



To: Dr. Mike Riggle

From: Rosanne Williamson

Re: Strategic Planning Update - Homework

Date: November 9, 2016

Revised Working DRAFT Homework Principles & DRAFT Principles for Students and Parents

The administration would like to share a revised Working DRAFT of the Homework Principles document and the newly developed DRAFT Homework Principles for Students and Parents. These principles are grounded in research-based best practices when using the instructional strategy of homework. No Board action is necessary.

Background

Board Policy 7400: Homework was adopted in July 2016. This policy calls for the development of principles for effective homework practices based on current research and best practices.

Feedback regarding homework practices was obtained during the 2015-2016 school year through the strategic planning survey of teachers, students and parents. Subsequent focus groups of students, parents and teachers provided more context to the survey data.

Purpose:

Teachers will utilize professional judgment to apply the Homework Principles when assigning homework. These principles are intended to guide and promote effective, research-based homework practices.

Process

The revised Working DRAFT Homework Principles document was updated based upon teacher and Board feedback.

Written feedback was garnered from teachers during faculty meetings at both schools held on Monday, October 17. All teacher comments were reviewed and adjustments to the DRAFT Homework Principles have been made in light of this feedback. Teacher comments identified the need and desire for department-based time and further conversations regarding Homework Principles. As noted in the timeline, additional department-based and school-wide feedback sessions have been established and will likely yield additional revisions before a Final DRAFT emerges from this dialogue.

Timeline

- Week of October 17 – Trial student survey administered & feedback obtained
- October 19-November 10 – Teacher survey open
- Week of October 24 – Adjustments to student surveys based on student feedback
- By October 28 – Identify themes from faculty meeting feedback for potential Homework Principle revisions
- October 31-November 10 – Student surveys administered in all English classes
- November
 - Analyze survey results
 - Obtain additional input regarding Homework Free Zones
 - Develop DRAFT Homework Principles for Students & Parents
 - November 7 & November 14, respective GBN/GBS department-based discussion of principles
 - November 14 Board Meeting – revised Working Draft of Homework Principles & DRAFT Student and Parent Principles presented
 - November 21 & November 28, respective GBN/GBS department-based discussion of principles in light of student and teacher perceptions identified through homework surveys
 - By December 2 – Incorporate additional faculty feedback for potential Homework Principle revisions
- November/December – Share survey results & incorporate any further revisions to principles
 - December 12 Board Meeting
 - Present Final DRAFT of Homework Principles
 - Present Final DRAFT of Student and Parent Principles
 - Present Survey Results and Findings
- Second Semester
 - Professional Development
 - Teachers and I.S.'s will help design second semester professional development based upon identified needs
 - Awareness/Communication Plan (Teachers, Students, Parents)
 - Homework Principles
 - Homework Principles for Students & Parents
- Next school year – Baseline data will be a source of comparison for surveys next school year

DRAFT (revised 10/27) - HOMEWORK PRINCIPLES
Characteristics of Meaningful Homework

Homework as a Research-Based Instructional Strategy:

Glenbrook teachers focus on effectively engaging students by creatively applying their knowledge and skills gained through formal teacher preparation programs and ongoing professional development. Assigning homework is a research-based instructional strategy used by our teachers that has been shown to support student learning, especially in Grades 7-12.

Purpose of Homework Principles:

Teachers will utilize professional judgement to apply these principles when assigning homework.
~~Teachers will use these principles.~~ The Homework Principles are meant to guide and promote effective, research-based homework practices. Parents and students may reference these principles to assist them in understanding teachers' approach to designing meaningful homework.

This is a living document that will evolve and change as technologies, curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessments are developed.

To promote student learning in partnership with teachers, students and parents have been provided [Homework Principles for Students and Parents](#).

Clear Communication of Homework Expectations:

- Provide a clear description of how homework is used to determine overall grade
- Provide students and parents with access to information regarding homework through a variety of means (such as announcement during class, posted online, written on syllabus)
- ~~Announce completion dates well in advance of due date~~
- Provide a clear description of how the homework is graded
- Communicate an estimated time for homework completion based upon the announced due date
- Communicate the purpose of the homework
- Respect Homework-Free ~~Zones~~ Breaks ~~established by the district~~
 - Major extended breaks from school (Thanksgiving, winter, spring)
 - ~~Major school activities (Variety Show, Homecoming)~~
 - Major religious holidays (already in practice)
 - Homework for a particular class should not be due on the same day as a large assessment or project (not inclusive of study guides or review assignments)

Research-Based Design of Quality Homework:

- Clear Academic Purpose
 - Purpose of homework may include checking for understanding, introducing, reinforcing, and/or applying concepts, principles, and skills
 - Homework is aligned to course curriculum goals
- Instill Student Competence and Confidence in learning
 - Provide clear explanation of homework
 - Provide clear expectations for how homework will be assessed

- Provide intermittent feedback on long-term tasks and projects
- Consider the length and frequency of homework
- Foster Student Ownership
 - ~~Provide~~ Consider providing an opportunity for students' personal expression
 - ~~Provide~~ Consider providing students with options for how to complete homework in a way that aligns with individual learning styles
- Efficiency
 - Assign homework that emphasizes academic skills focused on course learning outcomes while minimizing time spent on nonacademic skills
 - Consider an estimated time for homework completion by the student
 - Consider ~~totality~~ of student workload in other courses and other commitments
- Feedback
 - Design homework that enables teachers to obtain feedback regarding student understanding for the purpose of adjusting instruction
 - Provide timely feedback that gives students an opportunity to identify strengths and address weaknesses in preparation for assessments
 - Encourage students to communicate when they struggle with homework or when they are spending ~~far~~ greater time on homework than the teacher expects
 - Collect feedback from students on actual homework completion time
- Consistency
 - Strive for consistency in quality and quantity of homework among teachers offering the same course and/or levels

DRAFT - HOMEWORK PRINCIPLES for STUDENTS AND PARENTS

Homework as a Research-Based Instructional Strategy:

Glenbrook teachers focus on effectively engaging students in learning by creatively applying their knowledge and skills gained through formal teacher preparation programs and ongoing professional development. Assigning homework is a research-based instructional strategy used by our teachers that has been shown to support student learning, especially in Grades 7-12.

Purpose of Homework Principles:

Students and parents are encouraged to use these principles to promote student learning in partnership with teachers when the instructional strategy of homework is utilized.

To assist students and parents in understanding teachers' approach to designing meaningful homework, parents and students may reference the document [Homework Principles: Characteristics of Meaningful Homework](#). This document is meant to guide and promote effective, research-based homework practices and is not intended to serve as a required checklist given the varied nature of the homework assignments across academic departments.

Strategies for Supporting Homework:

Students: High school-age students should begin to develop self-advocacy skills, organizational skills and the ability to self-monitor and recognize when distractions interfere with homework completion time. Students should strive to strike a balance between academic coursework and desired involvement in school and non-school activities and athletics.

Strategies:

- Establish clear, positive communication with teachers
 - Speak with your teacher about the best way to communicate with them
 - When is your teacher free to help students?
 - What electronic means are available for communication?
 - email
 - Google Classroom
 - PowerSchool
 - Other
 - Communicate with your teacher when you struggle with homework or when you are spending greater time on homework than the teacher expects
 - Take the initiative to share your concerns about homework or other academic concerns with your teacher
 - Communicate with your teachers about your academic workload in other courses and other commitments
- Identify your academic strengths and address weaknesses based upon homework feedback in preparation for quizzes and tests
- Access resources provided by teachers that give information regarding homework (Google Classroom, class syllabus, other)
- Make use of Student Resource Time (SRT)
 - Use SRT time to complete homework

- Seek out Resource Area teachers for homework help
- Access other school resources such as the library
- Establish homework routines
 - Limit distractions when working on homework (For example: texting, TV, Social Media, etc. . .). Avoid multi-tasking when possible.
 - Establish a consistent work place
 - Develop organizational skills to assist in balancing workload
 - Consider a weekly time management plan that includes allocating time for homework, outside school activities, and other commitments
- Work with your school counselor to establish necessary supports within the school, as needed
 - Consider the estimated workload required when registering for courses in balance with desired involvement in school and non-school activities and athletics

Parents: Students are supported when parents and guardians provide clear messages about the importance of homework and consider specific strategies to assist their child in being successful. Parents should recognize and support the importance of their high school-age student in acquiring self-advocacy skills, organizational skills and the ability to self-monitor and recognize when distractions interfere with homework completion time. Encourage students to strike a balance between academic coursework and desired involvement in school and non-school activities and athletics.

Strategies

- Discuss homework with your student regularly
- Help establish homework routines
 - Provide a consistent, distraction-free work place
- Supervise the homework process, but don't micromanage
- Offer emotional support for student effort and performance
- Support your student's personal responsibility for homework processes and outcomes
- Encourage your student to self-monitor, focus attention
- Establish clear communication channels with teachers
 - Encourage your student to self-advocate in speaking with his/her teacher about homework or other academic concerns
 - Attend school open-houses
 - If warranted, reach out to teachers for assistance or when questions or concerns arise
 - Communicate with the teacher about student performance, progress, homework
 - Note signs of student success or difficulty related to homework task or motivation
- Work with your student's school counselor to establish necessary supports within the school, as needed
 - Consider the student's estimated workload when registering for courses to balance with his/her desired involvement in school and non-school activities and athletics

Some Strategies Excerpted from the Following References:

Dawson, Peg. "Homework: A Guide for Parents." (n.d.): n. pag. National Association of School Psychologists. Web.

Walker, Joan M.T. "Parental Involvement in Homework." Harvard Family Research Project, n.d. Web. 1 Oct. 2016.