

Fallon Middle School

2017-2018 Homework and Grading Plan

Homework

Fallon Middle School is committed to supporting young adolescents in realizing their full academic, social, emotional and physical potential. An essential component of meeting this goal is establishing strong partnerships between staff, students, and parents. We believe homework should be purposeful, relevant, and aligned to daily lessons and course standards.

Homework is defined as any task assigned to students by school teachers that is meant to be carried out during non-school hours. This includes independent preparation for upcoming lessons, practice of skills taught during class, completion of special projects, test and performance preparation, and daily independent reading.

Parent/Student Support of Homework

Homework is most effective and serves its intended purpose only when it is completed independently and in a timely manner by the student to whom it is assigned. Parents can best support their child's homework completion by making sure they are aware of homework assignments, providing their child with a dedicated time and space to complete homework each day, limiting screen time and other distractions until homework is completed, and checking each evening to be sure homework has been completed and placed in their child's backpack. As children progress from 6th grade into 7th and 8th grade, they should begin to take on more responsibility for organizing their time and materials to complete homework independently. Daily checks by parents should not be necessary as young adolescents develop skills of self-regulation and move toward high school.

Homework Expectations and Requirements

Students at Fallon Middle School will be assigned homework nightly. Our teacher teams work collaboratively to ensure that the amount of time students spend on homework is generally consistent across a particular course and that the total amount of homework does not exceed limits established by the DUSD Board of Trustees. Parents will receive a course outline from each of their child's teachers during the first few days of school. The course outline will describe the teacher's specific homework and grading policies. Most teachers also post these policies and course outlines on their teacher websites for review.

Homework Policies

Fallon's homework policies are aligned with the policies adopted by our DUSD Board of Trustees. As such, homework assignments should not exceed 2 hours per night for all academic

subjects combined (English, Math, History, Science, and World Languages), which equates to approximately 30 minutes per course. In addition, students may be assigned an additional 30 minutes of independent reading time each night. Homework may be assigned on the weekend, but those assignments will not exceed 2 hours in total. Teachers will not give a test on the first day back from a holiday. Similarly, project due dates will not be on the first day back from a school holiday. Finally, no homework will be assigned over winter break.

Additional Support

Fallon Students will have the opportunity to get additional help and support with homework by attending Academic Prep (AP). AP is a 25-minute block of time at the end of every school day except Wednesday. During AP, students can select a teacher's room to visit for additional assistance. Also, teachers may assign a student to attend their AP sessions if they feel that the student would benefit from an additional learning opportunity. Students who have an IEP, and some English Language Learners, may receive additional support during their regularly scheduled tutorial period. All students have the opportunity to attend peer tutoring after school in the Fallon Library. Peer tutoring is offered by California Junior Scholarship Federation students. Parents can contact the Fallon office for information about tutoring days and times. The Fallon counseling team also provides ongoing support and monitoring. Students who feel they need additional support beyond what is provided should make an appointment to see their counselor.

Communication

Homework due dates, project due dates, and test dates are communicated by each individual teacher either through the teacher's website, Google classroom, or the "minder binder." Students and parents should routinely check these locations together to maintain an accurate picture of deadlines and important dates. By working in partnership with parents, the staff at Fallon Middle School is committed to teaching students the time management and study skills they will need to use independently to be successful in high school.

The online Infinite Campus Parent Portal provides an opportunity for students and their parents to monitor academic progress on a regular basis. Parents should be aware that Infinite Campus does not necessarily provide a "real time" status of student grades or missing assignments. Teachers must update Infinite Campus at least once during each unit and every three weeks during the quarter, but they are not able or expected to update it on a daily basis. If a child is experiencing difficulty completing assignments within the allotted time, parents should request an appointment to discuss the issue with the teacher directly. Parents with questions about missing assignments or about grades on specific assignments or tests are encouraged to talk with their child first and support the child in approaching his/her teacher directly.

Make-Up Work

Students are encouraged to complete assignments on-time. Each teacher establishes guidelines

for turning in late work. This process is articulated in each course syllabus. Typically, students will receive partial credit for work turned in within the timeframe established by each teacher. In some cases, students may not receive credit for work that is turned in after deadlines established by each teacher.

Independent Study

Parent must notify administration, complete and return a Short Term Independent Study Request Form at least 10 school days prior to departure. Short Term Independent Study Request Forms are available in our main office. Contracts must be approved by an administrator. The student must turn in completed assignments before or on the agreed contract date; typically the return date. If work is not received by this date, the contract will be considered incomplete, voided and the student will not receive attendance credit. The student must return to school before the last week of the school year and turn in all assignments for grading. Contracts may not be faxed or emailed. A student whose achievement level is below grade level is not eligible for Independent Study. A student with disabilities, as defined in Ed Code 56026, is not eligible for an Independent Study contract unless his/her Individualized Education Program specifically provides for such participation (Ed Code, 51745). Students who have had a Short Term Independent Study contract in the past and did not successfully complete it, are not eligible for a new contract.

Grading

Grading is an important means of communicating student performance and progress. Grades are an impartial, consistent reflection of the quality of the student's work and his/her mastery of course standards. Student learning is supported by daily attendance and homework completion, class participation, and academic honesty.

Grade Scale and Assignments

At Fallon Middle School standards-based assessments account for 65%-80% of each student's final grade, depending on the course, articulated in the course syllabus. Demonstrating knowledge of those standards through projects and other processing activities account for 10% to 25% of each student's grade. The final 10% of the grade is for homework. Fallon Middle School uses the common 10% grading scale, which is the default in Infinite Campus. During grade evaluation teachers are encouraged to consider students' later performance, for example mastery on a final. However, teachers are discouraged from giving a final worth more than 30% of the overall grade.

Policies and Procedures

The Fallon Middle School teaching teams have worked collaboratively to develop policies for

students to retake selected assessments. In each case, students must work with the teacher to demonstrate that they have taken additional steps and put in additional effort to learn the material initially missed on the assessment. Teachers do not send home graded tests in all cases; instead, parents and students may need to make an appointment with the teacher to meet and discuss test results. Teachers may assign standards-based extra credit assignments that are relevant to the course of study, but are not required to do so. Academic integrity is a critical skill for middle school students to develop, and the policy on cheating and plagiarism is outlined in the Fallon Honor Code. Students who violate the policy will earn a zero on the assignment and may face additional consequences for each violation. The purpose of the code is to ensure students develop healthy habits for future academic success.

Missing Work

Student learning is enhanced by daily attendance, homework completion, and class participation. Students who miss school for an absence will earn credit for work submitted within a reasonable period of time. At a minimum, students are given one day of additional time to complete an assignment for each day they are absent. Suspended students are also expected to complete work, quizzes and tests missed during their absence. It is the individual responsibility of any suspended student to remain informed of class assignments and due dates. Credit shall be earned for work submitted within a reasonable period of time.