

## SWE Homework Guidelines

The debate about homework has been swirling since my now 32 year old son was in elementary school! It is the #1 frustration that families share with us, the #1 cause of missed work for school. Is it worth it? The last year we have spent quite a bit of time in research and reflection to answer that question. The research is pretty clear: Although there is decent correlation between effective homework and student success in high school, and to a lesser degree in middle school, there is very poor correlation in elementary school. Contrary to age-old "wisdom," there is little evidence that homework builds academic success or independence and responsibility for our children in elementary school. We had several classrooms last year experiment with no or little homework, and our own action research showed no decline in academic growth and some increase in reading enjoyment and enthusiasm for daily classroom work. This year, we will implement new homework guidelines for our students. Teachers may still send strategic assignments home, using these criteria:

**READING** may be incentivized and certainly encouraged nightly, but no written response will be required as homework. AR and other reading contracts can continue to be part of a student's reading grade.

**MATH** may be used to practice problems that students can work through independently. You will see no more than 10 practice problems a night and students will correct them in class the next day, with the teacher, for immediate feedback.

**UNFINISHED** work from daily school work may go home for completion.

**PROJECT WORK** - state, country, animal, etc. reports; science festival, book reports, biographies, etc. may be assigned. The calendar of incremental due dates will be provided and feedback must be provided incrementally during the instructional day.

**SPELLING** activities will focus on student agility with developmental spelling patterns or key vocabulary words. Most of the spelling work will be done in class with timely feedback. You are unlikely to see a weekly spelling test; instead students will be evaluated on their sustained use of correct spelling of target and high frequency words.

**COMPASS LEARNING** and a menu of family academic activities from which families may choose, are available for families to increase practice at home.

We know that this is a big change for many of our families; family reaction in our action research classrooms last year was overwhelmingly positive. Our students' agendas will be key in communicating with parents as highly strategic, yet limited, homework assignments come home. Please be assured that our dedication to our children's success is in no way diminished; in fact, we anticipate that this set of new homework guidelines will encourage our students as well as help families manage their precious evenings more freely.

Thank you! *Dr. Frank and the SWE Teaching Staff*