

THE RIDGE SCHOOL  
RIDGWOOD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
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October 17, 2017

Dear Parents:

For some time now, the Ridge teachers and I have been talking about homework – its value and purpose. We have reflected on our own experiences as teachers and parents, varied as they are, and the research on homework for elementary school students. Throughout my career as an educator, I have come to appreciate that homework for elementary school students is a complicated issue. The research is clear that there are limited gains in student achievement by assigning homework to young children. That, combined with the increasing anxiety and pressure that seems to be everywhere in our society, makes me want to step back and consider what we are asking our students to do at home each night.

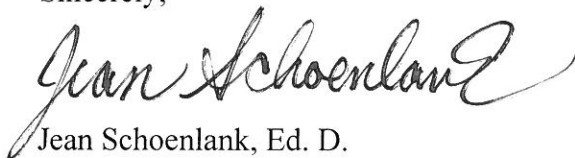
As you may know, I am a strong advocate of reading every night. As a staff, we want that to continue. We work with the students to not only become proficient readers but also to develop a passion for reading. By encouraging students to select their own books at levels which we know they can read independently, we aim to foster lifelong reading habits. In Grades 4 and 5 we up the ante appropriately by occasionally having them reflect on their reading through writing.

Math is an area where we feel some limited practice at home to follow up the day's lesson can be beneficial in Grades 1-5. We also want students, typically in Grades 1-4, to practice their math facts using a variety of tools. Beyond reading and math practice, there may be occasional assignments in other areas, but overall we are looking to limit the amount of homework that is assigned.

We want students to play and enjoy down time and family time at home each night. I know some parents will find the limited homework to be a blessing while others may want their children to have more. For those seeking more homework, I would encourage you to do what's best for your child. Technology is a wonderful source to seek enrichment, in math particularly. You can encourage your child to bring his/her writing notebook home and add entries. In reading, you can expose him/her to different kinds of books and read them together.

Please know that our homework policy is the result of thoughtful discussion and practice. We will continue to challenge each student and encourage her/him to stretch and learn every day here at Ridge School.

Sincerely,



Jean Schoenlank, Ed. D.  
Principal