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## Homework at Heather

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# Principal's Bulletin

Wednesday, August 29, 2018

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## Homework at Heather

Dear Families,

As a Preschool to 4th grade school, we are committed to supporting learning, engagement, and the overall well-being of our children. Over the last couple of years, we have worked alongside the other district schools, superintendent and Board of Trustees and have applied a new research-based approach to homework.

### Homework at Heather

- Out of classroom learning will vary according to a student's grade level, ability, need and interests, whenever possible.
- All students will be expected to read and talk about books each day. (Read alouds and turn-taking count!)
- Practice in math may be assigned in order to support skill mastery, as determined by teacher observations of student progress.
- Teachers will provide a menu of optional learning resources to support parents in extending their child's learning. In class, menus or lists of options will be shared with children so that they can explore and express learning interests. We encourage parents to support children in selecting both the pace and the material as a means of fostering curiosity and helping children develop ownership over their own learning.
- Additional assignments may occasionally be given when outside of class activities will deepen student-driven learning and/or project-based learning in the classroom.
- Some students may need more time or different resources to meet grade level standards. Teachers and parents will work together to set goals, develop a support plan, and monitor progress.
- We recognize that learning happens throughout a child's day, and that children are most engaged when they are pursuing their own goals. We want to help make room in our students' day for all kinds of learning!

### Why?

Over the last several school years, our staff engaged in a series of evidence-based conversations about what young children need in order to thrive. In addition, district administrators and our Board of Trustees have engaged in community conversations resulting in a revised district homework policy, TK-Grade 8, and how it supports our [strategic plan](#). The following key points from research and our experience, for TK-8, have been highlighted through this process:

- Homework assignments should be purposeful, meaningful, and tailored to the individual needs of students

- Daily reading is key to each child's long-term success
- Development of organizational work habits and self-discipline are crucial
- Family time, play time, and downtime are important for all children
- Math and music may require near-daily time and practice

At Heather, we have built on these principles and have considered what this means in a preschool to 4th grade environment.

### Personal Learning

Research tells us that assigning all students the same homework does not improve learning. Children learn at different paces and in different ways, thriving when they can practice with guidance at a level just beyond their independent "learning zone".

### Play and Passions

Young children need extensive time each day for free play and to explore personal passions in the arts, sciences, athletics and more! After school hours provide an important block of time for these essentials. For young children, play is the primary vehicle for learning.

### Responsibility

Elementary students are learning how to contribute to their classrooms and their households, pitching in to help with age appropriate responsibilities. After school can be a wonderful time to learn how to help out around the house and take care of pets. These hands-on opportunities build independence and a sense of self-efficacy.

### Connections and Conversations

Young children need daily opportunities to connect with their families. Dinner table conversations, game nights, and family fun build strong kids! We know these connections are more possible when there is more free time for families in the evenings.

### Sleep

Sleep is essential for emotional well-being, physical health, and learning. Health professionals recommend 10-13 hours a sleep each night for children ages 3-5 and 9-11 hours for children ages 6-13. As a community, let's work together to prioritize sleep and help our kids feel ready and excited for the next school day!

Best regards,

Pam Jasso, Principal  
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**To find the SCSD homework policy, please go to:** <http://gamutonline.net/district/sancarlos/DisplayPolicy/937368/6>

**Find our strategic plan under Strategic Plan tab at** [www.scsdk8.org](http://www.scsdk8.org)

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