

RACE TO NOWHERE

Homework Guidelines Supporting Student Health, Family Engagement and Active Learning Nationwide

In solidarity with the National PTAs 2012 Public Policy Recommendations, which include measures that *support quality education for every child* and demonstrate a commitment to *children's health*, we the undersigned respectfully petition the National PTA to embrace the following three recommendations on homework.

1. HOMEWORK SHOULD ADVANCE A SPIRIT OF LEARNING

Educators at all grade levels should assign homework only when:

- Such assignments demonstrably advance a spirit of learning, curiosity and inquiry among students.
- Such assignments demonstrably provide a unique learning opportunity or experience that cannot be had within the confines of the school setting or school day.
- Such assignments are not intended to enhance rote skill rehearsal or mastery. Rehearsal and repetition assignments should be completed within the confines of the school day, if they are required at all.
- Such assignments are not intended as a disciplinary or punitive measure, nor as a means of fostering competition among or assessment of students.

2. HOMEWORK SHOULD BE STUDENT-DIRECTED

Educators at all grade levels, but particularly in elementary and middle grades, should limit take-home assignments to:

- At-home reading chosen by the student.
- Project-based work chosen by the student.
- Experiential learning that integrates the student's existing interests and family commitments.
- Work that can be completed without the assistance of a sibling, caregiver or parent.

3. HOMEWORK SHOULD PROMOTE A BALANCED SCHEDULE

Educators at all grade levels should avoid assigning or requiring homework:

- On non-school nights, including weekends, school holidays, or winter or summer breaks.
- On the nights of major or all-school events, concerts, or sports activities.
- When a child is sick or absent from school.
- When it conflicts with a child's parental, family, religious or community obligations.

We the undersigned acknowledge that the above commitments will ask of school leaders that they provide teachers with professional development support and time to restructure their classroom practices to eliminate an over-reliance on homework.

We believe that such support and restructuring will help us to ensure that homework can better:

- Support learning and engagement among students, regardless of family background, income level, or caregivers' educational status.
- Narrow the achievement gap by ensuring that instruction, rehearsal, mastery and remediation happens primarily at school and in the classroom, rather than at home, where resources and instructional support are less equitably distributed.
- Enhance family engagement with schools and students by providing parents and caregivers more opportunities to influence and collaborate on homework policy and practice.
- Provide time for students to develop a rich array of extra-curricular personal interests and to engage in meaningful family, religious, community, creative or athletic activities outside of school.