experience. The Superintendent shall provide guidance to ensure that homework:

1. Is used to reinforce and apply previously covered concepts, principles, and skills;
2. Is not used for disciplinary purposes;
3. Serves as a communication link between the school and parents/guardians;
4. Encourages independent thought, self-direction, and self-discipline; and
5. Is of appropriate frequency and length, and does not become excessive, according to the teacher’s best professional judgement. (Adopted: December 15, 2014)

This policy reads like many other school districts regarding their approach and belief in homework. You will notice key words and phrases, such as “instructional,” “increasing student achievement,” “reinforce,” “communication between home and school,” and “independent thoughts”—all jargon used in education to highlight positive entities within the school. However, could these also be negative, because of the expectations placed on teachers and students to live up to these standards? Districts provide policies to ensure that consistency and expectations are acknowledged when implemented within schools. However, sometimes when the policies are written they are based on the beliefs of the writers, not as much on the individuals instituting these policies within the schools and/or district. Policies should have clearly stated purposes and benefits, and districts should design them to cultivate learning and development.

To complicate matters, in May 2016, the school district approved the adoption of two new curriculums for the upcoming school year, neither of which included homework components. The first was a new math program that was an online-designed curriculum in which whole-group instruction was done on a projector, and student independent work

was done in a workbook during class. Teachers were instructed to walk around and check for student understanding, either individually or in a small group setting. No homework component was present in this new curriculum because the idea was that student's instruction, understanding, and learning would all take place in the classroom, where it could be reinforced or immediately retaught to clarify any misunderstanding. The second curriculum was our new reading program, which fit a reader's workshop approach. This consisted of a teacher reading mentor texts, while the students learned skills and strategies, and then applied and practiced these skills within their own leveled texts. Teacher's conference with students to ensure understanding and applications of the skills within the context of their reading blocks. Like the math curriculum there is no assigned homework tasks, but practicing reading and applying skills is always encouraged for the students at home. Although these new curriculums were not chosen based on a homework component or lack thereof, it does help support the idea that homework is not necessary to enhance the learning that takes place each day in school. The curriculum provided each day sustains enough activities to produce authentic teaching, learning, and assessments.

Our district policy reads that homework is part of the instructional programs, but is it really? The curriculum that we just adopted does not consider homework part of the instructional program. Moreover, terms like "frequency" and "length," as well as phrasing such as "does not become excessive according the teacher's professional judgement" can be interpreted many ways by many different people. For example, some teachers believe that homework teaches responsibility and they need it for grades. So, how would a building principal—or superintendent, for that matter—monitor this issue?

The issue of homework becomes personal when an administrator would have to monitor the length, consistency, and necessity for every assignment given to ensure that it is productive. This task becomes mundane when, in all reality, if homework was only given when necessary for practice instead of driving grades, then maybe the outcome would be different for both teachers and students. Homework is a loose term used for completing a task at home and turning it in the next day. For most students, it is exhausting to do the same tasks they just did in school for eight hours, when all they really want is to be a kid for a short period of time before school starts all over tomorrow.

Effectively examining the impact homework has on students' emotional, physical, and academic success is what we need to review when writing, re-examining, or eliminating homework policies in districts across the country. I am actively engaging in this endeavor with my current staff to see how we as a team can advocate for students.

Recommended Policy and Envisioned Effect

Fowler (2004) defined education public policy as “the written constitutions, laws, regulations, and procedures as well as the unwritten continuous practices or courses of action that govern and direct schools in what they do to fulfill their public vision, mission, and purpose” (p. 9). Policies are living and breathing documents that should be re-examined all the time to add, take away, or adapt to suit the needs of the district, as well as the ever-changing needs of students.

I am proposing two components to change the homework policy that my district currently uses, to provide a more flexible and structured approach. The first option is to

change the language around and the use of the word “homework.” The second option is to eliminate sending home additional work.

Component one is to eliminate the word “homework,” which has a negative implication and stigma. Homework as it is currently defined is the task of completing a worksheet or project at home, and then bringing it into the school the next day for it to be graded. What happens to those students who do not understand the work they need to do, and no one is home to help them? With the current practice, these students may receive a detention for not completing the assignment or possibly their grade is lowered. On the flipside, those students who already understood the material at school go home to complete the task with no help, or problems, and most likely receive an A the next day. As educators, we already should know through formative assessments and informal check ins which students demonstrate understanding and which ones do not, but we continue to send it home anyway. I am proposing we change the word homework to “practice,” which is defined as an optional completion without any negative consequences, such as detention, loss of recess, or a lower grade. We would encourage the students to practice what is sent home, but it would no longer be mandatory; perhaps a more positive approach will surface.

Component two is to find other ways to generate grades throughout the school day instead of depending solely on homework. We all know that when homework is sent home, it is not always done independently by students—they may receive help from parents or older siblings. Does this really measure a student’s true understanding of the material? The gradebook or grade they receive on their report may show an A, but what

does that truly signify? They could fail their test and quizzes in the class, but homework always come back right. Now what does that grade really mean? We need to find better ways to assess students throughout the school day using formative assessments, exit slips, student conferences, or rubrics. This not only provides an accurate account of understanding, but also allows the teacher to identify areas of misunderstanding. The identification of misunderstanding is critical in teaching and learning because now the teacher can gauge his or her instruction based on the information the student provides.

As you can see, a change in this policy may not only benefit the students, but in turn makes teachers accountable for reflection on teaching and learning. Policies are made to provide guidance, but should be flexible enough to fit the needs of all students. Academic success and students' attitudes toward school can be extremely challenging to reverse when their experience is negative.

SECTION TWO: ANALYSIS OF NEED

The current homework policy has grave implications for students that go beyond just academics. This policy has the greatest impact on students, but it also indirectly impacts all stakeholders: teachers, students, parents, and the community. Homework is institutionalized. We assume that it is a key component of what makes up schooling. It affects students' perspectives educationally, economically, socially, politically, and morally/ethically. The traditional approach to homework has students learning all day in school, and a second shift at home with more academic assignments. The concept is mindboggling, but many people do not even think twice about it. Kohn (2016) stated, "Homework is all pain and no gain. It leaves students exhausted, frustrated, and less interested" (p. 2). We as an educational community need to debunk the old assumptions about homework and help restore the love of learning for all students.

Educational Analysis

Homework policies will shift the teaching and learning for students and strengthen their commitment to engage more actively within the school day. Teachers can see and measure growth and attainment of knowledge during interactions throughout the day, whether in whole groups, a small group, or individual conferencing. This will, in turn, produce a multifaceted system that assesses student learning and allows for interjections immediately when learning is a struggle. "Parents need to trust schools to make the right decisions and deliver a good education within the school day- and schools put trust in the quality of their teachers" (Coughlan, 2016, p. 5). Currently, the teacher assigns homework, and students are expected to turn it in the next day. The teacher

grades the paper, enters the grade into the gradebook, and hands them back to students. There is no descriptive feedback or opportunities for students to learn from their mistakes. How did this practice benefit students? They only reap the benefits when they see their report cards at the end of the quarter. Some students will get an A, B, or C for that class, or some unlucky students will get a D or F. Currently, grades are used from tests, quizzes, and homework to determine a student's success or failure in the class. However, there are still issues with the quality of assignments being sent for homework. In some classes, homework is only assigned to help students practice a difficult skill; some just send home busy work to produce enough grades for the gradebook. Clifton Parker (2014) stated, "This kind of busy work, by its very nature, discourages learning and instead promotes doing homework simply to get points" (p. 2). Inconsistencies on the policy create a false sense of student achievement not only for students, but also for parents.

To prepare a shift in mindset to a "practice policy" versus a "homework policy," a building wide discussion was held to determine teacher's opinions, beliefs, and attitudes about homework. After having an open and honest dialogue, the common theme was the question of what would be used for grades if there were no homework assignments. A transformation occurred when I asked teachers to reflect on what getting an A in their class means—does an A effectively measure an individual's academic achievement? Does it clearly show evidence of mastering grade-level knowledge? Some students received A's because they passed all the tests and did well on their homework. Other students also received an A and failed a few tests, but their homework was done well.

The conclusion we came to was that some students could not show independence in learning when asked to demonstrate that on a test, yet all their homework answers came back correct. So, an A does not represent learning in the same way. As a staff, we decided that, to ensure learning takes place and is reported consistently, we will only grade assessments and work done within the school day to accurately measure the attainment of knowledge.

In the era of more rigorous academic standards, we need to use more collaborative data to improve student learning. Common assessments amongst grade levels, rubrics, and exit slips are some tools teachers will begin to explore to signify and assess accurate learning for students. This will hopefully prevent “kids sliding into the habit of relying on adults to help with homework or, in many cases, do their homework” (Shumaker, 2016, p. 3). This new approach to grading will require grades derived from in-class assignments and assessments. Students will be able to demonstrate their knowledge independently and create a more substantive continuum of learning and growth.

Economic Analysis

The implementation of a new homework policy and the creation of more informative assessments will not create a large financial burden. Most of the key cost factors will include professional development, professional books for teachers, and time to create assessments. The most expensive cost listed would probably be professional development, either through sending teachers out or bringing in a professional development provider for the school. One speaker that we recently used within the district cost approximately \$1,500 a day, paid through Title 1 funds. We could continue

to use this speaker or send teachers out to trainings that range from \$350 to \$400 a day. The speaker we previously worked with is an expert at moving schools forward and ensuring learning occurs for all students—whether they are special education, English Language Learners, or are of low socioeconomic status. His theory is based on learning and instructional strength during the day, allowing for less learning at home independently. The professional development opportunities will center around how to assess students using various methods throughout the day instead of relying on homework. These could include, but are not limited to, rubrics, exit slips, and grade-level-created common assessments and quality practice work involving projects and creative approaches to learning. Although professional development through a professional training is great, it does not build capacity internally when teachers are finished with their training. Sending a group of teachers out to be trained then builds a capacity for the train-the-trainer model and creating “experts” within our building. It is not about the expenditure itself, but how we can successfully gain useful knowledge as success through this change.

Professional books for teachers cost an average of \$13.99 to \$15. I have been perusing a book through Solution Tree that discusses ways to create and implement common assessments. Although no final decision has been made, I will create a book club for teachers after school to begin reading and discussing the text. This will not be required, but voluntary, and teachers would be paid \$24 an hour for their after-school meetings (not to exceed 10 meetings). This money comes from the district’s Title 1 funds. To ensure there is not overspending, I will limit the time set for meetings to one

hour no more than once a week. The amount of money the district spends is menial in comparison to the increase of teaching and learning.

Lastly, teachers will be given an opportunity to work outside their instructional day to start creating common assessments, rubrics, and exit slips. The district will ultimately pay for this amount, but it will from the after-school club stipend, which stipulates meeting at least once a week for 45 minutes (to be paid at the rate of \$19.45 per session). Creating and using proficiency scales will allow for teachers and students to develop a more consistent approach to teaching and learning. No amount of money spent will ever outweigh the benefits of students achieving life-long learning and academic success.

Social Analysis

Traditional approaches to homework have created a war amongst parents. “And if you are wondering, not a single study has ever supported the folk wisdom that homework teaches good work habits or develops positive character traits such as self-discipline, responsibility or independence” (Kohn, 2016, p. 25). Parents on one side of the pendulum believe that the more time spent on a task produces better results, or that the old wives’ tale of “practice makes perfect” applies to academics. Kohn points out that parents need to reach out and educate themselves and others about the assumptions pertaining to homework. Such assumptions held are that homework is academically beneficial or that homework provides a strong link between home and school. Kohn reinforces the fact that status quo does not always equal better results, and that there needs to be a greater commitment to allowing kids to be kids (p. 25).

Harris Cooper of Duke University conducted a study that created a startling discovery, no matter what side of the homework debate you are on. His study found that homework did have some benefits, but that those benefits were age-dependent. “For elementary aged children, the research suggested that studying and assessing in class got superior learning results, while extra schoolwork at home is just... extra work” (Cooper, 2006 as cited in Shumaker, 2016, para. 4). After reviewing multiple studies over the years research has found no evidence of academic benefit to elementary students, but did negatively impact a child’s attitude toward school. The love and inquisitiveness of learning is lost at the earliest of ages when students are inundated with unnecessary work with no benefit. It directly affects the social lives of students in their midst of finding what they love and discovering new things.

While students are always our first and foremost priority, we need to explore the impact homework has on families. Toni Hargis (2015) wrote an article that explored the complicated relationships that parents have with homework between consistently reminding students to complete it and the struggle to understand the work as adults, plus compounded by finding the time to assist. Homework ranges from the mundane memorization of spelling words or math facts, to the mindless worksheets, to the projects that will need to support of an adult to create. Almost all parents want what is best for their children and want them to be successful, but where do we draw the line? Hargis’ advice is that teachers, school administrators, and parents need to find a common ground. Teachers need to teach parents how to effectively support learning at home, as well as communicate regularly on how best to help the individual student. Although there may be

social class differences in the learning opportunities kids have at home, it is imperative that parents and the school work together to provide extra support and learning with no cost to families. This way, the benefit of extended learning happens no matter what the financial status or burden of the support is at home.

Some parents believe that a no-homework policy is “economically and racially insensitive,” as Kyle Spencer, a writer for *The New York Times* (2017), stated. A clear divide exists between parents who are economically sound and those who are not—no matter what their race; however, not everyone shares this sentiment. For example, one parent with an affluent background may enjoy the no-homework policy because it allows her child to explore things he is passionate about, such as innovative software programs. On the flip side, a single mother with three children could explain that the no-homework policy has created a burden because she cannot afford additional resources for her children to supplement their learning. Both sides of the debate have valid reasoning for their stance on no homework; however, the common thread is that homework has become more stressful and unbearable based on the new Common Core Standards. The difficulty level especially in math creates struggles at home when parents cannot help students with homework. One thing is clear: it does not matter what side of the division line you are on, students are under more pressure than ever inside and outside of the classroom.

In thousands of homes every night throughout the country, damage is being done to personal relationships. Families battle over homework every night, nagging and obsessing over the necessity to get the homework done. Overworked and overtired children cry, protest, and prolong the inevitable to “just get it done.” We lose critical

connections and supporting environments at the end of every day... and for what? The homework cycle that continually haunts our daily lives.

Political Analysis

National policies surrounding homework have created even more of a confusion about its primary purpose and impact on learning. No wonder so many schools and districts struggle to implement this kind of change. The long history of political changes and implementations of best educational practices changes like the wind. After World War II, during the John Dewey era, education took the “back to basics” approach for learning (Watkins & Stevens, p. 81). The focus was on significant rigor in science and math, while using homework to extend and accelerate learning. As with anything in life, new leaders devise new ideas and approaches. In the 1960s and ‘70s, schools began to take away the focus and rigor of basics and allowed schools to make various choices about how to educate students. This movement eliminated homework because it was just a distraction to student’s choice of learning. In most schools today, student choice is an appropriate differentiated approach to student achievement because it allows for students to take ownership of their own learning. Educational trends and ideas become recycled and reused, or repackaged to make it seem like a new approach to learning. No wonder schools have a hard time creating an identity.

Considering that the above-mentioned reforms did not pan out by 1983, politicians made a bold statement that American schools were failing. A Nation at Risk was devised to help schools produce academically sound students and citizens. The premise behind this plan was to produce students who could compete within the business

world effectively. This plan particularly pointed out that schools were not assigning enough homework, which could be a direct correlation to them failing. Following A Nation at Risk brought in new administration the Bush and Clintons. Together they established Goals 2000, which crafted eight broad goals to ensure a successful opportunity for all students. Due to the lack of specificity, these eight goals were left open to interpretation and created inconsistencies with no accountability. This was under much scrutiny, which led the George W. Bush administration to create a new policy called No Child Left Behind (NCLB). He made it very clear that the federal government needed to oversee and monitor that all children can accomplish the goals no matter what their race, social class, or intellectual ability. “While homework was not directly addressed, a review of the NCLB government website (www2.ed.gov/teachers/how/parents/homeworktips/edlite-slide001.html) shows that homework is an expectation and there is a belief that homework makes a difference” (Watkins & Stevens, 2013, p. 81). Arguments regarding homework will continue to be the source of education for many years to come, with no definitive right or wrong. Teachers should be naturally skeptical of guidance and always use their best judgement.

Moral and Ethical Analysis

The traditional homework policies require students to complete daunting tasks at home after experiencing a long day in school. For most families—although it is a struggle—it is usually accomplished. But what about racially diverse families? An article published in *The New York Times* in 2006 highlighted the struggle for Hispanic parents to help with homework. This article focused on one family that has three children; the

mother could not help with homework, nor could she read to them at bedtime. She entered the United States in 1989 from Mexico, and she worked in a factory every day starting at 3 p.m. Her shift began right when her children got out of school—she did not have the time to address homework because she needed to use that time to cook, clean, and work to provide the basics (food, shelter, money, etc.) for her family.

Although this is not isolated to just Hispanic families, Dr. Pedro Noguera reiterates the fact that “many Latino parents are working a lot, so their ability to get involved is limited. There’s a language barrier. In many Latin American countries, there is a tendency to defer to authorities in school, an assumption that educators know what they are doing” (Berger, 2006, p. 2). Middle-class American parents take for granted that they can be advocates for their children, ensuring the right teachers and right classes, whereas immigrant parents are not clear in their role and may be afraid of an undocumented status. In essence, parents might be more afraid or intimidated by creating a presence in specific situations. This is not only isolated to race, but also to economically disadvantaged and single-family households (Berger, 2006). Our school has implemented a program entitled Latino Literacy night, where parents of our Native Language speakers can come and learn how to help their students at home. This includes, but is not limited to, assisting with reading and literacy components like phonics, writing, and comprehension. Parents are encouraged to check out books from the book room to bring home and read with their students in English or Spanish. The emphasis of this program was to involve our Spanish-speaking parents within the school and build better connections with their child. When parents do get involved, they are able to make pivotal

and life-changing decisions for their children. We have a moral and ethical obligation as a school to not only educate parents on their rights, but also ensure we do everything in our power to include them within the decision-making and policy-creation processes.

SECTION THREE: ADVOCATED POLICY STATEMENT

“Students’ learning opportunities are related to their classroom and school experiences and are the factors that schools can most readily manipulate. As such, they are popular targets of educational policies and reforms” (Minor, Desimone, Phillips, & Spencer, 2015, p. 242). The new homework policy would allow for more assessments and student learning opportunities within the classrooms rather than being dependent on at-home learning. Educational reform in any sense requires goals and objectives that meet the needs of the stakeholders.

Policy Goal

The goal is for the traditional practice of homework to become an opportunity to practice skills. This policy will allow both teachers and students a practical approach to assess skills within the school day, rather than being dependent on learning measured from work done outside the classroom. “Current homework practices in privileged, high performing schools sustain students’ advantage in competitive climates yet hinder learning, full engagement and well-being” (Parker, 2014, p. 1). Achievement gaps become a critical issue when we begin to consider the race and socioeconomic status of students and their support at home with homework. Discrepancies become apparent when the extension of learning takes place at home and not solely within the classroom walls. The proposed policy will allow all students—no matter their race or socioeconomic status—the opportunity and resources to exhibit their learning and understanding without being dependent on outside support. Homework or practice will become a philosophy to

enhance learning, but not hinder students' grades. Evaluating student knowledge in the classroom is a more effective approach to teaching, learning, and assessment.

Objectives

Common Assessments—Guide Instruction and Learning

Effectively monitored and developed assessments ensure that a student's understanding or misunderstanding of learning is detected early and often. Classroom instruction becomes a critical component in assessing student learning through whole class, small group, and individualized approaches. Support for various levels of students is provided within the school day based on need and necessity through differentiation. The practice policy will allow opportunities for the extension of learning, without the consequences of unsuccessfully applying those skills. Practice just becomes a platform for teachers to identify areas of extra support necessary for the entire class, small groups of students, or individuals. The addition of common assessments provides opportunities for teachers to reflect on their instruction. Collaboration between teachers strengthens teaching and learning, while also anchoring decision-making using student data.

Learning for All

Using this plan, all students become a priority for learning no matter their race, socioeconomic status, or home support. Parental involvement is a substantial buzzword in education apparently coined to help alleviate drop out, poor test scores, and almost all students' successes and failures in school. Students coming from middle- and upper-class families have the opportunities for the "right" teachers and "right" classes because of the

parental support and involvement, while “many immigrant parents don’t understand that this is the role they need to play” (Berger, 2006, p. 1). The parental role becomes less critical when the assessment and learning take place throughout the day instead of focusing on the primary necessity of homework. While practice may be sent home, it will not be a mandatory absolute for determining grades and learning.

Identifying the Needs of Stakeholders

Stakeholders make up the world of education, both its successes and failures. Despite the impact, their needs are vastly different and need to be met. All invested stakeholders’ goals are to ensure that the education provided is the best for our future generation.

Students

Students depend on teachers to educate them academically, socially, and emotionally to become productive citizens of the world. While student learning takes place everywhere, the new policy would focus on learning within the school day. Students become responsible for their own learning and achievements through strategic instruction and assessments. The fear of failure lessens when students can get immediate assistance with learning, and demonstrate that learning through practice, instead of taking work home, stressing about the understanding of a concept, and then demonstrating that misunderstanding through the assignment with little or no support. The new system will increase student motivation and learning because students are fostering support through their teachers.

Teachers

Teachers will be required to do some more work in providing additional opportunities to measure learning solely at school, rather than relying on homework to be a significant piece of the puzzle. This involves teachers creating assessments collaboratively that will measure students' learning and inform their own instruction. While the upfront work of creating rubrics, exit slips, and common assessments can be a daunting task, the goal of student success and each student meeting their full potential will give them a sense of relief. All teachers desire the best for each of their students, and their commitment to them is unparalleled. The new policy will allow teachers to reassess students when standards are not met and adjust their instruction or curriculum to meet each student's diverse learning.

Parents

Parent needs are met when student learning and assessment take place frequently and strategically within the school day, rather than interfering with busy households in the evenings. The reliance on support and learning is not focused on home support or lack thereof, but on demonstrated learning within their learning environment daily. Teachers and students then take on the role of explicitly demonstrating learning in multiple ways without outside dependence. Parents can focus on teaching and learning through other ways at home—whether it is through cooking, baking, fixing something, or household chores—that becomes a real-world application of problem-solving and production. Time spent together becomes precious without the additional pressure and stress of arguing to

get homework completed. The peacefulness allows more precious time spent in ways that enhance learning and motivation more than homework could ever do.

Community

Community members value education and have a sustained investment in the success of students and schools. Although their understanding of the education system of teaching and learning is sometimes misunderstood, they become a crucial voice when it comes to educating students. Some of the misunderstanding stems from their values and beliefs about how schools should function based on their own experiences in schools. The new homework policy may create some dissonance within in this core group because of their experiences with homework, whether it was based on themselves, their children, or grandchildren. It becomes the responsibility of the school to provide information and education within the area of student learning and success through school-based assessments—not homework. The focus should be on how students learn, and how teachers react to the learning without depending on someone at home providing that support. The connection between the community, home, and school should have a seamless partnership supporting all students no matter their race, religion, or financial status. The investment in students now will create a more sustainable community in the future.

SECTION FOUR: POLICY ARGUMENT

In the world of education today, various views exist on how the system should function based on past beliefs or current trends. Change is difficult for anyone in any situation, but increasingly more difficult when it comes to changing a practice held as a sacred cow in many schools and districts. Changing the homework policy and making it more practice-based and consequence-free is no different. The following sections will describe the positives and negatives of the policy I am proposing, as well as the benefits it could have on student success. The positive attributes greatly outweigh the negative.

Arguments

Homework is all pain and no gain.

After spending an entire day in school learning and being assessed, some schools send home a second round of learning with mandated homework. Some people believe that more time spent on a task produces better results, and that sentiment is at the heart of academic growth. “Even if you regard grades or test scores as good measures of learning, doing homework has no statistical relationship to achievement in elementary school” (Kohn, 2016, p. 25). Some teachers understand this view, but feel mandated or compelled to keep assigning homework for various reasons, such as “[for] traditions sake, [and/or from] pressure from [the] administration or parents” (Kohn, 2016, p. 26). The status quo needs to be challenged with research, as well as a basic commitment for the well-being of our children socially, emotionally, and academically.

Homework is wrecking our kids.

Multiple research studies found no evidence of academic benefit at the elementary level, but found how it affected children's attitudes toward school and academics (Shumaker, 2016, p. 2). The impact on students is not a positive one. Children deserve to have a love for learning instead of bombarding them with homework for their entire educational journey. Personal relationships become affected within families that battle with the completion of homework nightly. Children have a difficult time connecting with homework independently, which creates chaos and a bad habit of relying on someone else in the house for help. Parents assume the role as homework patrol, and this scenario ultimately undermines the sole purpose of homework—independence and responsibility (Schumaker, 2016).

No one, especially parents, can see eye-to-eye.

“Rather than filling out worksheets, students were encouraged to read at home, and [were] provided a list of websites to engage students in after school activities” (Spencer, 2017, p. 1). This may sound like a solid and strategic plan to replacing the traditional approach to homework, but it is not favorable amongst all parents. Parents from racially diverse backgrounds or lower socioeconomic statuses thought this plan benefited families with more time and money. Parents coming from higher socioeconomic backgrounds saw this as an opportunity for students to explore what they were passionate about (Spencer, 2017). Education and parenting trends come full circle after the push for federally mandated accountability facing schools and districts. For

many parents, the addition of Common Core Standards is not only rigorous, but also confusing for them because that is not how they themselves learned.

Counter-Arguments

Homework reinforces students' learning.

Watkins and Stevens (2013) examined homework just like the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. Is the homework porridge too hot? Too cold? Or, is it, just right? Homework is given based on who benefits from the outcome—teachers, parents, or students. Teachers typically view homework as a necessary extension to a lesson learned that day, parents expect it, and students see it as an interruption to their social lives. Some school leaders believe homework is the cornerstone to success and accountability on state exams. Homework, even with its critics, can benefit students' achievement and academics. Homework is only successful when it is embedded within the school culture and has buy-in from all stakeholders. Strategic approaches and high expectations create accountability and credibility to homework, as well as its impact on student achievement.

Practice makes perfect.

Finnish students spend less time in school and come out with the best results in the world (Coughlan, 2016). Extra teaching hours spent on specific subjects is reflected in higher scores. Teachers are left to make decisions and adjust their instruction based on the needs of their students. The balancing act comes from homework, basing it on quality rather than quantity. “Even if students do not need it, research suggests it makes a positive difference” (Coughlan, 2016, p. 9). Professor Susan Hallam from the Institute of

Education says, “There is hard evidence that homework really does improve how well pupils achieve” (Coughlan, 2016). This theory, as in life, depends on the quality of the homework being sent home, and the opportunities for students to use that in their academics. This creates a pendulum of teachers and students working together for a common goal. Teachers can help students when misunderstanding occurs, instead of left on their own to figure out and become frustrated.

Homework builds character.

Children will learn to be responsible, solve problems, analyze tasks, and become independent. These skills are the same ones necessary for students to function in the world as adults (www.connectusfund.org). People who support this kind of thinking believe that students will learn to focus, complete a task, and prioritize what is important and what is not. If students are not given homework, some people believe it will make them lazy. When children are forced to complete assignments in the classroom, it gives them a sense of responsibility and accomplishment because they cannot make excuses to get out of it (www.occupytheory.org). It teaches them punctuality and attending to deadlines because they become personally accountable to someone.

One can never make a full conclusion without consistently debating research regarding a hot topic’s pros and cons. The topic of homework is no different. Some proponents swear by its benefits and efficiency, while others see no benefit at all. In my opinion, the benefits of having homework outweigh the benefits of having it because of the direct impact it has on students—not based on the opinions of adults. However, the evidence is clear: supporters of homework are driving kids away from learning, making

them less successful, and interrupting their childhoods. Homework often overwhelms struggling students and bores high-achieving ones, but it has become a staple of education—meaning overcoming the practice of assigning it will come with challenges.

SECTION FIVE: POLICY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Implementing any new or changed policy takes strategic planning and a considerable amount of time to roll out to teachers, students, and districts. The new changes are not always necessarily met with positive feedback, but can alleviate some stress and anxiety when thoroughly implemented in stages. Implementation will require teachers and administrators to create classroom assessments to ensure that teaching and learning are at the highest level, so homework is not at the forefront of assessing learning. The district's role will be to help support learning and engage the parents and community in a positive discussion about the lack of research shown to support homework as an instructional tool. This planning and preparation will take time and exude extra energy, but the affects it will have on students is unsurpassed.

Creating Assessments to Measure Learning

Teachers will be left with the task of creating assessments to gauge student learning in a multitude of situations. This can include, but is not limited to, formative assessments, exit slips, and student conferencing. Districts will need to provide substantial training to ensure that teacher-created assessments match the learning taking place within the classroom. As discovered within my program evaluation, "Teachers need to understand the effect that formative assessments have on learning, and how it allows fluidity within the curriculum" (Ontiveros, 2015, p. 3). Training will include professional development on how to create assessments and a book study related to the purpose of assessments, as well as how to use the data to support student learning and instruction. Time will need to be provided for teachers to attend these professional development

opportunities and book study. Since most of these trainings will take place outside the school day, additional monies may need to be used to pay teachers for their time.

This policy change will affect everyone from teachers to district administrators regarding creating assessments to measure learning instead of assigning homework. It becomes imperative that we are transparent with the changes. Providing all stakeholders with a timeline and cost analysis will help bring this change to the forefront, as well as allow for people to voice their questions and concerns prior to full implementation.

Timeline

<p>Year 1: Pilot program (one school)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changing the paradigm: present information to the board of education. • Train staff on assessments. • Informing parents: Send a letter home, conduct a question-and-answer session held in the evening. • Monitoring and assessing progress at piloting school: Monthly through grade-level meeting and staff meetings.
<p>Year 2: Roll out pilot to remaining schools (the original school becomes the expert)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train staff on assessments: Use the same consultant, book, and

	<p>additional staff from original pilot school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and assess progress at all schools. • Present data to board of education.
Year 3: Full implementation	

Figure 1: Timeline

Changing the Paradigm

The first year becomes critical in any new change or adoption of a policy. It is imperative to be strategic when rolling out anything new, especially how leaders package and explain information to others. The board of education becomes a critical voice in decision-making, affecting all areas of the school district especially when it comes policy changes. Changing mindsets or shifting paradigms is not always easy because people use their own beliefs about things to overshadow the change that is necessary for improvement. Clear and concise branding anchored in data and research will help support the information we provide to the board of education regarding this change. The nature of piloting becomes pivotal because changes, additions, and deletions can take place throughout the process before anything becomes permanent. Monthly check-ins with staff at grade-level meetings and staff meetings will provide substantial data to share with stakeholders throughout this process. As the administrator, I will make myself available to answer questions from parents and ensure updates are provided to them along the way.

Training Teachers on Assessments

Hiring a consultant becomes critical when implementing new strategies or approaches in teaching and learning. It also provides teachers with constant support and training throughout this new process. The consultant will be hired before the start of the school year, so they can speak to teachers about the piloting school during the building-level Institute Days. Consultant fees vary based on experience, how many hours they will provide professional development, and how many individuals they will need to train. For the first year, the consultant will work with teachers every month during school-improvement days, with additional time spent coming in to observe and conference with teachers on the progress with assessments. This consultant has worked with our district previously, which helps to build trust with the teachers. Working with the consultant directly is the most beneficial, but it cannot always happen like that. Therefore, the second form of professional development will occur through a book study, which the building principal will lead. This will help support and sustain the consultant when he or she cannot be present. Once a month, during staff meetings, the staff will be able to discuss and synthesize information read from the book and continue to learn from one another. Three books choices will be provided for teachers and the majority vote will win as to which book the staff will read and engage in. Some of the titles we may include are as follows: Katie White (2017), *Softening the Edges*; James Stronge (2017), *Designing Effective Assessments*; and/or Nicole Vagle (2014), *Design in Five*. These are just a few recommendations to consider; however, other options may be available. These books

focus on the effectiveness of creating assessments to inform instruction and monitor learning in easily understood contexts that we can replicate within the school.

Informing Parents

Communication with important stakeholders becomes critical when making a change in past practices. We must involve parents in the creation and implementation stages of this new policy because most parents assume that homework is a mandatory part of schooling and think it teaches responsibility; however, misinformation can cause anxiety. It is important to present the information to parents in a clear and logical way, providing details to support the change. We will send home a letter informing parents of this change, as well as schedule a meeting to provide clarification and allow for questioning. Supporting change all throughout the process will allow for a smoother transition and support. Support may include, but is not limited to, having teachers continuously communicate with parents during this change through email, newsletters, or face-to-face conversations, as well as having the Parent Teacher Organization's board become the voice of this change and be available to support and communicate with parents through Facebook, meetings, or the children's arrival and dismissal at school.

Monitoring and Assessing Progress

Any new change requires check-ins and monitoring to gauge effectiveness throughout the piloting process. Staff meetings, school-improvement days, and grade-level meeting are strategic ways to view assessments, talk about grading, and assess the overall effectiveness of the homework change. It allows for problem-solving to occur

early on so that frustration does not build because of the new policy. Celebrations are another way to encourage this change and reinforce the application. As the administrator, I will be constantly checking grades within our online portal, reviewing progress reports, and checking report cards to compare grades from previous years.

Years 2 and 3

The process and procedures for implementation are the same as those for Year 1, but more schools will participate within the adoption of the new policy. Teachers from Year 1 will help mentor, and provide support and additional resources to sustain moving forward on the entire district implementing this policy. It is crucial that all administrators continuously check in with teachers and parents to ensure ultimate success. Check-ins will include staff meetings, grade-level meetings, and communications with parents in a multitude of ways.

Program Budget

Change in any realm requires costs at various levels, whether it is time, resources, or additional personnel. In this policy change, the largest amount of money being spent is on the consultant we will use to ensure consistent and strategic implementation of various assessments. The other major cost will be for the books we purchase for the piloting school's book study in Year 1, as well additional books purchased for the remainder of the district within Year 2. The last cost will be paying the teachers to participate with additional trainings, professional development outside of the consultant, and any time spent after their contractual hours.

Year 1: Piloting school	<p>\$1,500 per day for consultant x 9 days = \$13,500</p> <p>\$15 for book study book x 25 staff = \$375</p> <p>\$24 per hour for after-hour training, meetings, etc.—each of the 25 staff members will be allowed 10 hours = \$6,000</p> <p>\$19.45 per session for each of the 25 teachers to create exit slips and common assessments (not to exceed 5 times) = \$2,431.25</p>
Year 2: Remainder of schools	<p>\$1,500 per day for consultant x 9 days for 5 schools = \$67,500</p> <p>\$15 for book study book x 175 staff members = \$2,625</p> <p>\$24 per hour for after-school training, meetings, etc.—all 175 employees will be allowed 10 hours = \$42,000</p> <p>\$19.45 per session for each of the 150 teachers to create exit slips and common assessments (not to exceed 5 times) = \$14,587.50</p>
Year 3: Full implementation	No additional costs: Any new employees will be trained in-house by the building’s principal and colleagues.
Total cost for two years	\$153,518.75. All funding will be used from TITLE 1 under Professional Development and Training.

Figure 2: Estimated Cost for New Homework Policy

The consultant will meet with each school within Years 1 and 2 for a total of nine trainings. Some will take place during monthly school-improvement days, while others

will take place at additional times throughout the year as scheduled by the building. The consultant will work on devising various formative assessments to take the place of the traditional homework philosophy, so teachers can ensure learning is taking place. When the consultant is not working with teachers, he will take part in a book study to continue their learning of assessments.

The book study will consist of teachers reading chapters and sharing their learning and creating discussions at staff meetings throughout the year. Currently, staff meetings are held on the last Wednesday of every month, which gives them nine times to meet and discuss the book. There are three books choices with similar approaches to homework and assessments, and are similarly priced around \$15. Teachers will also be asked to share their learning and ideas through a Google doc set up within the school. Teachers' responses will be based on the following statements for each chapter: "I support the idea because..." "I disagree with the idea because..." and "I want to learn more about..." These responses will allow for continuous learning and sharing to become a norm within the school.

Teachers who attend additional professional development or meetings will receive \$24 per hour for their time spent outside of the school day. Learning for our teachers is an asset, but we need to limit the amount of time spent to manage the budget. Every staff member will be entitled to 10 additional hours of learning. Of course, if this does not seem sufficient when we review and check in, then it is always something we can adjust within the budget for the following year.

Expenses are usually the largest issue when change occurs within schools because we need to ensure it will directly impact teaching and learning, and the cost analysis balances the outcome. In our district, we can use money we receive from Title 1 to absorb these costs, because they directly relate to student learning through professional development and training of staff. The outcomes of success are far greater than the cost spent to change the lives of many.

SECTION SIX: POLICY ASSESSMENT PLAN

The implementation plan becomes the most critical when conducting change. Responsibilities and progress-monitoring will be key in affecting change. Section Six is broken up into three parts: district office, principal, and teacher responsibilities to implement and monitor the stages of change about to occur. The superintendent will be the gate-keeper and oversee the entire process, ensuring all required pieces are effectively being implemented at every level. The superintendent and district office will communicate the vision and expectations of the change. The principal will take that message and clearly lay out guidelines for teachers to follow and meet with them regularly to assess progress. Principals will provide support and time for teachers to collaborate or observe other teachers using these assessments. Teachers will be responsible for collaborating with their colleagues when creating and reviewing assessments. They will monitor student successes with the newly added assessments and be reflective with their instruction.

District Office Responsibilities

The district office refers to the superintendent, curriculum director, and special education director. The superintendent will take the lead in communicating and creating the vision for the new homework policy. She will involve stakeholders, such as parents and the board, to ensure their support and understanding of the new change. Members of the district offices, as well as principals, teachers, parents, and the union president, will form a committee. The superintendent's approach to and packaging of the vision will be the pivotal piece to start the change. The district office will hire the consultant and

provide the budgetary numbers for this change and communicate where they money will come from the implement this plan.

Hiring the Consultant

Homework has always been the cornerstone of schools for centuries. Both the expectation and requirement has become students' achievement. Mindset changes need to occur to effectively implement this plan with fidelity. The district office will have the task of choosing a consultant that has a positive relationship with people, but will also challenge the status quo. Experiences within the teaching and learning are important to demonstrate the success of this new change, as well as how it positively impacts student achievement.

Leading the Committee Meetings

The district office administration will be responsible for leading the monthly meetings and creating agenda items to be discussed. Someone from the committee will also keep the time, and record notes to ensure that discussions move along in a timely fashion and conversations stick to the agenda items at hand. If further discussions need to take place, then the remainder of the agenda can be put aside until the next meeting. Meetings will take place every month with the agenda prepared and emailed to all members three days prior to the meeting. This gives members the opportunity to give feedback or add/delete items from the agenda. The buy-in within this stage will be crucial to ensure all voices have been heard and respected.

First Task: Send Survey to All Stakeholders

The committee will create a survey on Survey Monkey assessing the thoughts and feelings about current homework. The survey will consist of reflective questions revolving around teachers' current homework policies, how they use homework, and the impact it has on their teaching and student achievement. The results of this survey will be coded based on key terms and feelings, and then presented to all stakeholders. We will send out the same survey at the start of the third year, after the full implementation, to note any changes in feelings and opinions after the homework policy change.

Principal's Responsibility

As the leader of the building, the principal becomes responsible to lead and support the teachers throughout this change. He or she will attend grade-level meetings, constantly check on grading, and communicate frequently with the district throughout this change. The principal continuously reiterates the vision and supports the implementation process.

Supporting Teachers

The creation of new assessments takes time and collaboration. Principals will be responsible for providing help and assistance when necessary to ensure the assessments are appropriate, consistent within grade levels, and are frequently monitored. This is a daunting task even with the support of the consultant because of the time it takes to create and monitor. The principal will help facilitate this process by providing deadlines for teachers to create each assessment, as well as when assessments should be monitored and

assessed. This process will provide natural check points for teachers and the principal, which will hold them accountable for the tasks.

Monitoring Effectiveness

As stated above, there will be natural check points for the creation of assessments and monitoring. Within this timeframe, the principal will be responsible for checking the online database for grades, reviewing student progress reports, and checking report cards. The primary purpose is to ensure that this new change has not affected the lowering of student grades from previous years because homework is no longer sent home. If there are changes noted, the principal will have conversations with those teachers to see if there are any struggles or adaptations that need to be made. These check-ins and conversations are critical to move forward with the change.

Communicating Vision

Principals will meet with staff at the grade-level and staff meetings to ensure that the communication of the vision is both supported and continuously modeled. At each meeting, staff will be asked to celebrate what is going well and share that with which they are struggling. This time provides an opportunity for other staff to help support people who are struggling with tips or tricks to help them get through the rough patch. This not only provides support, but builds collaboration and problem-solving skills within the school. We will share the positives and negatives with the district in a monthly statement that the principal creates, which will detail suggestions provided to improve the

negative areas plaguing teachers. These meetings are an opportunity for the principal, teachers, and other staff to communicate on a consistent basis.

Teacher's Responsibility

Teachers will be laying the groundwork and at the forefront of this change. They are responsible for creating and monitoring assessments, communicating with parents and the principal, and working in collaboration with others to carry out these essential tasks.

Creating and Monitoring Assessments

Teachers will take part in professional development monthly with the consultant, as well as participate in a book study. In the beginning, there will be struggles pertaining to the creation of the assessments and monitoring student learning along the way. It will become critical for teachers to vocalize and identify struggles, so they can ask for assistance when the consultant is present. Teachers can also explore these challenging areas through the book study and the online discussion board. They will have to be open and collaborative when reviewing the assessments given and the students' performance on them. Some questions may be poorly written or not have directly matched the instruction presented. It becomes their responsibility to acknowledge those areas and find ways to make adaptations to ensure student learning.

Communication

Not only are teachers creating, assessing, monitoring, and tweaking the assessments, they also need to communicate frequently with parents along the way. Parental communication is imperative within the change process to ensure transparency

and create buy-in. Teachers will be required to send a monthly email or newsletter to parents informing them of what standards students are working on, as well as how the assessments are going. In this letter or email, teachers will identify areas of strengths and weaknesses within a standard itself, and may include the results from the assessments. This creates a stronger connection to home and school by providing specific instructional information to parents, along with a plan to help students when weak areas are present. Such suggestions may include reteaching the concept, practicing the skill at home, rewriting the assessment, or having students fix their mistakes. Being open, honest, and transparent within the whole process will build trust and open the lines of communication.

Responsibility on all levels is required for any change. Each person at each level needs to clearly understand his or her role and responsibility, and carry that out to ensure the change moves forward according to the timeline determined. If any level of responsibility falls short, it may create undo chaos and uncertainty about the success of the implemented change.

SECTION SEVEN: SUMMARY IMPACT STATEMENT

Changing the homework policy is an appropriate and impactful change that will directly impact student achievement and teacher instruction. Many times, student grades do not always reflect actual learning especially when homework is considered. Homework is sometimes not done alone, but with support from family members. This kind of learning, although important, may not directly correlate to the student's ability to complete the task independently with success. The idea of changing homework to practice allows for support when necessary; it will not impact the students' grades, but provides teachers with information to guide their instruction.

Students benefit directly from this change because it allows them to demonstrate learning throughout the day, rather than taking things home to complete. Those students who do well academically throughout the day will be able to produce the same kind of learning at home with work. However, those students who are struggling throughout the day would continue to struggle at home and may not have the support to help them. Students' attitudes toward school will directly impact their successes along the way.

What and Whose Values are at the Center of the Homework Policy

Student success is the first and foremost priority for any school, district, and community. School districts become the forefront for successes and failures when schools do not generate what the community deems successful. Districts critique the programs and resources a school uses to ensure that student learning is taking place. Sharing this knowledge and being transparent is the key to an effective transition toward change.

Parents will be in communication with the teachers, principals will be communicating with staff, and the district administration will be in communication with the schools.

Parents will be able to see their students' grades in the online portal and will receive communication from the teachers via email or newsletter. They will know what the students are working on and how to support their learning at home. Teachers will be in constant communication with one another, focusing on creating and reviewing assessments, as well as teaching and learning. Meeting, producing, and delivering results may be time-consuming, but this data will help ensure that all students are ultimately learning the material. Principals will continuously monitor and check, while also communicating throughout the process to district administrators, to provide data, develop consistency within this change, and give support when necessary.

Consistent Implementation

With any change, participants in the process must follow the timeline strategically and wholly to accurately measure and achieve success. I have established a vision, created a timeline for implementation, and totaled the budgetary items. Now, everyone in the district will have the responsibility to hold each other accountable through every step of the process. When a road block hits, the committee must review the process and make appropriate adjustments when necessary. Communication and collaboration are at the center of this change, and the plan will not be effective unless all participants uphold their part of this journey.

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