

Harvest Elementary School



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Dear Harvest families,

About five years ago, Harvest jumped into research and developed a new homework policy that we view is of greater benefit to our students and families. This is **not a no homework policy**, rather it is a shift in our belief, based upon research, that homework should be something a student does that is of high interest and extends a child's learning and wonder.

Over the years we have seen an increase in homework, with that the pressure and stress amongst students and parents is also increasing. As we continue to research this topic, there is no evidence that supports improved student performance associated with homework especially before middle school. Most homework robs our children and our families of our most precious resource: time. Time to think, play, and connect with one another and friends. There is also a decrease in time to read, rest, discover, run, fall, fail and learn from it all. Most importantly, time to love.

In our desire to give our children the best possible education we have forgotten that creativity, play, rest, and other interests outside of school, along with time spent with family are key parts of growing up that are important for all ages. We hope that by providing time for students, they will develop an array of extracurricular personal interests and engage in meaningful family, community, creative or athletic activities outside of school. We are asking for your partnership in this initiative through supporting students at home.

While eliminating the compliance and consequence piece of homework it is important to note that children **must** read nightly. The biggest secret to becoming a great reader is to read! Read with a parent, read silently, read to a younger sibling, read to a pet, but just read! We are not going to set a number of minutes required or ask reading logs for parents to sign. One of the things we have learned over the past several years is that mandating a set number of minutes to read means a timer is set, students read and as soon as that timer goes off the reading is done. It doesn't matter if the child is deep into their reading, they are done.

Additionally, we will provide added learning opportunities such as math home links and digital resources on our website; however, these materials will not be collected, graded, or marked on the report card. If your child's report card currently addresses homework on it, you will see an "NA" for not assessed.

Saline Area Schools
Student Led-Future Focused

Here are some additional ideas for providing learning opportunities at home:

- Family games - math/reading/writing/critical thinking/communication
- Help cook - math/reading/critical thinking/communication/collaboration
- Play outside - imagination/creativity/communication skills/ friendship skills
- Building - math/reading/critical thinking/creativity
- Puzzle time - critical thinking/communication/collaboration
- Take a walk - science/discovery/wonder
- Journal - writing/creativity/communication
- Visit the library-reading/writing/research/wonders
- World Languages- listen to music, a story, or watch a cartoon in Spanish.
- Art activities-draw a picture/build with clay/visit a museum/creativity

We are currently developing a webpage that will be linked to the Harvest website in the very near future. It will be titled:

**For the Love of Family, For the Love of Play
“Homework Ideas”**

We are confident that our extraordinary team of Harvest teachers can teach effectively during the school day and eliminate the perceived need for our students to continue to do “school” when we send them home. This will eliminate the need for parents to have to continue to extend school and become a second shift as “homework supervisors.” We are excited for what lies ahead this year for our students given the additional time to engage in and pursue their own passions. We look forward to the gains our children will make both within and outside of the classroom. A key component to making these gains is the work that parents and children do at home. We do thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Emily Sickler, Principal
and the entire Harvest Faculty and Staff