

# Nelda Mundy Elementary School

## Homework Policy

### Summary

The Fairfield Suisun Unified School District has had a change in policy regarding homework. Rather than set a uniform minimum or maximum time requirement at the district level, sites are to review new data and research on the value of homework and determine a policy.

At Mundy, the purpose of homework is to support each student's growth and development. Classroom teachers will work with each student to set goals and will provide work based on student's needs and interests. For example, if a student has a goal to develop reading comprehension or improve reading fluency, reading would be a focus of their work at home. Goals and individualization will be the focus for homework.

Research shows that it doesn't make sense to have students practice something they do not understand. In other words, if a student needs to develop a skill, additional instruction and skill building is what is required, not practice. A review of research in the field of education, *Homework: What Does the Research Say?*, published by ERIC's National Parent Information Network, found that elementary students given homework and those not given homework perform about the same on standardized tests.

**Since independent nightly reading is the only academic activity that has any correlation to increased knowledge (Cullinan, NYU 2000), it will be the only "Must Do" for our students. At Mundy, our intention is to create learning opportunities based on student's goals and interests, not simply generalized, worksheet-based practice.**

After making this part of our School Site Council's work and reviewing several studies on the effectiveness of homework, Mundy will shift away from traditional, worksheet and "One Size Fits All" based assignments for homework. According to research done by John Hattie, Alfie Kohn, Matt Miller, Alice Keeler, Harris Cooper and others, it is shown that homework has a minimal effect of student success and/or achievement in Elementary School.

- Homework will not be assigned on Weekends or Holidays (Mon-Thurs only)
- Homework will be individualized and based upon a student's needs, interests, or academic deficiencies.
- Reading will be a school wide "Must Do" nightly activity. Preferably, this shall be done as a family activity.

- Homework expectations are reviewed at Back to School Night and in class newsletters.
- Homework will not be assigned as a substitute for instruction, or new material not yet introduced.
- Homework should never be a tear-filled or unduly frustrating experience for students. If a child is unable to complete the assignments in a reasonable amount of time, they should STOP them and contact the teacher as soon as possible.
- Unfinished Class work. If a student chooses NOT to be responsible or on task during the school day and does not complete the work that is expected. The teacher may have him/her take the work home to complete.
- Students will not be made to stay in at recess, after school, or be graded down for not completing Homework.
- In preparation for Middle School, students in Grade 5 may have differentiated assignments or work depending on the class, subject, or where a student is in regards to Grade Level Proficiency of subjects.
- Homework will NOT consist of packets that contain the same assignments for all students. Choices, Menus or online alternatives may be given.

### Homework Options

Kohn suggests that teachers “Use homework as an opportunity to involve students in decision-making.” To that end, teachers will provide a menu of “may do” options for students to complete during the week. These might include, but are not limited to:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Everyday Math Games</li> <li>● Reading to self or others*</li> <li>● Reflective Questions</li> <li>● Listening to others read</li> <li>● Fluency passages</li> <li>● High Frequency Word or Sight Word memorization</li> <li>● Home Genius Hour</li> <li>● Academic or high interest videos</li> <li>● Benchmark Adv. Online</li> </ul> <p>*Nightly reading at home as a family will always be a “must do”.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Coding activities</li> <li>● FlipGrid participation</li> <li>● Unfinished Classwork</li> <li>● Choice STEAM Activities</li> <li>● Family Games</li> <li>● Exploring Parks and the outdoors</li> <li>● Cooking, measuring, creating, crafting or innovating</li> <li>● Reading Books for AR points if individual students choose.</li> </ul> <p>*Nightly reading at home as a family will always be a “must do”.</p>
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## Technology

Not all students have access to technology at home. Students will be given time at school to complete “must do” assignments, if they do not have access at home, or they will be provided a paper copy.

## Punitive Work

Extra work or Homework **will not** be assigned as a punishment.

- In John Hattie’s list of 2017 Factors that influence student achievement (over 250 of them), the range is from -.09 (ADHD) to 1.62 (Teacher estimates of student achievement) Homework is a 0.29, which has also been referred to as the “Zero Effect” on learning. In his book, *The Battle over Homework: Common Ground for Administrators, Teachers, and Parents*, the homework guru gives details about the relationship between homework and success at different grade levels. While homework has a significant benefit at the Highschool level, **the benefit drops off for middle school students and “there’s no benefit at the elementary school level.”**

## **Sources:**

- Allington, Richard. *What Really Matters for Struggling Readers*(Allyn and Bacon, 2005).
- Bennett, Sara & Kalish, Nancy. *The Case Against Homework: How Homework Is Hurting Our Children and What We Can Do About It* (New York: Crown, 2006).
- Kohn, Alfie. *The Homework Myth: Why Our Kids Get Too Much of a Bad Thing* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2006).
- Balli, S. J. (1998). When mom and dad help: Student reflections on parent involvement with homework. *Journal of Research and Development in Education*, 31(3), 142–148.
- Marzano, R. J., Pickering, D. J., & Pollock, J. E. (2001). *Classroom instruction that works: Research-based strategies for increasing student achievement*. Alexandria, VA: ASCD.
- Cullinan, B (2000). Independent Reading and School Achievement. School of Library and Media Research, Volume 3.