



Metro Nashville Public Schools Homework Guidelines

Background:

Research provides strong evidence that, when used appropriately, homework benefits student achievement (Good & Brophy, 2003; Cooper, Robinson, & Patall, 2006). Homework, therefore, is beneficial and important in a student's overall program; homework is required in MNPS effective the 2017-2018 school year.

General Information:

Homework is one of the many learning activities in which students engage; its purposes is to—

- extend learning, provide for the practice of concepts and skill development in concepts and/or skills initially presented in the classroom and that students can do independently to deepen their knowledge and understanding;
- provide opportunities for independent work;
- provide opportunities for enrichment;
- provide opportunities to preview work they will have (i.e., flipped classroom); and,
- provide opportunities to check for understanding and for possible instructional follow-up when students struggle to complete their homework assignments or have misconceptions.

Planning and Assigning Homework:

- Help students to see how homework is related to classwork and instructional objectives (discuss homework with students; ensure students are clear about homework expectations);
- Develop assignments which have meaning and account for individual student differences, needs and abilities;
- Ensure that the homework is challenging and at the right level of difficulty; design homework to maximize the chances that students will complete it. (Students should be able to complete homework assignments independently with relatively high success rates, but they should still find the assignments challenging enough to be interesting.);
- Ensure the total homework load from all students' teachers is a reasonable one to ensure that the amount of homework (assigned 2 to 4 times a week) follows the "10 minute rule" (Cooper, 2007). The "10 minute rule" states that all daily homework assignments combined should take about as long to complete as 10 minutes multiplied by the student's grade level. For example, up to 10 minutes per night of homework for Pre-K and Kindergarten students, 10 minutes per night in the first grade, 20 minutes for second grade, and an additional 10 minutes per grade level thereafter (e.g., 120 minutes for twelfth grade). Additional time should be added appropriately for daily at-home reading for enjoyment and should not to include a book report or like assignment;
- Ensure homework assignments, the procedures for accomplishing them, and the due dates are clear;
- Identify strategies to support students who may not have support at home with homework completion;
- When assigning homework, schools should be mindful of cultural, ethnic, religious, and other celebrations and/or historical events that are important to members of our community;
- Homework is not to be assigned on designated religious holidays when students are absent because of religious observances;
- Homework cannot be required over breaks from school (i.e., winter break);
- Students who have been excused from school for religious observances or other lawful absences shall have the opportunity to make up assignments;

- Flipped Classrooms: Help students and families to understand that as teachers increasingly engage in a flipped classroom pedagogical approach, students' preparatory homework activities become vital to effective classroom activities; Clearly communicate to parents and students the importance of homework activities as part of flipped classroom activities and lessons, including potential safety-related homework and how students' failure to complete the homework may limit their participation in the related classroom activity;
- Partner with families to reinforce learning and broaden educational opportunities for students through parental knowledge of the homework procedures established by the individual teacher; and,
- Homework should involve parents in appropriate ways without requiring parents to act as teachers or to police students' homework completion; and, make homework meaningful to students by ensuring cooperation and communication among the teachers, students, and parents/guardians.

Responsibilities:

A. Principal: The principal will do the following—

- Review and discuss with faculty at the beginning of each school year the district's homework guidelines and expectations;
- Work collaboratively with faculty, students and families to develop a culture of high expectations regarding homework completion;
- Establish procedures with the staff for coordinating homework assignments to ensure 2-4 assignments per week with adherence to the "10 minute rule";
- Ensure each August (i.e., at Back to School Night), and as appropriate thereafter, that the district, school, and classroom homework guidelines are communicated to students and parents/guardians;
- During the school year carefully monitor—
 - the relationship between instructional objectives and homework assignments;
 - the kinds of homework activities assigned;
 - whether individual differences among students are accounted for;
 - the appropriateness of instructional follow-up;
 - the degree of coordination of assignments among teachers; and,
 - the amount of homework assigned so that it is appropriate to students' age/grade levels per the "10 minute rule" and does not take too much time away from other home /after school activities.
- Work with teachers to motivate students to complete their homework and ensure adherence to MNPS' Homework Guidelines.

B. Teacher: Each teacher will do the following—

- At the beginning of each school year, communicate to students, families, and the principal a statement of the general homework plan for his/her class(es);
- Inform students of the homework's relationship to instructional objectives and its effect on the assessment of learning;
- Ensure homework assignments are related directly to instructional objectives; that homework complements classroom learning; and, that students have a clear understanding of the assignment and its purpose;
- Assigned homework 2 to 4 times a week and consider homework the rule rather than the exception to daily activity and ensure adherence to the "10 minute rule" for the total assigned homework;
- Assign daily reading homework where appropriate (i.e., students may be asked to read for enjoyment for at least 10 minutes every night and to keep a log of what they read);
- Ensure homework activities include opportunities for concept and skill development through review and enrichment experiences;
- Review completed homework assignments (teacher or a designee), provide feedback as needed, and provide appropriate instructional follow-up as needed; and,
- Allow homework to be made up with teacher assistance where necessary when the pupil is absent because of other school-related activities or situations beyond students' control (i.e., illness).

Grading and Reporting:

- Completed homework assignments are to be reviewed by the teacher (or a designee) with feedback provided as appropriate.
- Elementary School—Homework completion will be reported on report cards using the following 4 point scale: 0 – never completes, 1 – rarely completes, 2 – sometimes completes, 3 – frequently completes, and 4 – always completes.
- Middle and High School—Homework completion will count for 10% of each 9 weeks grade. Providing high quality academic feedback is the district's recommended best practice; however, a numerical grade reflecting the percentage correct is not required or the goal for the homework grade. The 10% for homework is based on completion and/or accuracy.