

HOMework POLICY

Thurgood Marshall Elementary School
2008-2009

The MCPS Regulation on Homework Procedures (IKA-RA) states that "...the amount of time devoted to learning is related to achievement in a subject. Homework, therefore, is important in a student's overall program. The Montgomery County Board of Education believes that the home can reinforce learning and broaden educational opportunity for students through parental knowledge of the homework procedures established by the individual teacher." The regulation also states that homework should be assigned three to five times a week and that the teacher can best determine the nature and length of homework assignments. Schools are to make an effort not to assign homework on days of religious observances, or schedule important class field trips and activities on designated religious holidays and/or when students will be absent because of religious observances.

In addition to following the MCPS regulation on homework, we believe that homework assignments must be meaningful to students, should relate to the students' daily program, and should have a clearly defined purpose. Homework must not be busywork or punishment for misbehavior. We believe that each student's in-class learning activities are the most valuable, and that homework is an expansion of those activities. Whenever possible, homework should be individualized for each student.

Time spent on homework should be limited and should be incorporated into each child's daily schedule. Elementary school children also need time to spend on recreational activities and to personal interests. Homework is to be assigned every Monday through Thursday based on the following **minimum daily guidelines**: kindergarten, 10-15 minutes; grades 1 and 2, 15-25 minutes; grade 3, 25-30 minutes; grade 4, 30-45 minutes; and grade 5, 45-60 minutes. *If a child is spending excessive time on an assignment and is genuinely frustrated, the parent should stop the child from completing the assignment and contact the teacher.* Of course, all papers are to be evaluated and returned to the students. The return time should be within a couple days and never longer than one week.

At Thurgood Marshall ES, we believe that homework assignments should serve one or more of the following purposes:

- to reinforce and enrich school learning experiences
- to teach students to follow directions and to organize time and materials
- to help students to accept responsibility and to develop self-reliance for assigned work
- to enable parents to stay informed about their child's progress and about the school's instructional program

We believe that teachers should be responsible for:

- communicating their homework procedures clearly to students and parents at the beginning of each school year
- assigning homework that is purposeful and meaningful to the child
- using homework to encourage each student to use his/her initiative
- providing for students' needs through homework assignments. These assignments typically include reading, research, writing, experimentation, skill reinforcement, and/or a project in a special area
- assigning homework that is within the ability of the child
- assisting students in making up work missed due to excused absences by assigning homework to the student upon his/her return to school
- providing due dates for major assignments well in advance so that students can plan their work
- making comments on homework assignments that are of a helpful, diagnostic nature
- using desired outcomes and the needs of students as the basis for planning the amount and frequency of homework assignments

We believe that students should be responsible for:

- writing down homework assignments and turning in assignments when they are due
- explaining to parents what homework has been assigned and when it is due
- making up assignments that are missed due to absences
- learning directions for each assignment before leaving school and telling the teacher if they do not understand the directions

We believe that parents should be responsible for:

- arranging a quiet, comfortable, well-lit place for their child to use for studying and working on homework assignments
- providing encouragement, support, and suggestions when their child is working on homework (but refusing to do the assignment for him/her)
- communicating with the teacher when questions arise about an assignment or what is expected of the student
- arousing their child's interest in a variety of subjects through exposure to a variety of reading materials, visiting special places, and enjoying hobbies and new learning experiences
- remembering to praise both effort and finished product, being mindful that the greatest reward is parent approval and the child's own self-satisfaction

Working together, teachers and parents can help each child develop good study habits and feel successful in school.