

Minutes February 28, 2017

Attendees: Jackie, Jen, Debbie, Mary Anne, Sarah, Renee, Carrie, Dan Hayes, Christine Robinson

Discussion:

Jackie provided background information regarding the homework survey and explained that the Council will analyze feedback from all stakeholders and develop a homework agreement.

Christine Robinson (parent) began by sharing that she read the Washington Post article and said that it was fairly negative and did not support homework. As a teacher she feels that assignments given for the sake of homework is simply “busy work” but activities assigned to support further investigation and hand-on learning (such as project-based activities) is beneficial and has value.

Results from the community survey totaled 83 responses representing a fairly equal number of responses from Grades 1 - 6, with slightly fewer responses from PreK/K families and two respondents of Grade 7 or graduated.

100% of the fourteen Prek/K respondents indicated that their children’s teacher does not assign homework most nights. 92% of Prek/K families feel that homework should not be assigned most nights. All 22 respondents of Grades 1 or 2 students indicate that students do not receive homework most nights and that most (86%) agree that this appropriate.

65% of families from Grades 3 or 4 students state that their children receive homework most nights. Jackie explained the model used in fourth grade is bulk assignment (homework for the week is assigned on Mondays and due Fridays) so that responses may be a reflection on how individuals choose to complete homework (ie. a little every night or sporadically throughout the week). There was a 50/50 split to the question “Should grade 3 or 4 students receive homework regularly most nights?”.

Some of the comments indicate that people appreciate a flexible homework schedule. Families believe that students need to learn to take responsibility. Fourth grade families like the bulk homework assignment on Monday with a due date of Friday.

Carrie was curious about the Grade 3 or 4 respondents who say they are interested or not interested in regular homework assignments. Since the results are equally split it would be interesting to see if they were split by grade level as there are developmental differences between both grades.

Like Christine, Dan Hayes (school committee) agrees with the idea that reading is important but wonders if the timed component of reading (for example 25 minutes a night) detracts from the enjoyment of reading.

Survey results from families of students in Grades 5 or 6 say that 94% receive homework most nights and that the majority spend approximately 20-30 minutes each night. 73% of responses agree that homework should be assigned most nights. Some of the feedback from parents indicate that homework helps bridge the transition to middle school. SES recently introduced the use of planners to Grade 6 students to begin developing organizational skills.

Several attendees noted that even if homework is assigned SES teachers are flexible and respondent to family needs. Although homework is graded at school; lack of completion does not result in penalty.

Finally 84% of families indicate that they have internet access at home. This is encouraging since SES is currently employing the use of intelligent technology that adjusts to student learning through time.

Next steps:

A similar forum will be held with staff. Upon completion of feedback evaluation, School Council members will begin to draft a proposed homework agreement.