

Homework at Estabrook School

A Mid-Cycle Update for the Superintendent of Schools and the Lexington School Committee

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June 2017

INTRODUCTION

As part of its 2016-2017 School Improvement Plan, Estabrook School aimed to reduce student stress while maintaining high academic achievement for all students. One implementation step in this work was piloting a shift in homework, with a focus on at-home reading as core learning outside the school day. This was paired with the creation and distribution of monthly, grade-specific At Home Learning Calendars. The work was done in accordance with the Lexington School Committee's Homework Policy (policy IKB), and in coordination of the Lexington Public Schools' evaluation of the role of homework as a part of the 2016-2017 District Improvement Plan. What follows is information on the background and rationale that led to this shift, details on the implementation of the plan, a summary of feedback and data collected to date, and a plan for next steps in the second year of this pilot.

BACKGROUND, RESEARCH & RATIONALE

Research on Homework

While researchers have identified the need for further study of the impact of homework on students, research that has been conducted around the effectiveness of homework in elementary-aged students has been unable to draw a correlation between assigning homework and increased student achievement.¹ In his work *Visible Learning*, John Hattie concludes from synthesized analyses that homework at the elementary level has essentially no impact on a student's academic achievement. While there are indications that an impact exists at the secondary level, Hattie states that "homework in primary school has an effect of around zero."² What's more, there is no link to a often-cited secondary impact of homework, that of increased capacity for time management.³ In 2006, Kohn pointed out:

"There is no evidence that any amount of homework improves the academic performance of elementary students.' ...At best, most homework studies show only an association, not a causal relationship. In Cooper's major research review, the correlation between time spent on homework, on the one hand, and achievement, on the other, was 'nearly nonexistent' for grades 3-5, extremely low for grades 6-9, and moderate for grades 10-12."⁴

¹ Cooper, et. al. Does Homework Improve Academic Achievement? A Synthesis of Research, 1987-2003.

² Hattie, John. *Visible Learning*. <https://visible-learning.org>

³ Hattie, John. *Visible Learning: A Synthesis of Over 800 Meta-Analyses Relating to Achievement*. 2009, p 235

⁴ Excerpted from Kohn, "Abusing Research: The Study of Homework and Other Examples," *Phi Delta Kappan*, vol. 88, 2006, pp. 9-22.

Another study found that homework can be a barrier to some students meeting socially-based developmental milestones, and impacts stress and physical health.⁵

Research on Reading

While researchers are not able to draw linkage between homework and academic achievement at the elementary level, extensive research on reading draws a strong positive correlation between the quality and quantity of self-selected, independent and shared reading and overall academic achievement. Simply stated, the more a child reads (and in particular, reads texts of high interest at his/her just right level), the better reader he/she will become, and the higher level of achievement will be actualized. The level of reading engagement is also a stronger predictor of achievement than socioeconomic status.

“Engaged reading is strongly associated with reading achievement. Students who read actively and frequently improve their comprehension of text as a consequence (Cipielewski & Stanovich, 1992). However, it is also likely that students who are capable of understanding a wide range of texts choose to read independently for their own enjoyment. This connection between engagement and achievement, measured as the ability to understand narrative and expository text, was shown in a national sample of students (Campbell, Voelkl, & Donahue, 1997). At all three ages studied (9, 13, and 17 years), the more highly engaged readers showed higher achievement than the less engaged readers. The cross age comparisons were remarkable. The 13-year-old students with higher reading engagement were higher in achievement than the 17-year-old students who were less reading engaged. In other words, middle school students who were engaged in reading achieved as highly as students who were less engaged in reading but had 4 more years of schooling. As students become engaged readers, they provide themselves with self-generated learning opportunities that are equivalent to several years of education.”⁶

Research on Wellness & Play

Scholars and educators have long identified the value that comes from rest, unstructured play and creative, invention-driven activities at the elementary level. Social/interpersonal and planning/organization skill development, along with patience, empathy and resilience are among the areas cited as benefits to this. Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia pediatrician Dr. Kenneth Ginsburg’s research underscores the benefits of unstructured time for children. A summary of this work highlighted that “free, unstructured playtime gives kids a chance to discover their interests and tap into their creativity. It’s a crucial element for building resilience in children, an attribute they’ll need in order to become happy, productive adults.”⁷ Play also has an impact on cognition as well. “The experience of play changes the connections of the neurons at the front end of your brain and without play experience, those neurons aren’t changed” says Dr. Sergio Pellis, a researcher at the University of Lethbridge in Alberta, Canada.⁸ Caprara and colleagues found that prosocial skills “such as cooperating, helping, sharing, and consoling, had a strong positive impact on later academic achievement.”⁹

Feedback from Families

Anecdotal parent reports to school administrators and staff have painted a picture of children without much wiggle-room in their after-school schedules. Many students also reported to teachers that they often had little

⁵ Galloway, et. al. Nonacademic Effects of Homework in Privileged, High-Performing High Schools. *The Journal of Experimental Education*, 2013

⁶ Excerpted from the chapter “Engagement and Motivation in Reading” (Guthrie & Wigfield) in *Handbook of Reading Research*, Volume III (Kamil, Mosenthal, Pearson, & Barr, 2000)

⁷ Schwartz, K. (2013). KQED. Retrieved from: <https://ww2.kqed.org/mindshift/2013/02/15/how-free-play-can-define-kids-success/>

⁸ <http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2014/08/06/336361277/scientists-say-childs-play-helps-build-a-better-brain>

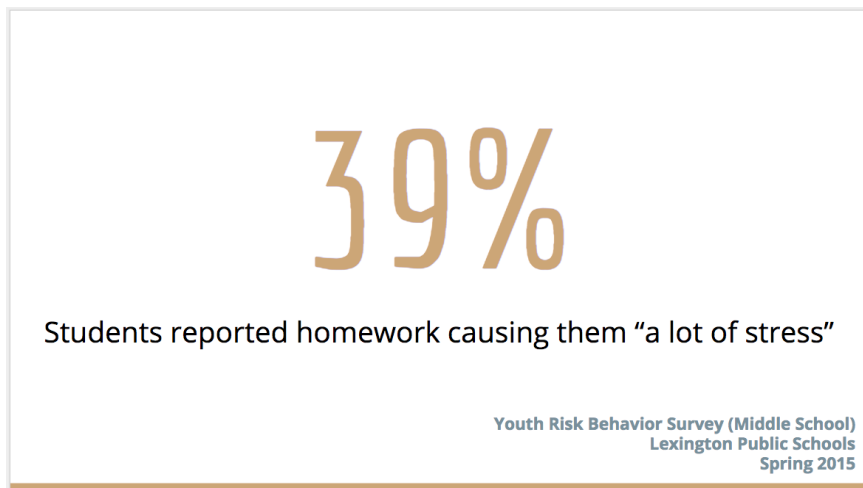
⁹ <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/11273389>

time for themselves outside the school day. This was captured clearly during Estabrook's first Sunday Principal Roundtable in April 2016. In conversations with then-Principal Sandra Trach and then-Assistant Principal Jeffrey LaBroad around topics related to social-emotional well-being, several parents reported that the culture of the Estabrook and wider Lexington community was one where children did not have time after school to play or engage in other unscheduled, unstructured activities.

Sources of Student Stress: Youth Risk Behavior Survey

While the 2015 Lexington Youth Risk Behavior Survey only included information from secondary students, Estabrook examined results from the middle school survey. Of particular interest was sources of student stress. In 2015 39% of seventh and eighth grade students indicated that homework causes "a lot" (32%) or "extreme" amounts of stress (7%). This raised questions about the potential negative impact of homework on elementary students, for whom current research suggests there is little instructional benefit. In light of this research, school leaders felt it was important to explore this area further.

Figure 1: Slide from Presentation During the November 2016 Estabrook Principal Roundtable



THEORY OF ACTION

If we support independent and shared reading of appropriate high-interest texts at home, including removing barriers preventing ample reading time, we support a culture of learners who enjoy reading.

If we increase time spent with self-selected texts, we strengthen our students as readers and learners.

If we reduce the use of a practice that does not have a proven value-added effect in terms of skill or knowledge development, we create time for students to engage in play and other self-directed activities alone, with family and with friends.

If we provide ample time for recreation, rest, family commitments and the pursuit of activities of interest to students, then students' academic and social-emotional skills will grow.

If we allow for some short term, targeted intervention and practice at home when individual student need dictates it and parents and teachers agree, all students will continue to achieve at high levels and have their individual needs met.

If we provide resources and ideas aligned with LPS curriculum for extending learning, families will identify activities and routines that best suit their family's interests and needs.

IMPLEMENTATION

What It Looks Like

READING: Estabrook School students continue to learn outside the school day. Every afternoon and evening, students are expected to read texts of their choosing. Teachers support this by engaging students in conversations related to their independent reading, and many teachers model appropriate at-home reading behaviors for parents. When needed, teachers support students by providing titles for students to read at home, or assignments of pages/minutes. This largely reflects previous practice in grades K-3, already in place.

AT HOME LEARNING CALENDARS: Each month, students receive a grade-specific calendar with an array of activities to do alone, with a friend, or with family members. The calendars are a collective effort of staff throughout the building, and often reflect what students are learning in school.¹⁰

AT HOME PROJECTS: Many grades continue to offer students at-home projects to be done together with family members. An example of this is the Kindergarten Quilt Project.

REINFORCING PRACTICE: As needed, teachers provide short term, targeted intervention practice when a student demonstrates a specific need. Such work is assigned only when agreed upon by parent and teacher (and often involves consent of older students). In younger grades, activities are sent home that reinforce skills learned in school. First grade students receive individually-tailored packets following unit assessments, identifying skills requiring further development, and games that families can play to support these skills.

FOSTERING DISCUSSION: Teachers have reinvested time in sharing with families conversation starters, talking points or questions related to work going on in school, or otherwise increasing the frequency of home-school communication, aimed at providing a frame within which parents can discuss and extend learning taking place in school.

Parent Education

Two Principal Coffees this fall featured topics related to extended learning beyond the school day. One featured literacy specialists and the LPS K-5 Literacy Department Coordinator sharing about best practices for instilling a love of reading at home. A second featured the Estabrook math specialist, three faculty members and the LPS K-5 Math Department Coordinator demonstrating what math learning looks like in the classroom and how it could be replicated at home. Each of this provided an opportunity for parents to learn more about how to support their students' learning outside the school day. In addition, two Principal Roundtables in November and April allowed parents to share ideas about supporting student learning outside the school day. Lastly, topics explored during two Estabrook Speaker Series events further explored themes related to how students spend time outside the school day.

Faculty & Staff Training and Conversation

The Estabrook faculty and staff engaged in conversation and planning about the role a modified homework plan would have. Faculty were presented with the plan through the principal's weekly staff memo on September 5, 2017. The first conversation on the topic took place at a faculty meeting on September 8, 2016. After hearing an overview of the plan, faculty met in small groups to discuss the following questions:

¹⁰ Examples can be found at <https://drive.google.com/open?id=0B9yaUEgUU828MER2bzRPYjZjdFE>

- 1) What opportunities does this present?
- 2) What challenges could this present?
- 3) What questions do you have?
- 4) What do we still need to do?

Subsequent conversations took place during monthly Estabrook School Leadership Team Meetings, School Site Council Meetings, Professional Learning Community Meetings and other meetings and professional learning opportunities with and among faculty and staff.

Communication

Information about Estabrook's homework plan was communicated in a variety of ways:

- **WEBSITE:** In August, a homework page was added to the Estabrook School website, including a statement of philosophy and an explanation of reading as core homework.¹¹
- **BACK TO SCHOOL PARENT COFFEE:** On the first day of School August 30, 2016, Estabrook administrators hosted a parent coffee in conjunction with the school's PTO. Among the topics and initiatives shared was Estabrook's homework pilot.
- **NEWSLETTER:** The September 6, 2016 edition of the school newsletter, *Estabrook Buzz*, featured a piece explaining Estabrook's homework plan. This included links to the school's 2016-2016 School Improvement Plan and the Homework Overview on the Estabrook website.
- **BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT:** All teachers shared information about the reading-centered homework plan with families at our September Back to School Night. Teachers used a common slide during presentations. The principal also spoke in several classrooms in the upper grades about the topic during the event.
- **PRINCIPAL COFFEES:** Two Principal Coffees this fall featured topics related to extended learning beyond the school day. One featured literacy specialists and the LPS K-5 Literacy Department Coordinator sharing about best practices for instilling a love of reading at home. A second featured the Estabrook math specialist, three faculty members and the LPS K-5 Math Department Coordinator demonstrating what math learning looks like in the classroom and how it could be replicated at home.
- **SCHOOL COUNCIL:** Monthly Estabrook School Council meetings provided an opportunity for the principal to update the representative body on the initiative.
- **PTO PRESIDENT'S MEETINGS & EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETINGS:** Regular meetings between school leaders the the Estabrook PTO Co-Presidents or the Estabrook PTO Executive Board provided opportunities to share information about the progress of the homework pilot.
- **COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS:** Estabrook's homework plan has been a topic of conversation at various community events, including screenings of *Beyond Measure*, Community Coalition meetings, PTO Presidents' Council meetings and the Estabrook Speaker Series events, among others.

¹¹ See <https://lps.lexingtonma.org/domain/1551>

Figure 2: Slide from Presentation to Faculty During Faculty Meeting on September 8, 2016

What it is:	What it is NOT:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● A pilot● In line with the LPS Homework Policy● Research based● A renewed focus on reading as a powerful driver of student achievement● An endorsement of unstructured, free time after school	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● A "ban" on homework● Estabrook "eliminating" homework

Figure 3: Slide Used by Estabrook School Teachers to Talk about Homework at Back to School Night, September 2016

Homework at Estabrook School
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Students are expected to read at home for pleasure nightly● Independent reading, shared reading, reading aloud to others and being read to● Teachers, Librarian, Literacy Specialists available to support book selection● No regularly assigned written assignments

MONITORING & EVALUATION: GUIDING QUESTIONS AND DATA COLLECTIONS

Evaluation centered on five areas:

- 1) What are the self-reported impacts on family and student life outside of school?
- 2) What are the self-reported and observed impacts on students' social and emotional-well being?
- 3) How do academic outcomes compare with other LPS elementary schools (where written homework was assigned)? How do academic outcomes for Estabrook students compare with their previous academic achievement?
- 4) What impact, if any, did this change have on students' reading behaviors and interest in reading?

- 5) How might this approach to elementary homework impact student preparation for middle school homework demands?

At this time, we will report on collected data that most directly addresses questions 1 and 2. Academic outcomes will be analyzed at the conclusion of the school year (question 3 and 4). We will continue to follow rising fifth grade students to examine possible impacts on middle school transition (question 5) into the 2017-2018 school year.

During the 2016-2017 school year, the following data collections took place:

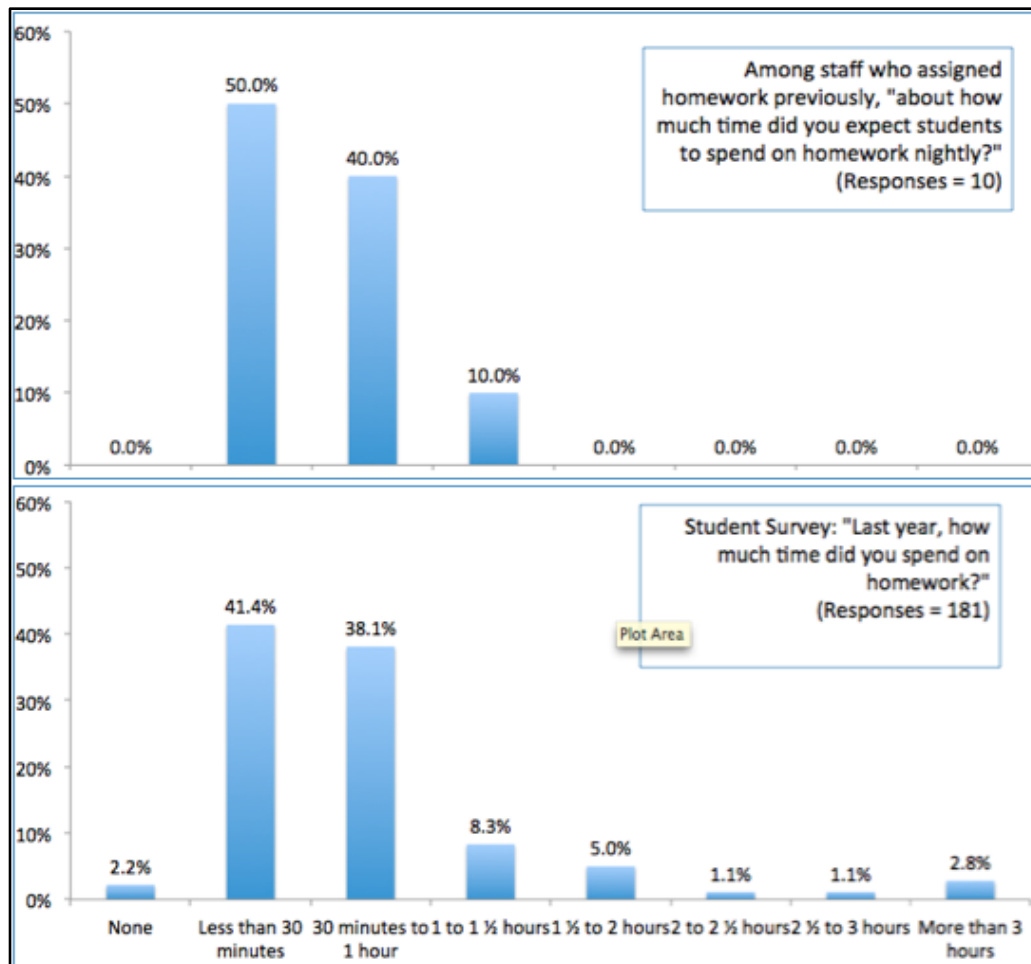
- **ESTABROOK PARENT COFFEE: LISTENING SESSION ON HOMEWORK:** All parents were invited to attend a parent coffee hosted by Mr. LaBroad and Dr. Kavanaugh, held at Estabrook School on March 8, 2017 at 9 a.m. Parents were alerted of this event through the school newsletter and email/text reminders from the principal. Approximately 25 parents were in attendance. Parents were asked about their experiences with homework this year and in previous years, any positive changes or challenges they experienced and concerns they had. Parent responses were reviewed and critical themes identified.
- **PARENT FOCUS GROUPS:** A sample of parents were also recruited to participate in more structured focus groups. Teachers were asked to identify a cross-section of parents. Based on these recommendations, a total of 32 families were invited to attend a focus group, facilitated by Dr. Kavanaugh. We received 14 affirmative responses. Ultimately, 10 parents participated in one of two 30 to 45 minute focus groups (held at 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. on March 28, 2017 at the Estabrook School). Similar to the parent coffee, parents were asked about their experiences with homework this year and in previous years, any positive changes or challenges they experienced and concerns they had. Parent responses were reviewed and critical themes were identified.
- **PARENT SURVEY:** An online parent survey was shared with families through multiple means of distribution: school newsletter, email from principal, text message reminders, teacher newsletters/emails, and PTO newsletters/email reminders. A total of 411 responses were collected from April 26 to May 13. Given 436 estimated households, a 94.3% response rate was achieved. All survey questions and aggregate responses can be found in Appendix A.
- **STAFF SURVEY:** An online staff survey was distributed via email to all Estabrook faculty. Twenty three out of an expected 45 responses were collected from May 10 to May 15 (response rate = 51.1%). All survey questions and aggregate responses can be found in Appendix B.
- **STUDENT SURVEY:** An online student survey was administered to all 4th and 5th grade students during class time. With a 100% response rate, 184 responses were collected from May 5 to May 16. All survey questions and aggregate responses can be found in Appendix C.

Student, parent and staff perceptions and reported experiences can offer valuable perspective. However, this should be paired with other data whenever possible to strengthen the inferences and conclusions ultimately drawn. Survey and focus group data should not be used alone to draw causal inferences about policy, practice or individuals. Other data, including student performance data, will be analyzed in follow up reports. Together these multiple data sources will be combined to identify areas of strength and areas for improvement in our use of homework.

KEY FINDINGS TO DATE

For context, both students and teachers were asked about time spent previously on nightly homework (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Time Spent on Homework Previously: Teacher Expectations vs. Student Reports



Regarding Self-Reported Impacts on Family and Student Life Outside of Schools (Question 1):

Parents and students were also asked about how they currently spend their time outside of school. The most frequent daily activities cited by students included spending time with family (44.6%), exercising (41.5%) and playing outside (38.3%) (Figure 5). Parents answered similarly about students' daily activities with spending time with family (78.2%) and engaging in unstructured play (46.5%) as the most frequently selected daily activities. (Figure 6). Parents were not asked separately about playing outside or exercise.

Figure 5: Student Survey: How Do You Spend Your Time After School?

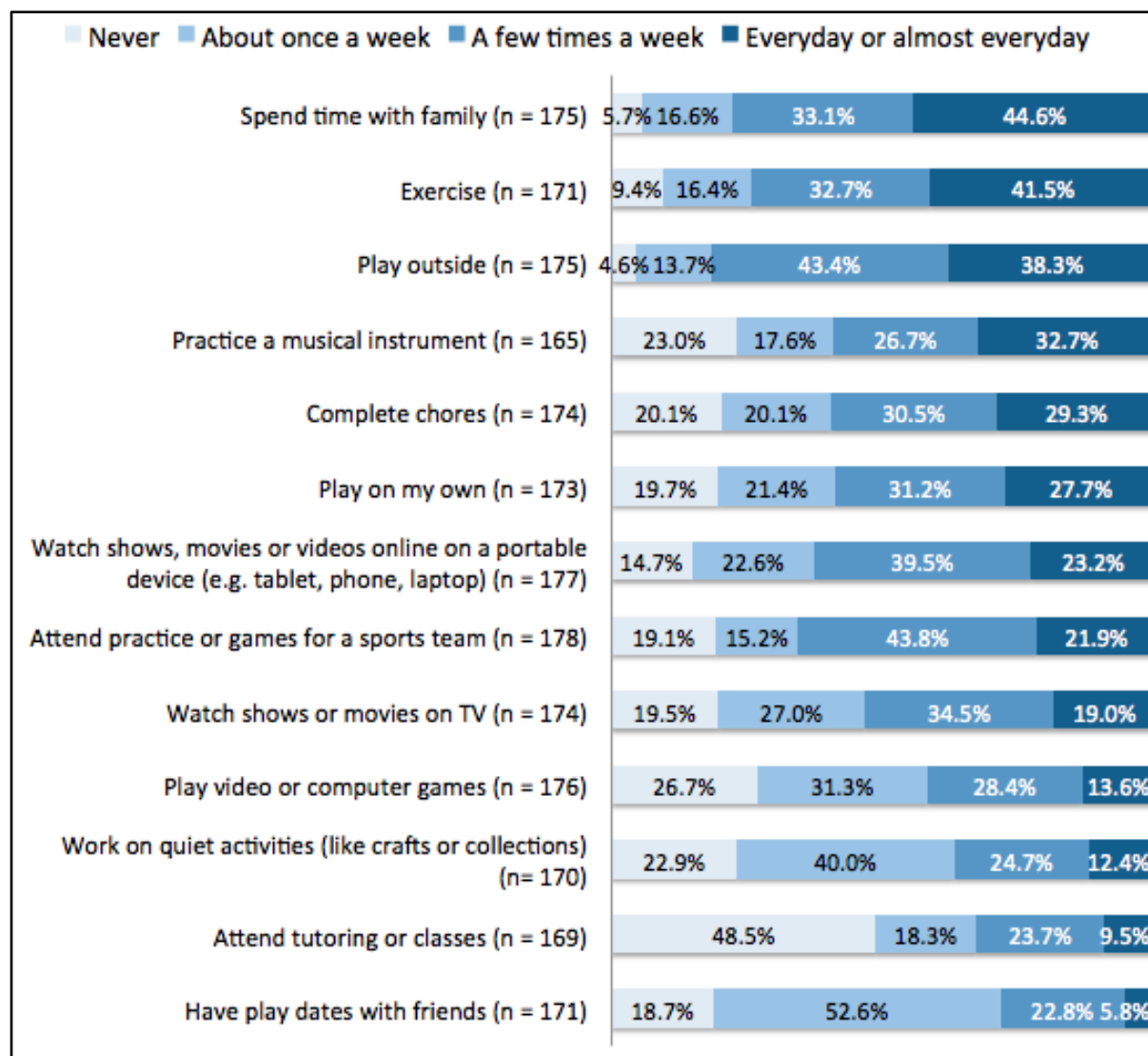
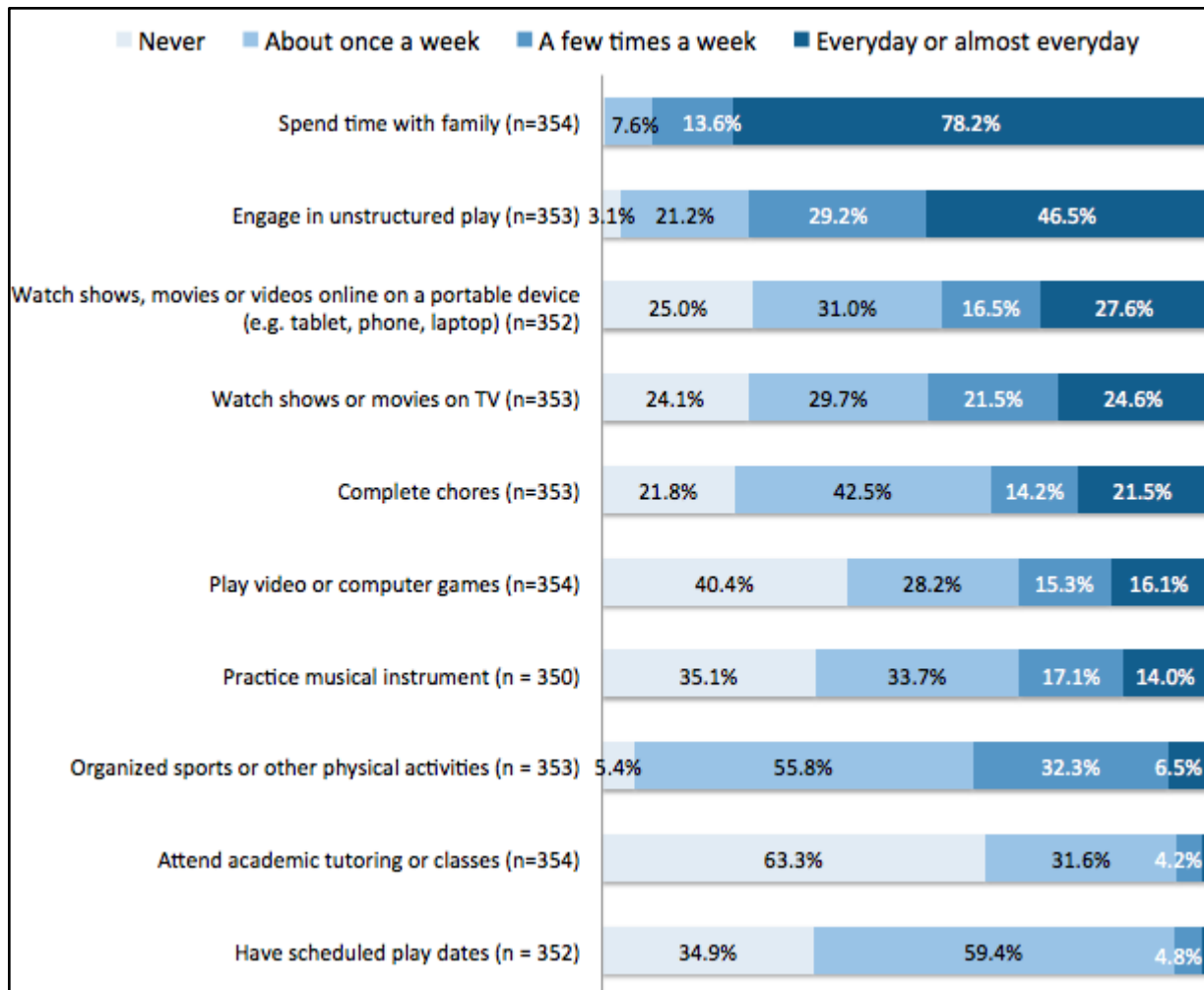


Figure 6: Parent Survey: During the School Week (Monday to Friday), Approximately How Often Does your Elementary Child(ren) Do the Following Activities After School?



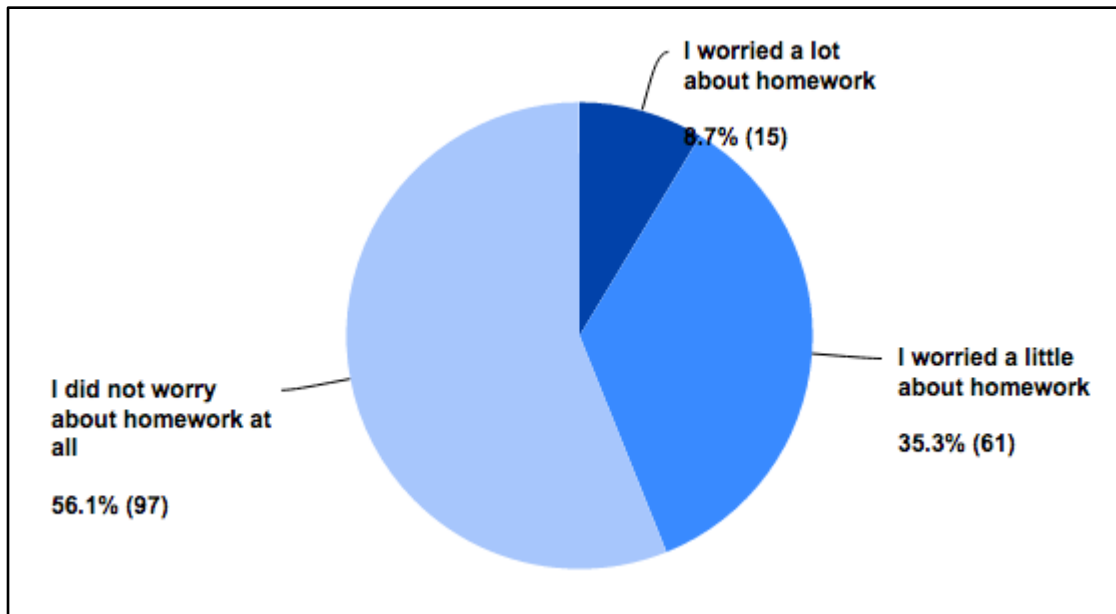
When asked compared to previous years, 52.7% of parents indicated that the amount of time available for family activities during the week is now “better” or “a lot better.” Approximately, 45% indicated they’ve experienced no change from previous years. A much smaller proportion (2%) indicated “worse” or “a lot worse” (see question 5 on parent survey in Appendix A).

When asked compared to previous years, 56% of parents indicated that the amount of time available for unstructured play during the week is now “better” or “a lot better.” Approximately 42% indicated they’ve experienced no change from previous years. Again, a much smaller proportion (2.2%) indicated “worse” or “a lot worse” (see question 5 on parent survey in Appendix A).

Regarding Self-Reported Impacts on Students’ Social and Emotional-Well Being (Question 2):

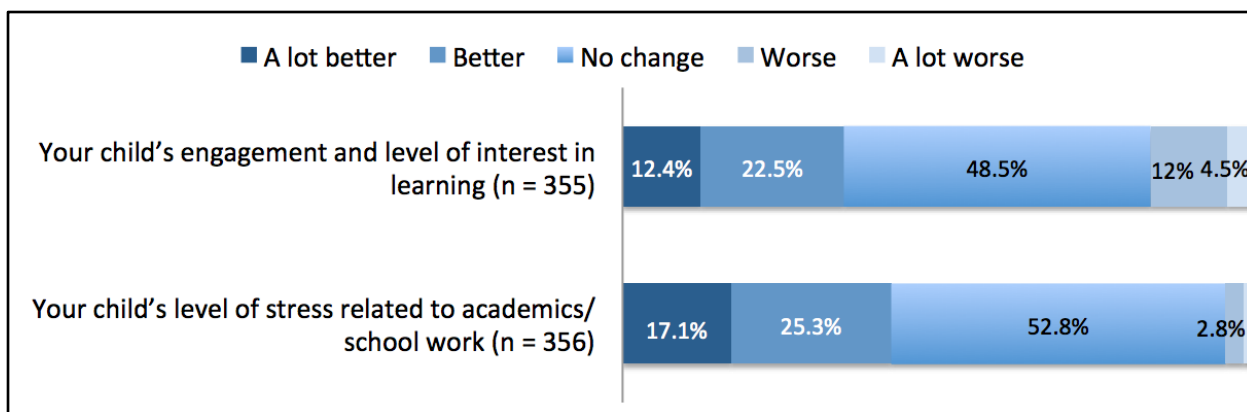
When 4th and 5th grade students were asked how much they worried about homework last year, a small proportion (8.7%) of students indicated they worried a lot about homework (Figure 7). The majority of students indicated they did not worry or worry a little about homework.

Figure 7: Student Survey: Thinking About Last Year, Did You Worry About Homework?



When parents were asked about changes in student stress, 42.4% indicated their student’s level of stress was “better” or “a lot better” compared to previous years and 52.8% indicated there was no change. Parents were also asked about their student’s engagement and level of interest in learning. Approximately 35% indicated their student’s level of engagement and interest was “better” or “a lot better” compared to previous years and 48.5% indicated there was no change (See Figure 8).

Figure 8: Parent Survey: Compared to Previous Years, Please Indicate the Extent to Which Each of the Following Has or Has Not Changed...



Concerns and Challenges: Communication

Evident in both parent surveys and focus groups, parents had frequently viewed homework as a communication tool both as a way to receive information about what their individual student knows or can do, and what kind of instruction and activities were going on in the classroom. Approximately 87% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that previously assigned homework provided information about what their child(ren) learned in school. Similarly, 80% of parents agreed or strongly agreed that, previously assigned

homework provided information about what their child(ren) knew and could do (See question 4 on parent survey in Appendix A).

Approximately 39% of parents indicated how informed they felt about what their child knew and could do was worse or a lot worse compared to previous years. On the other hand, a similar amount (37%) indicated no change in how informed they felt and the remaining 24% indicated this aspect had improved. (See question 5 on parent survey in Appendix A). Results were similar when asked how informed parents felt about what their child was learning in school. Again 39% indicated how informed they felt was worse or a lot worse compared to previous years, 35% indicated there had been no change, and the remaining 26% indicated they felt this aspect of communication had improved (See question 5 on parent survey in Appendix A). This concern was also mentioned during parent focus groups and during the parent coffee.

Staff reported using a variety of means to communicate with parents and communicate most frequently about current instructional activities and content (See Figure 9 and Figure 10). The most frequently used means of communication indicated were email to parent/guardian (66.7% every week or a few times a month) and completed student work with teacher comments, corrections or scores returned to parent or guardian (38.9% every week or a few times a month).

Figure 9: Staff Survey: About How Often Do You Share Information With Parents About...

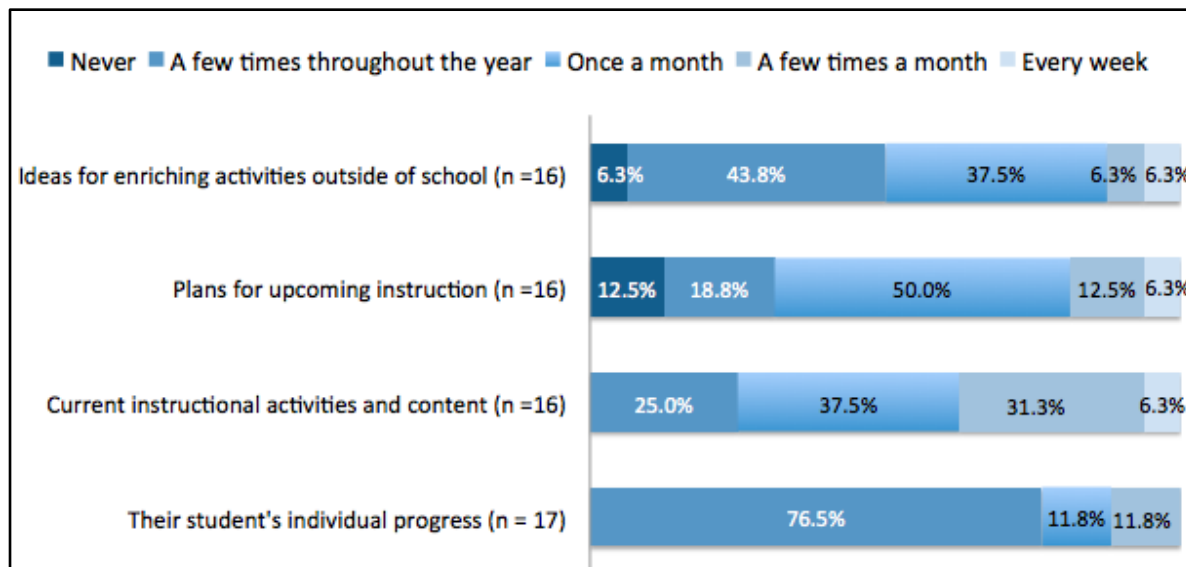
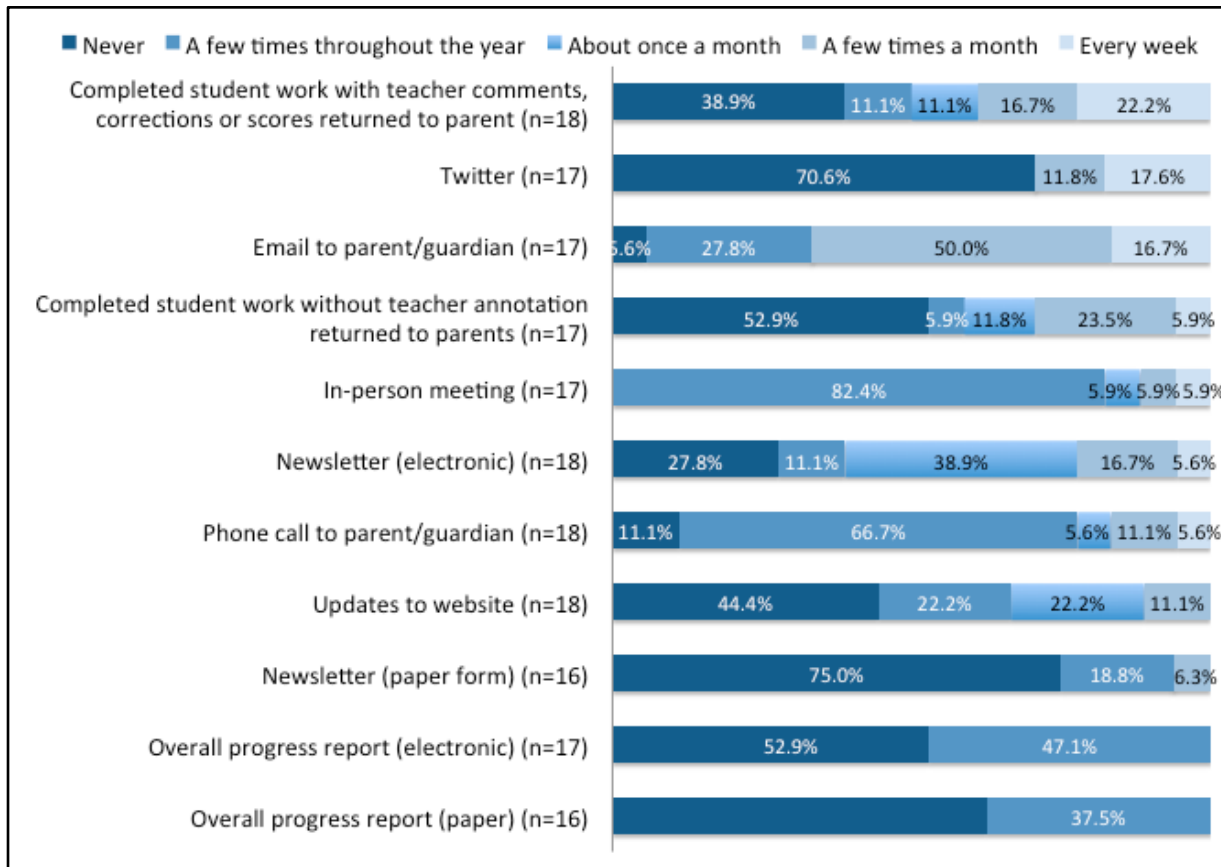


Figure 10: Staff Survey: How Often Do You Use the Following to Communicate with Parents



From a parent’s perspective the perceived usefulness of these communications varied (See Figure 11 and Figure 12). Among those who received specific communication types, parents indicated that in person meetings (94.5%), newsletters (93%) and individual emails (80.2%) have been the most useful. Parents comments made during focus groups, during the parent coffee and on open ended survey items indicated some staff are communicating very effectively and may offer other faculty a positive model to learn from.

Figure 11: Parent Survey: How Do You Receive Communications From Your Child(ren)'s Teacher(s)?

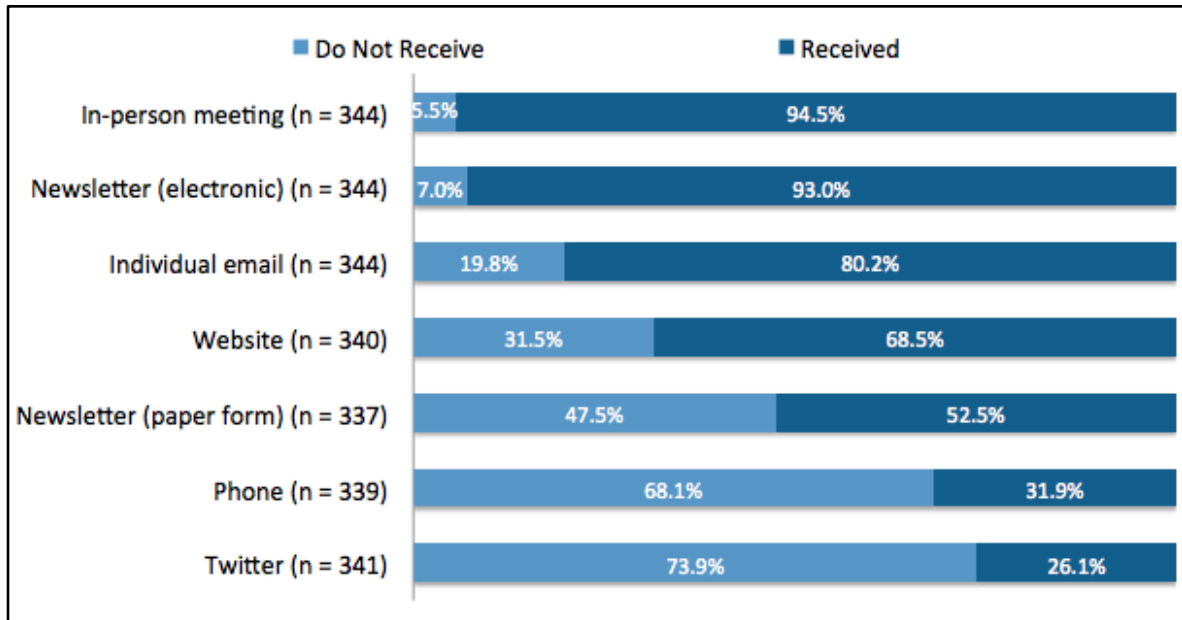
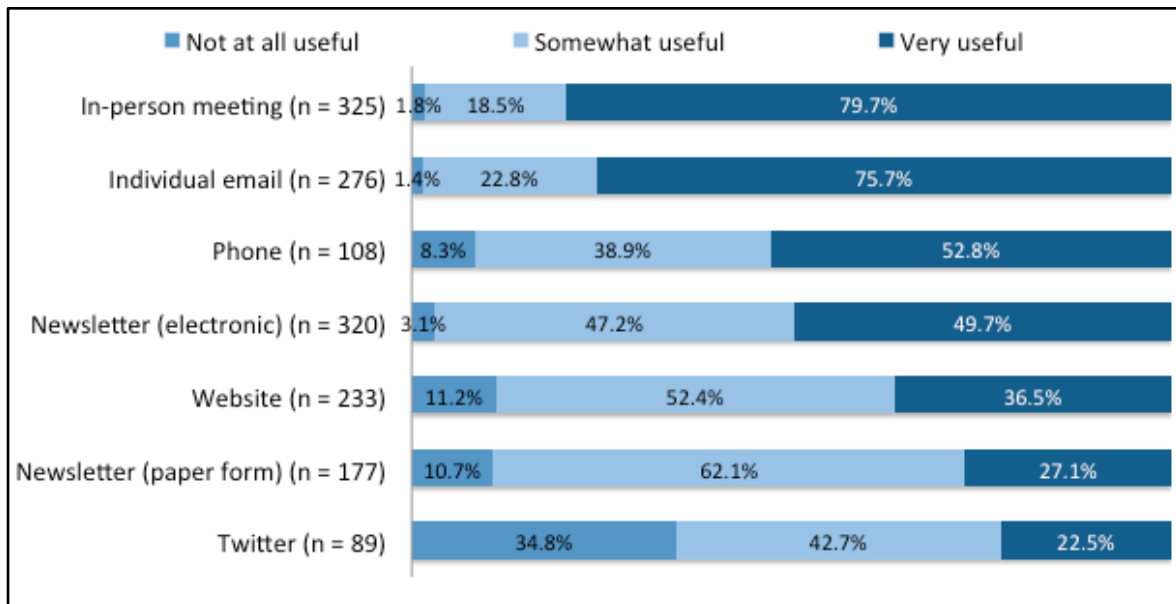


Figure 12: Parent Survey: Perceived Usefulness of Communication Type Received



Concerns and Challenges: Homework Perceived as a Tool for Developing Work Habits

Both staff and parents frequently perceive homework as a tool for helping students develop positive work habits (e.g. organization, responsibility, time management). Among teachers, 68.2% indicated that homework helps students develop work habits and organizational skills (See question 11 on staff survey in Appendix B). Feedback collected during focus groups and through an open-ended survey items indicated that a number of parents feel the same way.

However, broader educational research fails to clearly demonstrate whether or not homework is in fact an effective tool for developing positive work habits among elementary students. This may be an area in need of further study to inform future practice.

Concerns and Challenges: Transition to Middle School

Finally, parents frequently expressed concern about the transition to middle school and expected adjustment needed to the perceived amount of homework assigned at that level. This was indicated by parents who attended the parent coffee or parent focus groups and who responded to an open-ended survey item. During the upcoming school year, we will work with Diamond Middle School to explore this further.

NEXT STEPS

Moving ahead, Estabrook School plans to support its students and families through the second half of this two-year pilot, while continuing to carefully monitor student progress, gather feedback and evaluate data.

- Share summary of pilot steps undertaken in this first year with parents and staff, including initial findings.
- The 2017-18 Estabrook School Improvement Plan includes a goal continuing the work started this year: “During year two of a two-year pilot study on homework, focus on independent reading as the core homework plan in conjunction with grade-specific At Home Learning Calendars. Continue ongoing monitoring and evaluation, collaborating with the Director of Planning and Assessment.”
- The 2017-18 Estabrook School Improvement Plan also includes a goal, informed by initial perception data, to explore home-school communication: “Examine the effectiveness of home/school communication in the digital age, with a focus on strategic content and frequency of communication from teachers, teams, departments and administration.”
- To address remaining evaluation questions, we will analyze student performance data at the conclusion of the 2016-17 school year to examine possible academic impacts. We will also review self-reported impacts on students’ at home reading behavior and the perceived value of homework as reported on staff, student and parent surveys.
- During 2017-2018, we will partner with Diamond Middle School, following rising 5th graders to explore possible impacts on middle school transition.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work would not be possible without the professional support of the Estabrook School faculty and staff and Lexington Public Schools administrators. In particular, we thank Jill Gasperini, Thomas Grasso, Kathleen Glenn, Alicia Lindenmayer, Katherine O’Hare Gibson, Carolyn Plamondon, Sandra Trach and Matthew Willis for their contributions to this update. We are grateful to Dr. Mary Czajkowski and the Lexington School Committee for their initial approval and ongoing support of this work. We appreciate the partnership of the Estabrook PTO, and are grateful to the Estabrook School families for their active participation in dialogue and feedback regarding this work.

Estabrook School Homework Pilot Parent Survey: 2016-17

Appendix A

Q1 Please complete for each child who attends Estabrook School.

Answered: 408 Skipped: 3

Grade							
	K	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Child 1	15.79% 63	15.79% 63	20.05% 80	15.29% 61	18.80% 75	14.29% 57	399
Child 2	11.65% 12	22.33% 23	14.56% 15	22.33% 23	17.48% 18	11.65% 12	103
Child 3	12.50% 2	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	75.00% 12	6.25% 1	6.25% 1	16
Child 4	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	66.67% 2	33.33% 1	3

Is your child an English Language Learner?					
	Yes	No	I don't know	Not applicable	Total
Child 1	30.33% 118	64.52% 251	3.86% 15	1.29% 5	389
Child 2	21.21% 21	74.75% 74	2.02% 2	2.02% 2	99
Child 3	38.46% 5	61.54% 8	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	13
Child 4	25.00% 1	75.00% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4

Does your child receive special education services?					
	Yes	No	I don't know	Not applicable	Total
Child 1	11.58% 44	87.37% 332	1.05% 4	0.00% 0	380
Child 2	15.63% 15	83.33% 80	1.04% 1	0.00% 0	96
Child 3	0.00% 0	92.86% 13	7.14% 1	0.00% 0	14
Child 4	0.00% 0	100.00% 4	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4

Q2 How many years have you been a part of the Estabrook community?

Answered: 407 Skipped: 4

Answer Choices	Responses
1	25.80% 105
2	17.44% 71
3 or more	56.76% 231
Total	407

Q3 Prior to this year, in a week, how much homework had your elementary student been assigned?

Answered: 407 Skipped: 4

Answer Choices	Responses	
None	27.03%	110
Less than 30 minutes	33.17%	135
30 minutes to 1 hour	16.71%	68
1 to 1 ½ hours	8.60%	35
1 ½ to 2 hours	4.67%	19
2 to 2 ½ hours	4.42%	18
2 ½ to 3 hours	3.44%	14
More than 3 hours	1.97%	8
Total		407

Q4 Indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree that previously assigned homework achieved each of the following:

Answered: 277 Skipped: 134

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	I am not sure	Total
Previously assigned homework reinforced or provided additional practice related to what your child(ren) learned in class.	36.59% 101	47.83% 132	8.33% 23	2.90% 8	4.35% 12	276
Previously assigned homework provided information about what your child(ren) learned in school.	39.35% 109	48.01% 133	8.30% 23	1.08% 3	3.25% 9	277
Previously assigned homework provided information about what your child(ren) knew and could do.	34.78% 96	45.29% 125	13.04% 36	2.17% 6	4.71% 13	276
Previously assigned homework provided a structured activity for your child(ren) after school.	36.36% 100	33.45% 92	17.45% 48	8.36% 23	4.36% 12	275
Previously assigned homework provided additional challenge for your child(ren).	22.10% 61	32.61% 90	25.00% 69	9.78% 27	10.51% 29	276
Previously assigned homework provided your child(ren) the opportunity to learn new concepts.	15.75% 43	25.64% 70	37.00% 101	12.82% 35	8.79% 24	273
Previously assigned homework was meaningful and a good use of your child(ren)'s time.	31.27% 86	30.55% 84	18.18% 50	12.00% 33	8.00% 22	275

Q5 Compared to previous years, please indicate the extent to which each of the following has or has not changed...

Answered: 358 Skipped: 53

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	A lot better	Better	No change	Worse	A lot worse	Total	Weighted Average
How informed you feel about what your child knows and can do	9.80% 35	14.57% 52	36.69% 131	27.73% 99	11.20% 40	357	2.84
How informed you feel about what your child is learning in school	11.20% 40	15.13% 54	35.01% 125	25.77% 92	12.89% 46	357	2.86
Your child's engagement and level of interest in learning	12.39% 44	22.54% 80	48.45% 172	12.11% 43	4.51% 16	355	3.26
Your child's interest in reading	19.33% 69	22.97% 82	45.38% 162	9.24% 33	3.08% 11	357	3.46
Your child's level of stress related to academics/school work	17.13% 61	25.28% 90	52.81% 188	2.81% 10	1.97% 7	356	3.53
Time available for family activities during the week	23.81% 85	28.85% 103	45.38% 162	1.40% 5	0.56% 2	357	3.74
Time available for unstructured play during the week	25.21% 90	30.81% 110	41.74% 149	1.40% 5	0.84% 3	357	3.78

Q6 Compared to previous years, the average amount of time your child(ren) reads throughout the week has:

Answered: 357 Skipped: 54

Answer Choices	Responses
Increased a lot	22.41% 80
Increased some	28.01% 100
No change	31.37% 112
Decreased some	13.73% 49
Decreased a lot	4.48% 16
Total	357

Q7 During the school week (Monday to Friday), approximately how often does your elementary child(ren) do the following activities after school?

Answered: 354 Skipped: 57

	Never or almost never	1 - 2 times a week	3 - 4 times a week	Daily	Total	Weighted Average
Spend time with family	0.56% 2	7.63% 27	13.56% 48	78.25% 277	354	3.69
Engage in unstructured play	3.12% 11	21.25% 75	29.18% 103	46.46% 164	353	3.19
Watch shows, movies or videos online on a portable device (e.g. tablet, phone, laptop)	25.00% 88	30.97% 109	16.48% 58	27.56% 97	352	2.47
Watch shows or movies on TV	24.08% 85	29.75% 105	21.53% 76	24.65% 87	353	2.47

Estabrook School Homework Pilot Parent Survey: 2016-17

Complete chores	21.81% 77	42.49% 150	14.16% 50	21.53% 76	353	2.35
Play video or computer games	40.40% 143	28.25% 100	15.25% 54	16.10% 57	354	2.07
Practice musical instrument	35.14% 123	33.71% 118	17.14% 60	14.00% 49	350	2.10
Organized sports or other physical activities	5.38% 19	55.81% 197	32.29% 114	6.52% 23	353	2.40
Have scheduled play dates	34.94% 123	59.38% 209	4.83% 17	0.85% 3	352	1.72
Attend academic tutoring or classes	63.28% 224	31.64% 112	4.24% 15	0.85% 3	354	1.43

Q8 How useful do you find each of the following for ideas about enriching activities outside of school?

Answered: 350 Skipped: 61

	I don't know	Not at all Useful	Somewhat Useful	Very Useful	Total
Local public library	7.45% 26	5.16% 18	48.14% 168	39.26% 137	349
Ideas from my child(ren)'s teacher(s)	10.00% 35	9.14% 32	43.14% 151	37.71% 132	350
Estabrook PTO	15.71% 55	15.14% 53	48.57% 170	20.57% 72	350
Estabrook At Home Learning calendar	25.50% 89	22.92% 80	41.83% 146	9.74% 34	349

Q9 How do you receive communications from your child(ren)'s teacher(s)? Please rate the usefulness of these types of communication:

Answered: 348 Skipped: 63

	Do not receive this type of communication	Not at all useful	Somewhat useful	Very useful	Total
In-person meeting	5.52% 19	1.74% 6	17.44% 60	75.29% 259	344
Individual email	19.77% 68	1.16% 4	18.31% 63	60.76% 209	344
Newsletter (electronic)	6.98% 24	2.91% 10	43.90% 151	46.22% 159	344
Website	31.47% 107	7.65% 26	35.88% 122	25.00% 85	340
Phone	68.14% 231	2.65% 9	12.39% 42	16.81% 57	339
Newsletter (paper form)	47.48% 160	5.64% 19	32.64% 110	14.24% 48	337

Estabrook School Homework Pilot Parent Survey: 2016-17

Twitter	73.90% 252	9.09% 31	11.14% 38	5.87% 20	341
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Appendix B

Q1 Grade(s) you currently teach:

Answered: 22 Skipped: 1

Answer Choices	Responses
K	68.2% 15
1	50.0% 11
2	50.0% 11
3	54.5% 12
4	45.5% 10
5	54.5% 12
Total Respondents: 22	

Q2 Years worked at Estabrook?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 1

Answer Choices	Responses
1	18.2% 4
2	9.1% 2
3	4.5% 1
4	13.6% 3
5	0.0% 0
6	4.5% 1
7 or more	50.0% 11
Total	22

Q3 Total years in the teaching profession?

Answered: 21 Skipped: 2

Answer Choices	Responses
1	0.0% 0
2	4.8% 1
3	0.0% 0
4	0.0% 0
5	9.5% 2
6	0.0% 0
7 or more	85.7% 18
Total	21

Q4 What is your primary role?

Answered: 22 Skipped: 1

Answer Choices	Responses
Classroom Teacher	50.0% 11
Specialist	27.3% 6
Special Education Teacher/Related Service Provider	13.6% 3
Mental Health Team	9.1% 2
Other (please specify)	0.0% 0
Total	22

Q5 Prior to this year, did you previously assign homework?

Answered: 23 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	43.5% 10
No	56.5% 13
Total	23

Q6 In what subjects did you previously assign written homework?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 13

Answer Choices	Responses
Math	80.0% 8
Reading	100.0% 10
Writing	10.0% 1
Science	10.0% 1
Social Studies	10.0% 1
Other (please specify)	20.0% 2
Total Respondents: 10	

Q7 In what form(s) did you previously assign homework?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 13

Answer Choices	Responses
Worksheet	40.0% 4

Estabrook School Homework Pilot Staff Survey: 2016-17

Writing assignment	20.0%	2
Reading	80.0%	8
Interactive online activity	10.0%	1
Hands on/physical activity	30.0%	3
Studying	10.0%	1
Other (please specify)	30.0%	3
Total Respondents: 10		

Q8 About how much time did you expect students to spend on homework nightly?

Answered: 10 Skipped: 13

Answer Choices	Responses	
None	0.0%	0
Less than 30 minutes	50.0%	5
30 minutes to 1 hour	40.0%	4
1 to 1 ½ hours	10.0%	1
1 ½ to 2 hours	0.0%	0
2 to 2 ½ hours	0.0%	0
2 ½ to 3 hours	0.0%	0
More than 3 hours	0.0%	0
Total		10

Q9 Describe how you assigned homework.

Answered: 10 Skipped: 13

Answer Choices	Responses	
Class received the same assignment	40.0%	4
Homework assigned to individuals	30.0%	3
Used tiered assignments (easy, medium, hard)	30.0%	3
Total		10

Q10 What did you do with homework? (check all that apply)

Answered: 9 Skipped: 14

Answer Choices	Responses	
Correct and return to students	66.7%	6
Review as a group during class	33.3%	3

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Have students review with a partner	22.2%	2
Review one of one with a student	33.3%	3
Use it to inform Standard Based Report Card indicators	22.2%	2
Use it to to plan upcoming instruction (including plans for differentiation)	55.6%	5
Total Respondents: 9		

Q11 What do you believe are the purpose(s) for assigning homework? (check all that apply)

Answered: 22 Skipped: 1

Answer Choices	Responses	
Reinforce or provide additional practice related to what students learned in class	77.3%	17
Help students develop work habits and organizational skills	68.2%	15
Provide parents with information about what their child(ren) learned in school	13.6%	3
Provide parents with information about what their child(ren) knows and can do	13.6%	3
Allow students to preview content to be taught in class	9.1%	2
Allow student to learn and pursue their own interests and passions	9.1%	2
Provided additional challenge for students	0.0%	0
Provide students the opportunity to learn new concepts	0.0%	0
Provide a structured activity for students after school	0.0%	0
Total Respondents: 22		

Q12 Since we've removed written homework, during an average week:

Answered: 15 Skipped: 8

	None (no time gained)	15 to 29 minutes	30 to 44 minutes	45 to 59 minutes	60 to 89 minutes	90 minutes or more	Total	Weighted Average
When you have your class, about how much instructional time have you reclaimed?	80.0% 12	0.0% 0	13.3% 2	0.0% 0	6.7% 1	0.0% 0	15	0.53
Outside of class, about how much of your own professional time have you reclaimed (e.g. planning, duplicating, creating, reviewing, scoring, etc.) ?	53.3% 8	20.0% 3	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	13.3% 2	13.3% 2	15	1.40

Q13 This year, about how often have you assigned a targeted short term assignment for an individual student, in collaboration with the parents (e.g. practicing multiplication facts), to be completed out of class?

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Answered: 17 Skipped: 6

Answer Choices	Responses	
Never	17.6%	3
A few times throughout the year	70.6%	12
Once a month	5.9%	1
A few times a month	5.9%	1
Every week	0.0%	0
Total		17

Q14 Compared to previous years, what impact do you think the modified homework plan has had on students' overall academic performance this year in each of the following subject areas:

Answered: 13 Skipped: 10

	Positive Impact	No Significant Impact	Negative Impact	Total	Weighted Average
Math	18.2% 2	81.8% 9	0.0% 0	11	1.82
Reading	38.5% 5	61.5% 8	0.0% 0	13	1.62
Writing	18.2% 2	81.8% 9	0.0% 0	11	1.82
Social studies	9.1% 1	90.9% 10	0.0% 0	11	1.91
Science	9.1% 1	90.9% 10	0.0% 0	11	1.91
Development of positive work habits	9.1% 1	54.5% 6	36.4% 4	11	2.27

Q15 About how often do you share information with parents about:

Answered: 17 Skipped: 6

	Never	A few times throughout the year	Once a month	A few times a month	Every week	Total	Weighted Average
Their student's individual progress	0.0% 0	76.5% 13	11.8% 2	11.8% 2	0.0% 0	17	2.35
Current instructional activities and content	0.0% 0	25.0% 4	37.5% 6	31.3% 5	6.3% 1	16	3.19
Plans for upcoming instruction	12.5% 2	18.8% 3	50.0% 8	12.5% 2	6.3% 1	16	2.81
Ideas for enriching activities outside of school	6.3% 1	43.8% 7	37.5% 6	6.3% 1	6.3% 1	16	2.63

Estabrook School Homework Pilot Staff Survey: 2016-17

Q16 How often do you use the following to communicate with parents:

Answered: 18 Skipped: 5

	Never	A few times throughout the year	About once a month	A few times a month	Every week	Total	Weighted Average
Overall progress report (electronic)	52.9% 9	47.1% 8	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	17	1.47
Overall progress report (paper)	62.5% 10	37.5% 6	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	16	1.38
Newsletter (paper form)	75.0% 12	18.8% 3	0.0% 0	6.3% 1	0.0% 0	16	1.38
In-person meeting	0.0% 0	82.4% 14	5.9% 1	5.9% 1	5.9% 1	17	2.35
Updates to website	44.4% 8	22.2% 4	22.2% 4	11.1% 2	0.0% 0	18	2.00
Phone call to parent/guardian	11.1% 2	66.7% 12	5.6% 1	11.1% 2	5.6% 1	18	2.33
Twitter	70.6% 12	0.0% 0	0.0% 0	11.8% 2	17.6% 3	17	2.06
Completed student work with teacher comments, corrections or scores returned to parent	38.9% 7	11.1% 2	11.1% 2	16.7% 3	22.2% 4	18	2.72
Newsletter (electronic)	27.8% 5	11.1% 2	38.9% 7	16.7% 3	5.6% 1	18	2.61
Completed student work without teacher annotation returned to parents	52.9% 9	5.9% 1	11.8% 2	23.5% 4	5.9% 1	17	2.24
Email to parent/guardian	5.6% 1	27.8% 5	0.0% 0	50.0% 9	16.7% 3	18	3.44

Appendix C

Q1 What grade are you in?

Answered: 183 Skipped: 1

Answer Choices	Responses
Grade 4	52.5% 96
Grade 5	47.5% 87
Total	183

Q2 During the school week (Monday to Friday), about how many nights a week do you read after school?

Answered: 184 Skipped: 0

Answer Choices	Responses
Every night (5 nights)	59.2% 109
3 to 4 nights	25.5% 47
1 - 2 nights	10.9% 20
Never (0 nights)	4.3% 8
Total	184

Q3 When you do read, about how much do you normally read each afternoon/evening??

Answered: 176 Skipped: 8

Answer Choices	Responses
1 - 15 minutes	8.5% 15
15 - 30 minutes	27.3% 48
30 - 45 minutes	27.3% 48
45 minutes - 1 hour	17.6% 31
More than 1 hour	19.3% 34
Total	176

Q4 Who do you read with? (Check all the apply)

Answered: 176 Skipped: 8

Answer Choices	Responses
I read alone	95.5% 168
With a parent or guardian	11.9% 21

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With a brother or sister	8.5%	15
With a friend	2.8%	5
With a tutor or teacher	2.3%	4
Someone else (please specify)	2.3%	4
Total Respondents: 176		

Q5 Do you read more, less or the same as you did last year?

Answered: 182 Skipped: 2

Answer Choices	Responses	
I read more this year	58.8%	107
I read the same as last year	30.8%	56
I read less this year	10.4%	19
Total		182

Q6 Do you like reading?

Answered: 181 Skipped: 3

Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	93.4%	169
No	6.6%	12
Total		181

Q7 How do you spend your time after school?

Answered: 183 Skipped: 1

	Never	About once a week	A few times a week	Everyday or almost everyday	Total	Weighted Average
Spend time with family	5.7% 10	16.6% 29	33.1% 58	44.6% 78	175	2.72
Exercise	9.4% 16	16.4% 28	32.7% 56	41.5% 71	171	2.65
Play outside	4.6% 8	13.7% 24	43.4% 76	38.3% 67	175	2.77
Practice a musical instrument	23.0% 38	17.6% 29	26.7% 44	32.7% 54	165	2.36
Complete chores	20.1% 35	20.1% 35	30.5% 53	29.3% 51	174	2.40
Play on my own	19.7% 34	21.4% 37	31.2% 54	27.7% 48	173	2.39
Watch shows, movies or videos online on a portable device (e.g. tablet, phone, laptop)	14.7% 26	22.6% 40	39.5% 70	23.2% 41	177	2.48

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Attend practice or games for a sports team	19.1% 34	15.2% 27	43.8% 78	21.9% 39	178	2.47
Watch shows or movies on TV	19.5% 34	27.0% 47	34.5% 60	19.0% 33	174	2.34
Play video or computer games	26.7% 47	31.3% 55	28.4% 50	13.6% 24	176	2.15
Work on quiet activities (like crafts or collections)	22.9% 39	40.0% 68	24.7% 42	12.4% 21	170	2.14
Attend tutoring or classes	48.5% 82	18.3% 31	23.7% 40	9.5% 16	169	1.85
Have play dates with friends	18.7% 32	52.6% 90	22.8% 39	5.8% 10	171	2.10

Q8 Last year, how much time did you spend on homework?

Answered: 181 Skipped: 3

Answer Choices	Responses
I did not have homework	2.2% 4
less than 30 minutes	41.4% 75
30 minutes to 1 hour	38.1% 69
1 to 1 ½ hours	8.3% 15
1 ½ to 2 hours	5.0% 9
2 to 2 ½ hours	1.1% 2
2 ½ to 3 hours	1.1% 2
More than 3 hours	2.8% 5
Total	181

Q9 Thinking about last year...

Answered: 174 Skipped: 10

	Yes	Sometimes	No	Total	Weighted Average
Homework helped me practice what I learned in class.	29.0% 49	50.9% 86	20.1% 34	169	1.91
Homework helped me learn new things.	15.9% 27	41.2% 70	42.9% 73	170	2.27
Homework gave me a chance to try more challenging work.	26.0% 44	36.7% 62	37.3% 63	169	2.11
Homework was a good use of my time.	23.7% 40	37.9% 64	38.5% 65	169	2.15

Q10 Thinking about last year, was homework hard, easy, or just right?

Answered: 173 Skipped: 11

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Answer Choices	Responses	
Hard	6.9%	12
Easy	50.3%	87
Just right	42.8%	74
Total		173

Q11 Thinking about last year, did you like homework?

Answered: 174 Skipped: 10

Answer Choices	Responses	
I liked homework	17.8%	31
It was ok	56.9%	99
I did not like homework	25.3%	44
Total		174

Q12 Thinking about last year, did you worry about homework?

Answered: 173 Skipped: 11

Answer Choices	Responses	
I worried a lot about homework	8.7%	15
I worried a little about homework	35.3%	61
I did not worry about homework at all	56.1%	97
Total		173

Q13 Tell us what you think about coming to Estabrook School...

Answered: 176 Skipped: 8

	Most of the time	Some of the time	Never or almost never	Total	Weighted Average
Things I do in school are interesting.	50.6% 89	43.2% 76	6.3% 11	176	2.44
Things I do in school are fun.	41.5% 73	52.8% 93	5.7% 10	176	2.36
Things I do in school are important.	66.5% 117	30.7% 54	2.8% 5	176	2.64
Things I do in school are challenging.	13.8% 24	65.5% 114	20.7% 36	174	1.93
I get to choose the things I want to work on, learn or do.	12.8% 22	68.6% 118	18.6% 32	172	1.94
I feel safe at school.	82.7% 143	13.9% 24	3.5% 6	173	2.79

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I like coming to school.	49.1% 84	43.3% 74	7.6% 13	171	2.42
I have enough time to eat lunch.	44.3% 78	39.8% 70	15.9% 28	176	2.28
I have enough time to play with my friends at recess.	42.0% 74	34.7% 61	23.3% 41	176	2.19