

Handling Homework

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Our district has a policy that we must assign homework. The amount is determined by the grade level. I teach sixth grade ILA & SS and have partners who teach ILA & math, science, etc. Our grade level is assigned 60 minutes a night. My team has divided up that hour into minutes for the required subject areas so that we meet the district policy. (We don't agree but are already fighting that battle on the correct level.)

Anyway, the policy includes that after three missed assignments a madatory after-school detention must be assigned. Because I had a problem with such a negative approach when I arrived three years ago in this grade level, my partner and I decided to acknowledge the hard work the children who DID the required homework. We instituted the following:

If a student does all the homework in every subject every night for a marking period, we treat them to lunch and give them a free homework pass to any subject. Sometimes we order Chinese food, Taco Bell, subs, pizza, etc. Parents were notified, kids responded positively, and administration supports it and is even looking to fund us since my partner and I foot the bill. We have four lunches which is one for each marking period. At graduation we give an award to those who did all four lunches. Last year we gave a certificate of recognition and a gift card to the movies.

When I taught Kindergarten I was always picking up little things to add to my centers and theme days. I saved a huge amount of money moving to sixth and feel this expense is well worth it. The children who always do homework always will...we hope to catch the ones on the fringe and push them over to the responsible side...plus we wanted to let all the homework doers know that we appreciate their efforts.

PS: We are in a small district...36 sixth graders! That makes a huge difference! If you are in a bigger situation, this would be way out of line unless you had funding!