



**LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
POLICY BULLETIN**

TITLE: Homework and Makeup Assignments in Grades K-12

NUMBER: BUL-3491.1

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ROUTING

All Schools and Offices
Local District Superintendents
Administrators of Instruction
Local District Principal Leaders
Principals
All Teachers

DATE: May 9, 2012

PURPOSE: This bulletin defines District philosophy relating to the weighting of homework in a student’s academic grade, homework guidelines, and makeup assignment guidelines for Grades K-12.

POLICY: As the District has implemented standards-based curriculum and standards-based assessments, it is critical that our students’ academic grades reflect the knowledge they have learned rather than behavioral compliance. This applies to students in Grades K through 12.

Beginning July 1, 2012, daily routine homework assignments will comprise no more than 20% of a student’s academic achievement grade. Studies have shown that by limiting the weight of homework towards a student’s academic grade, a truer picture of the student’s knowledge will be reflected in the achievement grade. Homework is a formative tool for practice toward mastery.

This bulletin is to clearly define the purpose of homework, its weight towards a student’s academic grade in a standards-based system, and the cumulative amount of daily time that is appropriate for the student. Academic grades are to be aligned to student performance on California state content standards.

MAJOR CHANGES: This Bulletin replaces BUL-3491.0, *Homework and Makeup Assignments in Grades K-12*, dated June 26, 2007. The content has been revised to reflect effective homework practices.

BACKGROUND: The purpose of homework is fourfold:

- It is meant to be an opportunity for independent *practice*, to reinforce learning and to help students master specific skills.
- It can be used as a *preparation* for introducing material to be presented in future lessons.
- It is an opportunity for students to *extend* their current skills into new situations.
- It is a means by which students may *integrate* many different skills to a larger task, such as book reports, projects, or other creative avenues (Vatterott, 2009).



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Homework is formative and an opportunity for students to experiment with new learning and skills. Students apply what they have learned so they may see what they fully understand and where they may still have questions. This is part of the formative learning process. Homework is not a punitive or compliance-driven tool. (Vatterott, 2009). It should have direct alignment to the content standards appropriate to the grade level or course.

Research has shown that a truer picture of a student's content knowledge is reflected in the academic achievement grade when that grade is based on actual learning rather than compliance (O'Connor, 2009). Based on varying degrees of access to academic support at home, completion of homework should not penalize a student so severely that it prevents the student from passing a class nor should it unduly inflate the grade. Because of the formative or practice nature of homework, it is now Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD)'s policy to limit its weighting in a student's academic grade. No more than 20% of a student's academic grade can include daily routine homework as a factor towards that grade.

An alternative placement for grading the completion of homework is in conjunction with cooperation and work habits, completely separate from the academic grade. The academic grade is to be a clear and accurate indicator of what a student knows and is able to do base only on the requirements of the standards. The non-academic grade for cooperation and work habits is a clearer and more accurate indicator of a student's behavior, attitude, effort, or attendance (O'Connor, 2009).

Effective homework practices focus on academic success for all students. Questions to be addressed when assigning and giving credit for homework include: What is the purpose of the homework task/assignment? How will this enhance the student's understanding and learning? What support systems are in place for students to complete this work outside of the classroom?

Schools may establish local school guidelines in regards to daily routine homework with input from all stakeholders.

GUIDELINES:

The following guidelines apply:

I. WHAT AN ACADEMIC GRADE MEANS

In our standards-based system of teaching and learning, academic grades reflect multiple measures of performance and a variety of assignments that demonstrate progress toward and mastery of standards in a particular content area. The academic grade accurately represents what a student knows and is able to do. Academic grades are not to be based on the routes which students take towards mastery, nor their behavior, attitude, effort, or attendance (O'Connor, 2009).



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II. WHAT A NON-ACADEMIC GRADE MEANS

In our standards-based system of teaching and learning, non-academic grades reflect students' initiative, social behaviors, and work habits. These grades are determined through levels of performance, such as "Excellent", "Satisfactory", and "Unsatisfactory", or "Consistent", "Inconsistent", and "Minimal." By distinguishing between academic achievement and personal effort and behavior, a student's report card or transcript becomes a more robust document as well as a comprehensive profile (Guskey, 2009).

III. ASSIGNMENT OF ROUTINE DAILY HOMEWORK

- A. Homework assignments should be reasonable in content, length, and resources required. Books and other materials required for assignments should be provided or easily obtainable.
- B. Homework for all students should be purposeful and clear and should be based on the grade-level standards for the class. It should be modified for students with special needs. It should never be assigned as a punishment.
- C. Homework should be directly related to the content and standards being taught. Students should not be given homework assignments they have not been taught how to do. Homework should be assigned to reinforce and enrich student knowledge. The assignment should always be stated in terms of the standard, skill or concept being reinforced in addition to terms of the chapter, unit, or page number in a given text.
- D. Homework assignments and due dates should be thoroughly explained by the teacher in advance. The written description of the subject content, standards, and course objectives provided to parents at the beginning of the course should include homework requirements.
- E. Completed homework assignments should be acknowledged with feedback, recorded by teachers, reviewed with and returned to students in a timely manner. The longer students have to wait for feedback, the weaker the connection to their effort becomes, and the less likely they are to benefit. (Banger-Drowns, Kulik, Kulik, & Morgan, 1991)
- F. Parents should be notified when students do not complete homework assignments or show signs of significant decline in effort or achievement.

IV. PROJECTS AND LONG-TERM ASSIGNMENTS

- A. Projects and long-term assignments may be scheduled over an extended period of time that may include weekends and vacations. If a project or



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assignment is assigned over an extended period, regular checks on progress should be made by the teacher. Parents should be notified through the syllabus of long-term assignments and projects, especially if they overlap part of a vacation period.

V. TIME ALLOCATIONS

To ensure that the amount of time spent on daily homework is not excessive or detrimental to the health of a student; schools may establish local school guidelines with input from all stakeholders.

A. Elementary School

Routine daily homework should be assigned for a maximum of four days a week. A Monday-to-Thursday schedule is recommended. For projects and extended assignments, see Section IV above.

Grade Level	Maximum Number of Routine Daily Homework Minutes per Day*
Kindergarten	10
1 st	20
2 nd	20
3 rd	30
4 th	40
5 th	50

*Does not include daily reading practice

B. Secondary School

Routine daily homework in secondary schools may be assigned in academic classes. A Monday-to-Thursday schedule is recommended. In non-core content areas, homework may be assigned when appropriate. Instead of following the maximum time allocations listed below, secondary schools have the option of requiring an increased amount of homework in two academic subjects on specific nights of the week and specific amount of time in other subject areas on the remaining nights. For example, a school may wish to concentrate on English and mathematics on Mondays and Wednesdays by increasing the amount of homework in each of these subjects and not requiring homework in other subjects on the same nights. These decisions must be reached through a coordinated school effort and based on student data or need.

The amount of routine daily homework in any of the A-G courses should be the same for all students, regardless of their grade level. In other words, a eighth grader taking Algebra 1A in a middle school should have just as much homework as a twelfth grader in the same class in high school.



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Grade Level	Maximum Homework Time Allocation
6	Average of 15 minutes for each academic class daily
7 - 8	Average of 20 minutes for each academic class daily
9 - 10	Average of 25 minutes for each academic class daily
11 - 12	Average of 30 minutes for each academic class daily

- C. Special consideration must be given to students in honors, Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, School for Advanced Studies (SAS) and highly gifted classes and programs. It is essential that teachers in these programs remain sensitive to the overall course load of a student, and make every attempt to collaborate with other teachers so as not to overburden a student in one subject area.
- D. Special Education Students, Schools and Centers

To ensure that the total amount of time spent on homework is appropriate to the student's individual needs, assignments should be related to the content of each student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

VI. MAKEUP ASSIGNMENTS FOR SCHOOL ABSENCES

- A. Students with excused absences must be given the opportunity to complete the missed coursework, homework, or test with other equivalent assignments and must be given credit equal to that which they would have received on the original assignment or test for the same quality of work.
- B. Students absent for justifiable personal reasons, upon written request of the parent or guardian and approved by the principal or designated representatives, shall be allowed to complete all assignments and tests missed during the absence which can reasonably be provided and, upon satisfactory completion, shall receive credit equal to the credit they would have received on the original assignment or test. The teacher shall determine in what period of time the student must complete such assignments. Teachers must take into consideration that students will have work from multiple subjects to make up. Teachers should collaborate with each other to assure that the student will have the opportunity to get all of the work completed. The tests and assignments shall be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the tests and assignments that the student missed during the absence.
- C. Students who have been suspended from a class may be required to complete assignments or tests missed during the suspension if the



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assignments and tests can reasonably be provided and upon satisfactory completion shall receive credit equal to that they would have received on the original assignment or test. The teacher shall determine what assignments must be made up and in what period of time the student must complete such assignments. The tests and assignments shall be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the tests and assignments that the student missed during the suspension.

- D. Students who are truant or absent without verified justifiable personal reasons or students who have returned to school without a note need not be given the opportunity to complete coursework, homework, or tests missed. However, in the interest of helping these students succeed academically, teachers should give them such opportunities.
- E. Students who fail to complete assignments satisfactorily may receive a mark of “Fail/Not Proficient” on such assignments.

AUTHORITY: This is a policy of the Los Angeles Unified School District.

RELATED RESOURCES: Cooper, H., (2007). *The Battle Over Homework: Common Ground for Administrators, Teachers, and Parents* (2nd ed.). Corwin Press. Thousand Oaks, CA.

Guskey, T. R., (2009). *Practical Solutions for Serious Problems in Standards-Based Grading*. Corwin Press. Thousand Oaks, CA.

Kohn, A., (2006). *The Homework Myth: Why Our Kids Get Too Much of a Bad Thing*. Da Capo Books. Cambridge, MA.

O’Connor, K., (2009). *How to Grade for Learning, K-12*. Corwin Press. Thousand Oaks, CA.

Vatterott, C., (2009). *Rethinking Homework: Best Practices that Support Diverse Needs*. ASCD. Alexandria, VA.

Bangert-Downs, R. L., Kulik, C. C., Kulik, J. A., & Morgan, M. (1991). The instructional effects of feedback in test-like events. *Review of Educational Research*, 61(2), 213-238.

ASSISTANCE: For assistance and further information, contact the Office of Curriculum, Instruction and School Support, Secondary Programs at 213-241-7510.