



**Platte River Academy  
Mission Statement:  
Provide a content-rich,  
academically rigorous education  
with a well-defined, sequential  
curriculum in a safe, orderly and  
caring environment**

**September 8, 2011 "Special Edition"**

## ***Special PRA Newsletter Insert*** **Homework** **September 8, 2011**

### **What Research Says About Homework**

You may not be aware of it, but the topic of homework and its effect on student learning and achievement has been a topic of educational research for decades. As conscientious educators, we rely on this research to inform our decisions about which instructional practices to use with our students. Research tells us that there are many benefits to regular homework assignments for students.

Some of the positive effects of homework include:

- Better retention of factual knowledge
- Increased understanding
- Better critical thinking
- Better study habits and skills
- Improved attitude toward school
- Better time organization
- More independent problem solving
- Greater parental involvement in schooling!



We feel like these are all excellent reasons for assigning homework. Of course, these effects are only possible if the students complete the assignment. Keep reading to learn about the responsibilities of teachers, students and parents when it comes to homework.

### **Homework Guidelines**

Teachers share their individual guidelines about homework in their first communications with parents. In general, you can expect your child to have homework most school nights. Homework is usually not assigned on weekends or vacations, with the exception of long-range projects or other special assignments. When designing homework assignments, teachers consider a variety of factors:

#### **Your child's grade level**

**As a general rule of thumb**, children should *generally* not be assigned homework in excess of:

- \* Grades K – 3: 30 minutes per night
- \* Grades 4 – 6: 30 to 60 minutes per night
- \* Grades 7 – 8: 45 to 90 minutes per night

(Cont'd on pg.2)

Because every child's capacity to complete homework varies, some assignments might require more time than others; it is important to understand that these ranges are offered as general guidelines. However, if your child is spending *significantly* longer than this on homework *most* nights, you should talk with your child's teacher(s). Obviously, middle school students will be assigned more homework than elementary students; the assignments will also be more complex. In addition to regular, nightly homework, there will also be long-term projects and on-going assignments (reading) throughout the year.

### **Purpose for assignment**

Teachers assign homework for any of the following reasons:

- Skill review and/or practice
- Preparation for next day's lesson
- To allow for more in-depth investigations
- To foster the development of study skills
- To informally assess skill development (they want to see what their students can do on their own)



### **Students have the capacity to complete the assignment independently**

Teachers will only assign homework that students are prepared to complete independently at home. Instructions and explanations are covered in class before the student brings the work home. Teachers will also post assignments on their class website so students or parents can look up the requirements if necessary. If your child is unable to complete, or seems confused by an assignment, you should let the teacher know; this should be a rare event.

## **Parent Support**

By enrolling your child in Platte River Academy, you have demonstrated your support of a rigorous and enriching academic experience for your child; you also understand that homework is one part of that.

Please refer to the tips below when working with your child on homework.

### **Tips for Success (for parents)**

1. Demonstrate an interest in your child's academic progress
2. Exhibit a positive attitude about school and stress the importance of doing your best
3. Help your child find the best time and place to do homework; it's best if this place is free from distractions
4. Promote a "business before pleasure" philosophy about homework; if homework comes after the fun stuff, it pushes too close to bedtime (practice schedules and games force families to plan creatively)
5. Ask your child to explain the homework to you
6. Encourage your child to do the work, but do not stand over him while he works; independence is the goal
7. Monitor your child's progress and stop him/her when bedtime comes (sleep is essential to optimal functioning...nothing is more important)
8. Check your child's planner daily for an accurate listing of the night's assignments (consistent use of the planner is an excellent study skill and leads to effective time management)
9. Check the website to clarify assignment expectations
10. Communicate with your child's teacher(s) any time you have concerns about your child's progress

