



Homework Update

**Suffolk Public Schools
School Board Meeting**

November 9, 2017

Homework Policy



Section 8-29.1. A. The basic objective of homework is the **reinforcement and application** of previously learned concepts, principles and skills. Homework assignments should be structured to reinforce and apply that which has been introduced and explained in the classroom or for the purpose of independent study. Homework can provide an **essential communication link between the school and the home**. One measure of a program or course is the quality of the work done at home by the student. Homework should be an **important tool in developing independent thought, self-direction and self-discipline**.

Homework Policy (Continued)

- Assigned after **introduction and thorough explanation of the skills** necessary to successfully complete the assignment.
- Assigned in such a manner that it will be clearly understood by all students.
- Serve a **valid purpose** and be closely related to current classroom activities.
- A student **access to resource materials** should be considered when making assignments.
- **Evaluated promptly** and returned to the student. Effort and competency should be recognized
- Teachers should seek to **determine the causes if a student regularly fails to do assigned work.**
- **Excessive homework should be avoided**
- Not be used for disciplinary purposes.
- Appropriate steps should be taken to **communicate with parents regarding the division's homework policy and to solicit parent support.**

Local School Division Nightly Homework Practices

Grade	Suffolk	Chesapeake	Hampton	Norfolk	Newport News	Virginia Beach
K	Up to 30 Min (Optional)	No Specified Time Limit	10 Minute Rule <i>(multiply by the grade level --e.g. 2nd grade = 20 min, 3rd grade=30 min etc.)</i>	< 30 Min	15-30 Min	No Specified Time Limit
1st Grade	Up to 45 Min	20-45 Min		< 30 Min	15-30 Min	20 Min
2nd Grade	Up to 60 Min	20-45 Min		45 Min	30-40 Min	30 Min
3rd Grade	Up to 90 Min	20-45 Min		45 Min	30-40 Min	30-40 Min
4th Grade	Up to 90 Min	30-60 Min		60 Min	45-60 Min	40-50 Min
5th Grade	Up to 90 Min	30-60 Min		60 Min	45-60 Min	50-60 Min

Research

In John Hattie's *Visible Learning*, a synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement, he found:

- “The effects of homework are twice as large for high as junior high, and twice as large again for junior high as for elementary students” (Cooper, 1989).
- Effect sizes equaled .15 for elementary and .64 for high school students.
- Homework involving higher level thinking and project-based work were least effective.
- Effects were highest when homework involved rote learning, practice or rehearsal of the subject matter.
- Short, frequent homework closely monitored by the teacher is most effective
- Effects were greater for lower ability students
- Effects were higher in math; lowest in science and social studies

Hattie, J. (2010). *Visible learning: a synthesis of over 800 meta-analyses relating to achievement*. London: Routledge.

Homework Review Process



- Reviewed SPS homework policies and regulations
- Reviewed policies and regulations in other divisions
- Reviewed current research on homework
- Met with principals to discuss concerns about homework and reviewed the policy with them
- Surveyed elementary teachers to determine their homework practices and beliefs about homework

Recommendation

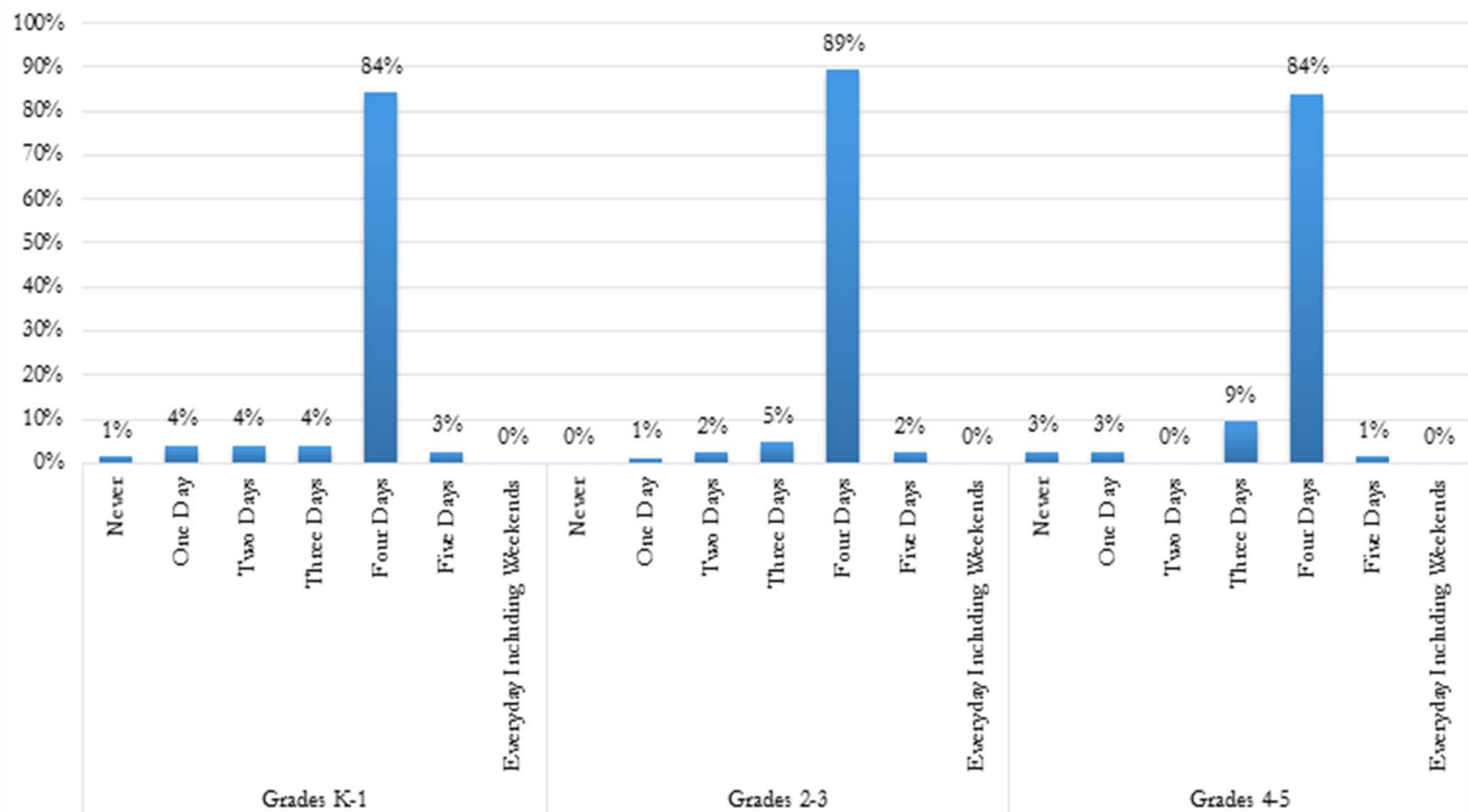
Homework is very beneficial when implemented in a manner that aligns with research and best practices. To ensure homework is implemented effectively, we recommend:

- Implementing the 10-minute homework rule in elementary school.
- According to Duke researcher Harris Cooper, 10 minutes per grade level is the optimum amount of homework that should be assigned to students per night.

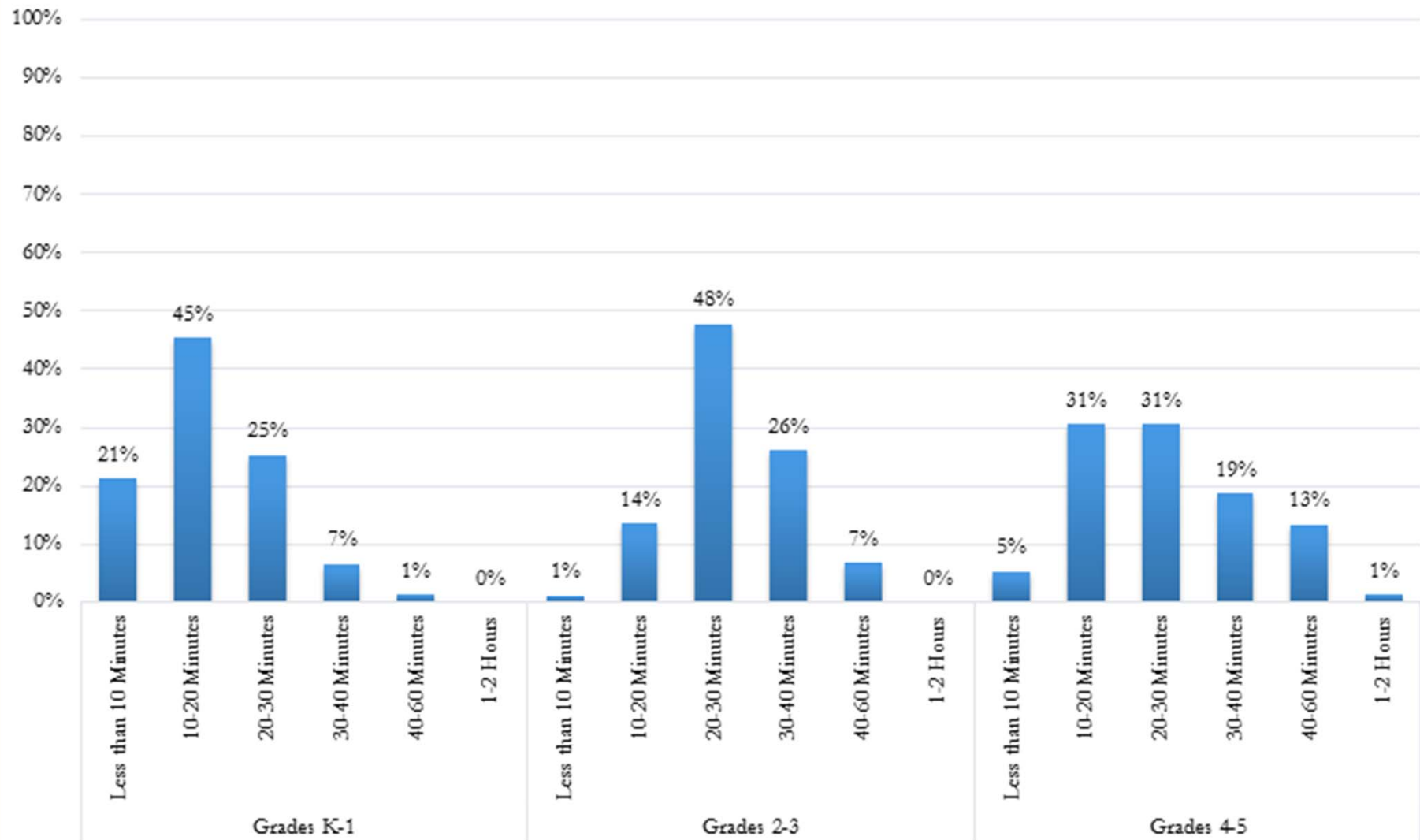
Teacher Homework Survey

Count and Percent of Respondents by Grade Level		
	Count	Percent
Kindergarten	42	17%
1st Grade	41	17%
2nd Grade	41	19%
3rd Grade	46	16%
4th Grade	39	15%
5th Grade	38	17%
Total	247	

Number of Days Homework is Given



Amount Of Time Spent On Homework



Expectations for the Amount of Homework

	Too Little Homework	About The Right Amount of Homework	Too Much Homework	I Do Not Know
Kindergarten	3%	89%	6%	3%
1st Grade	5%	74%	13%	8%
2nd Grade	5%	68%	20%	8%
3rd Grade	0%	80%	16%	5%
4th Grade	5%	65%	22%	8%
5th Grade	8%	62%	16%	14%
Total	4%	73%	15%	7%

Feedback Given to Students

	All of the Time	Most of the Time	Half of the Time	Some of the Time	None of the Time
Provide students with a grade or comments on their homework	34%	29%	5%	19%	14%
Explain the purpose of specific homework assignments to students	51%	24%	3%	15%	7%
Review completed homework assignments in class	22%	16%	6%	29%	27%

Reasons Teachers Assign Homework

	Percent of Responses
To practice a skill	47%
To introduce a skill	1%
To prepare students for the next day's lesson	4%
To teach students responsibility	16%
Because parents expect it	11%
Because the division requires it	20%

Benefit of Homework on Academic Success

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The homework your students receive is beneficial to their overall academic success.	42%	35%	12%	7%	4%

Proposed Change

Grade	Current	Proposed
Grade K	Up to 30 Min (Optional)	Up to 10 Min (optional)
1st Grade	Up to 45 Min	10-20 minutes
2nd Grade	Up to 60 Min	Up to 20 Min
3rd Grade	Up to 90 Min	Up to 30 Min
4th Grade	Up to 90 Min	Up to 40 Min
5th Grade	Up to 90 Min	Up to 50 Min

Next Steps



- If approved, implement the new 10-minute rule in the elementary grades beginning Jan. 2, 2018
- Include homework questions in annual parent survey to monitor student homework load and parent satisfaction on an ongoing basis
- Encourage parents to communicate with their child's teacher if the homework consistently takes longer than the new proposed times