

## **Rieke Homework Survey**

In June 2015, the Rieke PTA Board administered a survey of homework and project practices to Rieke parents. Principal Torres requested this survey to provide insight into parents' perspectives, which will support the principal and staff in their efforts to set homework policies and to determine the proper amount and type of homework in each classroom. The survey was conducted using the online site SurveyMonkey and was open to all Rieke parents. Members of the Rieke PTA Board summarized results, created figures to better communicate results, and interpreted the results. We have included a brief summary of results, figures for each of the questions, and all of the written comments provided by parents. We would like to thank all parents who provided their perspectives and for taking the time to address this important issue for the Rieke community.

Sincerely,

Huntley Morrison and Kelli Walker, PTA Co-Presidents

Jim Meurer (PTA Imagine) and Nate Wood (PTA Secretary), survey administrators

**Observations about survey participation** – The survey was answered by 96 individuals, suggesting that approximately one out of three Rieke families participated. There were an increasing number of participants from families with children in kindergarten until 3<sup>rd</sup> grade, after which responses lessened for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade parents.

## **Overall observations about homework-related responses:**

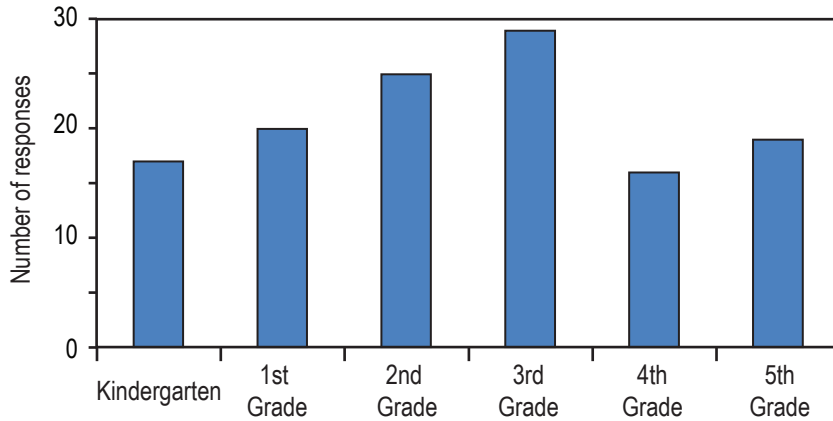
- **Homework purpose (question 1)** - The majority of parents felt K-2 homework is primarily for developing study habits and skills, whereas grades 3-5 homework served a dual purpose of developing study habits and for improving student performance.
- **Homework amount (questions 2 and 3)** - The majority of parents felt that the amount of homework for students in K-3 classes was appropriate (66%, 63%, 56%, and 52% of respondents for kindergarten to 3<sup>rd</sup> classes, respectively). For 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade, the percentage of parents that felt the current amount was appropriate shrank to 34% and 36%, respectively. Approximately 44-49% of parents felt that there is too much homework currently in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes. As for recommendations on homework amount, the majority of parents felt students in Kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade classes should have ten minutes or less of homework per night. This increased to 10-20 minutes for students in 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classes and to 20-30 minutes for students in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade classes. Based on write-in comments at the end of the survey, there were many people that felt students needed more homework and many others felt that they needed less homework.
- **Parent expectation for teacher reviews of homework (question 4)** - The highest percentage of respondents (47%) felt homework should be reviewed for errors but not graded. The second most common response (31%) was that homework should be reviewed for errors and graded.
- **Parent roles in homework (questions 5 and 6)** - For students in kindergarten, parents felt equally that they should be actively helping their children and available as a resource. Starting in 1<sup>st</sup> grade and increasing to 5<sup>th</sup> grade, parents primarily felt they should be available as a resource but are not actively helping their children complete the homework. Once homework is completed, the majority of respondents (58%) felt their signature on homework meant that they have reviewed the homework with their child and have checked it for accuracy and completion. Approximately 30% believe their job is to review it that it is complete, but not check for accuracy.
- **Additional written comments** – There were 43 comments related to current homework practices, including 9 comments that were supportive and 34 comments that were critical and included recommendations. The nine positive comments regarding current homework practices focused on homework consistency and relevance, as

well as the importance of the computer-based homework (e.g., IXL). Of the parents that were critical of current practices, five parents felt there should be more and more-challenging homework, whereas ten other parents believed there should be no homework at all. The parents who felt there should be no or close to no homework believed that it encroached on valuable time for imagination, creativity and family engagement, as well as overly stressing some students. There were several parents who did not wish to see their children doing what they considered to be “busy work” and wished to see homework that pushed critical thinking. However, other parents felt that homework is for reinforcing and reviewing what was learned in class to help students practice a new skillset, which may be considered busy work by the other group of parents. Recommendations for improving homework included (1) providing an answer key to parents, (2) guidance on how children are now being taught math, (3) guidance on what role a parent should have with homework, (4) allowing for homework to be due after a weekend, (5) providing information about projects and large homework sets far in advance, (6) mechanisms to ensure that children bring home assignments, (7) a natural progression in homework and project expectations as students advance in grades, and (8) homework differentiation within a class based on a student’s abilities instead of a common set of homework across a classroom.

### **Overall observations about project-related responses**

- General opinion of project-based homework (question 7) - Parents were divided on the utility of projects. Approximately 34% of parents felt that projects enhance their child’s learning. Approximately 46% of parents questioned the educational value of the project and the remaining 20% of respondents had no opinion of the projects.
- Opinion on whether inequity is a problem with projects (question 8) - Approximately 60% of parents felt that inequity is a minor or major problem with home-based projects at Rieke. Eighteen percent of parents do not feel there is a problem and 22% were neutral on the subject.
- Additional written comments - There were many passionate comments in support of and critical of projects. There were 30 comments related to projects, including 10 comments that were supportive and 20 comments that were critical and included recommendations. Supporters felt that projects are incredibly valuable from experiential-education and time-management perspectives. Detractors felt that the value of projects is questionable given the varying levels of parental involvement (and dependence in many cases), availability of resources, the timing of the projects, and the amount of time that they require at home. Several parents felt the projects are busy work and question how much their child actually learns. If the projects are continued, parents offered several recommendations for improving the project experience, including (1) teaching about the sociological and economic aspects of bridges, instead of only building a bridge, (2) providing a worksheet that outlines time management, task planning, and project expectations, (3) providing a common set of materials to students to level the playing field in terms of resource inequity, (4) project completion during class time to increase student ownership, greatly reduce parental involvement, and minimize logistics in transporting projects to school, (5) discussion of projects earlier in the school year to minimize end-of-the-year stress, and (6) include a written element that includes plans, execution of the plan, and outcomes.

## Section 1 - Survey demographics

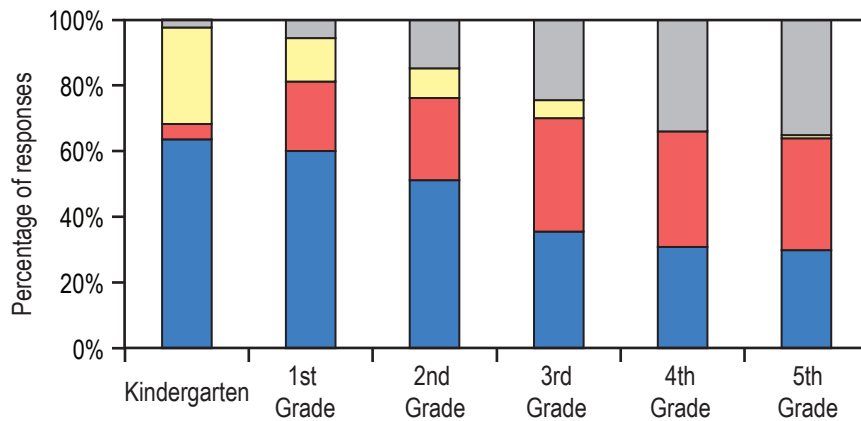


In what grades do you currently have children?

Survey respondents = 96

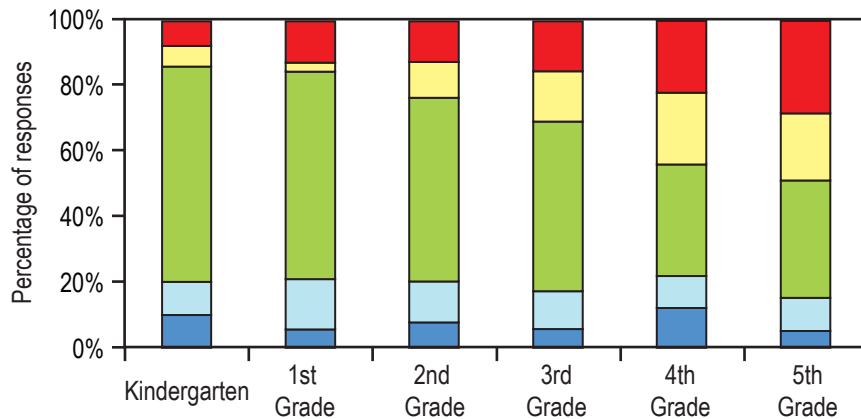
Number of responses to question #1 = 126

## Section 2 - Purpose and amount of homework



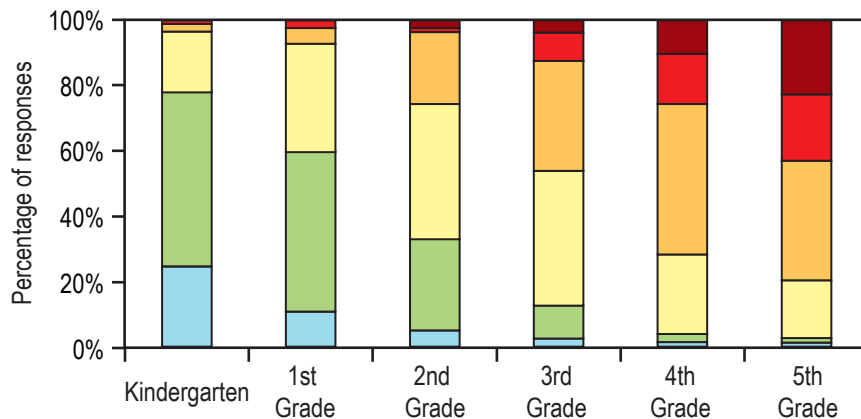
1) What do you think should be the primary purpose of homework?

- N/A (I have never had a student in that grade)
- Inform you about what your child is learning at school
- Improve student performance
- Develop study habits and skills



2) Is the amount of homework your child is required to do too little, the right amount or too much?

- Too much
- Somewhat too much
- The right amount
- Somewhat too little
- Too little

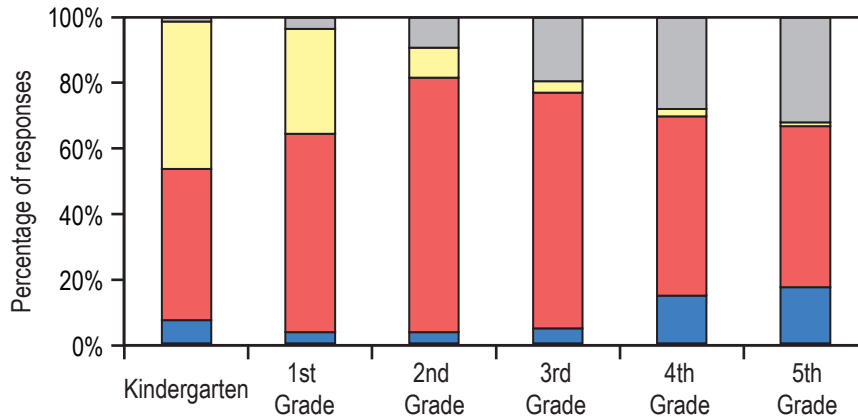
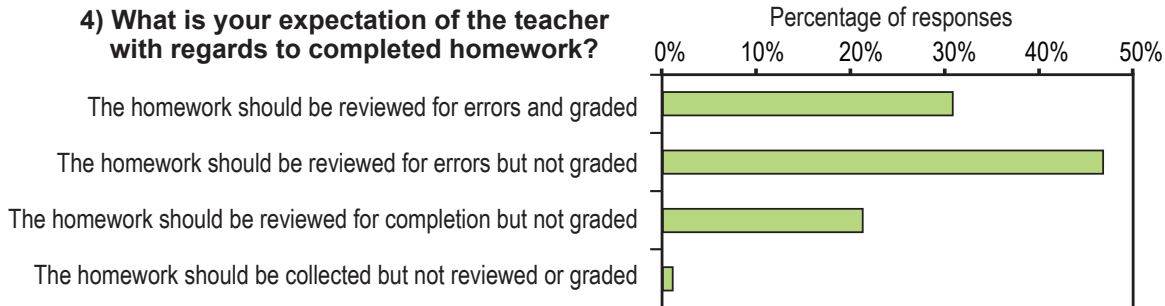


3) In addition to the 20 minutes of reading a night, what is the appropriate amount of homework per night for each grade?

- 40-50 min
- 30-40 min
- 20-30 min
- 10-20 min
- < 10 min
- None

## Section 3 - Parent and teacher expectations for homework

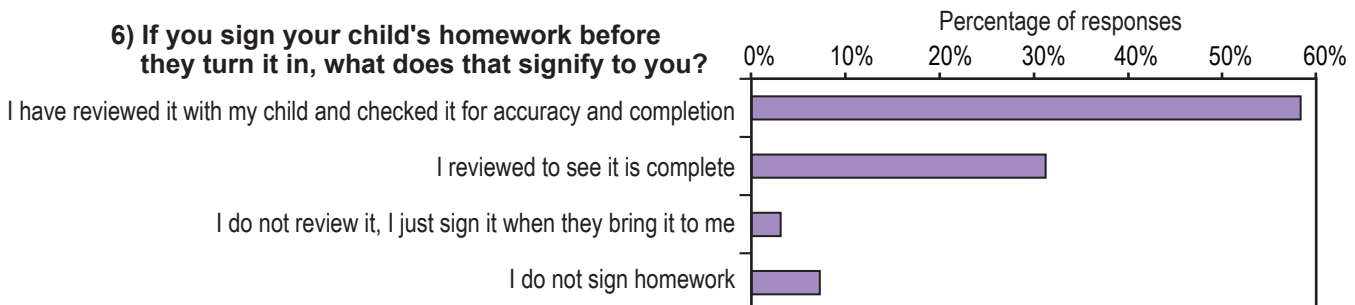
### 4) What is your expectation of the teacher with regards to completed homework?



### 5) What do you think the parent's role should be with homework?

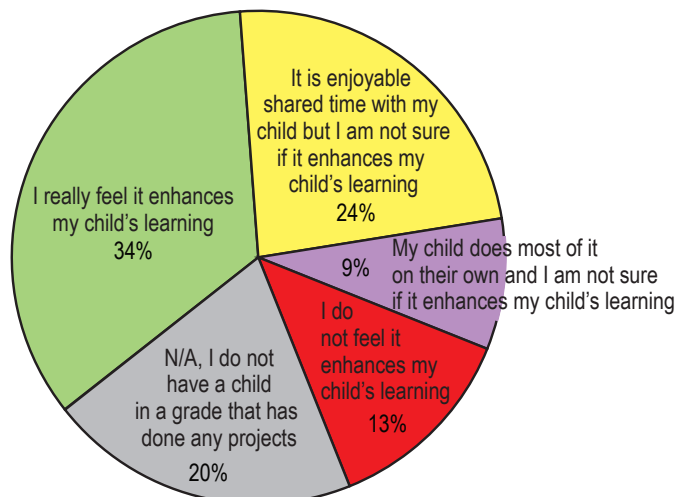
- N/A, I have never had a child in this grade
- I should be actively helping my child complete the homework
- I should be available as a resource, but my child should complete most of the homework on their own
- I should not be involved, my child should be able to complete it on their own

### 6) If you sign your child's homework before they turn it in, what does that signify to you?

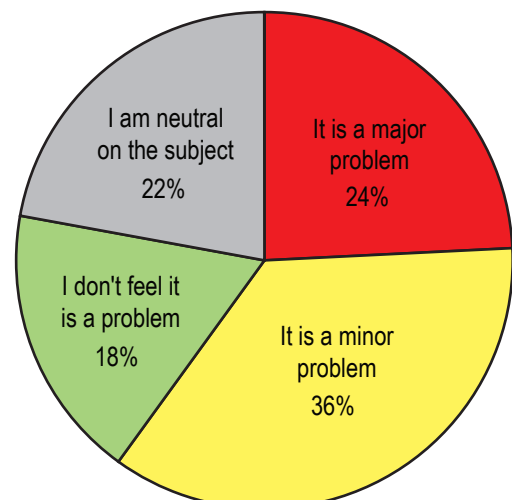


## Section 4 - Projects

### 7) What is your opinion of project-based homework (example: 3rd Grade bridges, 5th Grade floats)?



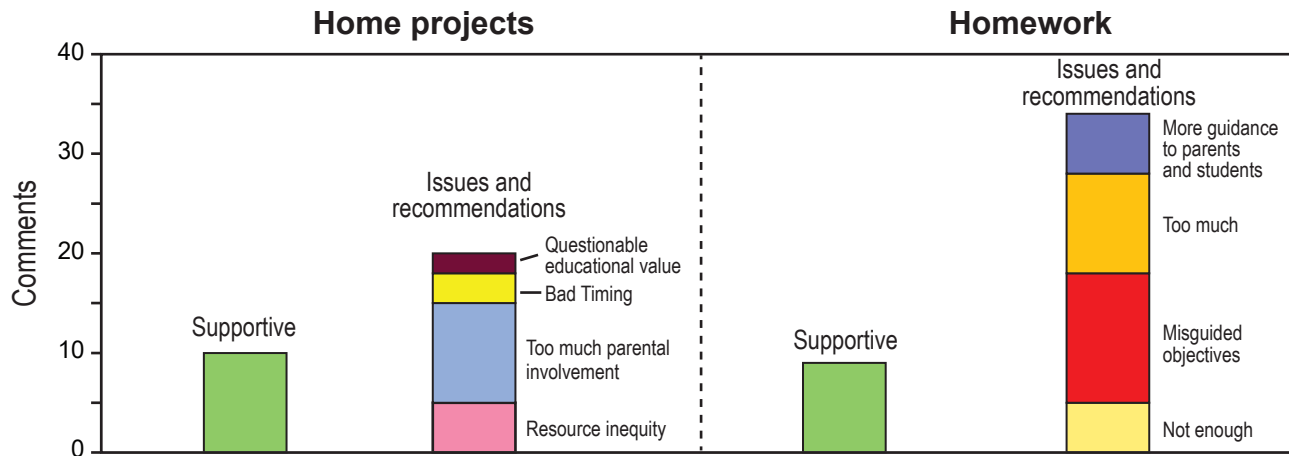
### 8) Project-based homework can sometimes create inequity among classmates. Do you think this is a problem in Rieke classrooms?



## Section 5 - Additional comments

### Overview

Survey participants were asked to provide any additional comments. We read all comments and grouped them based on similar topics. If a respondent made several points within the same comment, we separated the points and placed them in the appropriate group. We grouped comments based on special projects versus regular homework and also if the comments were supportive or critical. We include a graph to get a sense of the number of comments for a specific topic and then provide text from the original comments.



### Home Projects – praise with recommendations for improvement (10 comments)

- I like the idea of project based homework.
- I think experiential learning should always be the goal. I think there could be more of it, generally speaking, at Rieke.
- Project-based learning can be incredibly valuable and educational and does seem to engender excitement among the kids. This requires a thoughtful and robust classroom aspect. For example, with bridges are the kids learning about how the structures are designed and built (engineering/science/construction)? Likewise, are sociological and economic aspects such as importance of bridges to building communities and commerce discussed? If not, then it would seem we're simply having fun—which is great, but given the amount of time required may not be the best value. To be clear, I support the projects and want to make sure we continue to get the most out of the experience. As far as a sense of "inequity" it is impossible to create an absolute equal experience across the board and I don't think the job of the school is to create what is perceived to be the most level playing field, especially at the expense of a valuable program. What we should be focusing on is creating the most engaging educational environment we can with our resources. Then, if there are those who need help, we should be working together as a community to help lift them up as best as we can rather than bring down the experience for everyone.
- The project question 7, didn't have an answer for my child works on it themselves AND learns from it. I think that some (competitive) parents are doing the project for their kids. But that will always happen no matter what.
- I don't think we should penalize all students and do away with a beneficial resource such as project-based homework just because of some parents lack of involvement.
- Regarding potential project inequity -- That is life. Although the projects would feel like homework for me
- One or two project based homework per year is OK, but more is probably too much.
- Project homework is good in terms of learning time management and planning out tasks. It would be good to have a worksheet or something to emphasize that aspect, to encourage students to think about what steps will be needed and how much time each might take.
- Yes. This survey is poor and does not capture the SOLUTION options and is designed to be weighted in a biased way regardless of what we put in. Project Learning is CRITICAL to develop problem solving skills and critical thinking. Children can be provided with resources (I routinely bring extra things to class for students that don't have enough AND a field trip to SCRAP before these projects would be a HUGE benefit to children who have too much AND too little (yes children can have too much). The hands on learning at Rieke is so poor that if you remove this the children will be unprepared for excellent learning which they all deserve. I can't for this all in... a brainstorming session or 5 on learning with outside speakers would be a HUGE benefit to teachers AND parents. Why not take a day when the kids are wasting time watching a movie and bring Teachers and Parents together (mandatory for teachers) and another session eve for parents who can't come during the day.... :) The kids deserve the best and teachers need HELP!!!!
- The projects can be wonderful. I would like to school to dial down expectations on what these projects should look like and be made from. They should not imply that an expensive trip to the craft store is required, but kids will self-compare and feel badly about their shoe-box trolley when other kids have one that a proficient wood-worker parent has helped with and spent much money on. Please think along the lines of the space stations in 5th and milk carton village in 2nd. Easy to acquire materials and time spent in class building, so equity and money becomes a smaller concern. Some of the projects like getting the wagon to school are burdensome for families that do not live that close to school.

## Section 5 - Additional comments, continued

### Home Projects – issues and recommendations for improvement (20 comments)

#### Resource inequity (5 comments)

- I feel like there is major inequity but I assume kids are not evaluated on time/money/tools/supplies used. As a parent it is hard to know how much help to provide.
- Requiring color pictures attached to an out of school project is too difficult and expensive: printer ink runs out fast. Home projects can be expensive to do well. Maybe the class room can supply materials? Very much appreciated Ms. Early doing the long houses IN class. If you are a working parent, getting the float to and from school when you kid is a bus kid is STRESSFUL. There was no place to put it early or place to leave it to pick it up the next. Teachers should highlight this issue and help parents
- A family investment into some arts and crafts project does little in terms of the child's development in any capacity. Rather, it sets up a burden for the family, and draws a sharp line between the children who have the resources and manpower to complete the project, and the ones who do not. I grew up in a home that did not have support for projects like this, and I'll tell you, it hurt to be the kid with the "worst" project, simply because I didn't have the involved parents or endless supply of materials. I had the ugliest project, but having done 100% of the work on my own, probably learned 100% more than my peers who had their dad build something, or mom craft something. But I was judged harshly by peers and teachers on aesthetics, for sure.
- #8 Inequity, even if it is for a small minority of the students, is always a problem. Students who cannot afford materials for projects MUST be provided them and assistance MUST be available elsewhere if parents are not.
- Also, I do think that a resource for kids who might not have the means or parental availability could go for help with projects. Or "you can make your bridge out of these materials, and then the school can offer some of those materials" I think you find a way to make it equitable vs taking it away altogether.

#### Too much parental involvement (10 comments)

- With projects, most of them can't be completed by a child by themselves and requires a parent. This is where the inequity occurs, as not every parent cares or has the time (i.e., multiple children with projects, work shifts, skills, or not involved), it isn't necessarily the supplies that are needed as cardboard is a great building tool.
- Children of single parents, or children whose parents work more than one job (statistically more likely to be children of color) may be less likely to have a parent available to support them in this academically meaningless activity. Time and money are not equally distributed among PPS families. This practice reeks of the 1950s and it should stop. It is of dubious educational value and is inequitable to our most vulnerable students.
- While I find the projects somewhat interesting, the parent involvement in many of the projects is quite overwhelming. That is, too many of the parents have clearly done 99% of the project for the child. This creates big differences between the projects that the kids have done themselves, and the ones that the parents have done. The result, is the kids who've actually done the project themselves feeling crummy about their effort as it is obviously different than what the parent has produced. This problem is widespread and quite irritating. It completely defeats the point of the child being assigned a project. If projects are assigned I think there need to be strict guidelines about parent participation. I do feel that independent, practice and review homework has a place as it helps inform the parent of the material the child is learning as well as giving the child more time to master a skill. Thank you for asking about this subject, I can't tell you how annoying the projects have been due to massive parent involvement. The parents already had their turn....
- I'd like to see that there is work that is done primarily by the student, and not finely done work that is clearly done by a parent (finished with power tools, etc.)
- I feel that the bridge and streetcar projects have been far too parent dependent. My child was not able to take initiative with these building projects because they were so overwhelming. They required multiple trips to the store and the use of tools. My family had no trouble doing the project but I would be concerned about single parents, families in crisis and poverty or busy families. These projects seem inequitable.
- With projects, agree that some parents seem to be way too involved which creates grossly different results.
- Seems like many of the projects are done by parents, not kids. Perhaps supplies brought into school and kids can share and use class time. I would be happy to provide supplies to the group and have the kids actually do the work and help the kids that can't afford the materials.
- Seeing the bridges and trolley/bus projects displayed always makes me feel like projects should be designed as something kids can complete w/minimal help, unless jig saws and welding equipment will be available to all of the kids at school, along with proper adult assistance.
- In regards to the projects (bridge, streetcar, etc) although they provide a point of integration and connection with our kiddo's curriculum, they invariably bring the parents in at way too deep of a level. Have you seen some of the projects? It is painfully obvious that parents playing too big of a hand in their construction. I loved how Ms. Early took the long house project, and kept it in the classroom. Allowed the students much more ownership and engaged them in all cylinders. They had to conceptualize, build, work as a team, and address conflict. A++ Ms. Early!
- I have always felt the bridge and long house projects should be in class projects. Students should be given a bag of supplies and work from there. Rieke has too many parents with thousands of dollars of wood working tools in their garages to not have these projects go overboard. It only takes one time of your child crying because their project wasn't up to snuff to make the next time go over the top. Hope this helps!

#### Timing (3 comments)

- Major projects should be spread out. Between the last book report and the 5th grade float there was a lot to do in the last several weeks of school.
- Bridge project was VERY stressfully for the parent BOTH times. If continued, should be discussed early in the year and then due LATE in the year so that there is time. We cut vacation short to finish project -- and that was with good planning.
- The number of projects and reports for this past year was a bit over whelming for our family. 5th grade seemed to have a high amount of them due.

#### Educational value (2 comments)

- My daughter has learned nothing from the bridge and street car projects. They were simply busy work for me. My involvement didn't increase her interest in construction projects: this simply isn't an area of interest for her.
- Project based learning is a great goal but that is not what Rieke does and I think it's misrepresented in this survey. Rieke teaches some concept (say Bridges) and then sends the project home. Students don't learn anything about bridges at home. They might learn a data point (the bridge I chose is this long) and they might learn how to use a hot glue gun but that's about it. I have seen project based learning done really well and it is always done in the classroom with teachers present. Students then not only learn how to use the hot glue gun but they also learn how to problem solve when things go wrong and how given the same supplies, you can get a lot of variations of the same project. One school that my son attended had the kids write about their project. First, they wrote up a plan. Then they attempted to follow the plan. Next, they wrote about what went wrong and how they had to problem solve. Lastly, they wrote about the outcome. They often included an engineering concept in their projects and this was also written about and explained. At the end the "project" itself was a huge source of pride for the students but so was the writing that showed their journey of learning. This can certainly be done from 3rd-5th grade and I've seen it done younger - just with adjustments for skills. Perhaps pictures are drawn for the steps instead of sentences or paragraphs.

## Section 5 - Additional comments, continued

### Regular homework – praise with recommendations for improvement (9 comments)

- I like the math work you sent home with my first grader this past year. I want to see that continue. Rieke seems to do a better job with consistent, relevant homework compared to Ainsworth, where a friend's child attends and we compare what is going on.
- I think that the daily homework at Rieke has been very appropriate so far.
- Secondly, homework depends on the child. I have one child who excels in school and works every homework and challenge with no parent assistant or even ask to do it. My 2nd child, is dyslexic and homework is harder to manage. The teachers have been great and work with us on this.
- It is nearly impossible to make building wide decisions about homework. Principal Torres especially should not be making the decision as she is unfamiliar with our students or teachers. Our teachers have a better grasp of what their students are capable of (case by case) and whether homework is appropriate for the subject matter.
- Reading homework and spelling homework for 3rd grade was great. I would like to see more computer based homework for math such as IXL so can meet child's level and rate of learning more closely.
- I do not want to create inequity or enhance disparities, but I do appreciate being able to request more challenging homework assignments that I can complete with my child and have integrated with his or her classroom lessons. I very much appreciate Mrs. Jackson, my child's kindergarten teacher, in this regard.
- I think the homework in kindergarten, first, and second grades has been very appropriate. From what I've heard, I believe the homework assignments in grades 3-5 are also appropriate.
- I liked reading with my child for 15 min. Five times a week. I also like that the homework was done in such a way that my child could work independently with help as needed. Made my child feel accomplished and successful. Projects at end of the year was fun to do with my child. I felt that in kindergarten homework was easy and got my child in the habit of homework. Also have my child the sense that he was successful.
- I have an older child now at Robert Gray and, unless homework practices change at the middle school level, I've realized how important it is for the younger kids to become accustomed to doing homework every night. My older daughter spends at least an hour if not several every night on homework. Doesn't thrill me, but it's coming down the pipeline for the Rieke kids.

### Regular homework – issues and recommendations for improvement (34 comments)

#### Not enough homework (5 comments)

- In comparison to homework by my Daughter's cousins who are also in 1st grade, in the San Francisco East Bay area, at a public school, the Reike homework is much more simplistic.
- Disappointing inconsistency in frequency and challenge of homework. Generally the kids need and want more homework. But us working parents and kids with activities need the weekend to finish everything in an unstressed way.
- There isn't enough homework
- I would like to see more homework to cause the kids to do more outside of classroom work.
- I have one exceptionally driven high achiever who "graduated" from Rieke and was never challenged by the volume/content in homework and projects. Would have like to have seen more. My daughter who is currently in 3rd grade is a high achiever but not as driven so she is more comfortable with limited homework. I would still like to see more of a challenge.

#### Misguided homework objectives (13 comments)

- my 1st grader had more consistent h.w. than my 3rd grader. They need to know what to do - it should be practice and skill building, not new info.
- The homework (worksheets) need to reinforce what they are learning. If they haven't gotten to something in class, or they were pulled out, the homework is a disaster because the parents may not understand the objective
- I think homework that is sent home as "busy work" is a waste of my child's time. Homework should reflect and build on what my child is working on in class.
- I would like to see a natural progression from one year to the next on what the expectations are with homework, how much of it there is, etc. Why are there 2 huge projects in 3rd grade, none if 4th and then one if 5th? It doesn't logically make sense to me. My oldest child is now in 3rd grade, it is the first year that she barely started to care if it was complete or not, up until this point it was all us as parents caring and it is an added stress to a family with so many things to juggle and early bedtimes for younger students. But I do think it is important to develop study habits so that middle school is not a complete shock.
- I have very mixed feeling about homework. My child comes from a Montessori environment where there is no homework. My child is totally exhausted after a day of focused learning at school. My husband and I are both professionals ... we'd rather connect socially as a family, than fight with our 2nd grader about homework in the evening. We focus on getting a good night sleep, so often only have about an hour of leisure time in the evening. I'd much rather read together as a family. This doesn't require a much guiding/checking (which my independent child doesn't really want from me for academics) ... but enjoyment of reading together. I'd much rather focus on that. We also feel very strongly about supporting our child's teacher ... so if homework is required, that needs to be considered. By doing this, the goal is that our child will also defer to/respect their teacher during school hours.
- The homework should reinforce what is taught not a new concept.
- Homework should NOT be busy work. Regular skills work should be done at school. Only larger projects or ones requiring quiet concentration should be done at home.
- It will be valuable to look at innovating the broader learning process, leveraging the experience and success of other schools, districts and countries. Especially in the area of homework, the "flipped classroom" and use of technology to enhance learning and maximize classroom time should be considered.
- I have been a teacher for 20 years and hold an MA in education. I am appalled by the amount of "busy work" my first grader brought home this year. I also see my neighbors slogging through huge projects (science fair, bridge, etc) on behalf of their children. Neither of these scenarios present the best practices in teaching and learning. This article is a good overview of the problem with homework: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/answer-sheet/wp/2012/11/26/homework-an-unnecessary-evil-surprising-findings-from-new-research/> I was somewhat shocked to see that Rieke's teachers are in the dark ages with homework. Children do not need to be pushing a pencil in circles to make it "look like" their learning. As a parent and educator, I have very strong feelings about the homework philosophy at Rieke. Please read the linked article for a nice overview of the experts: homework is largely irrelevant in regards to student learning or achievement. The quality of classroom instruction, literacy of family, quality of parent involvement, and availability of books at home, largely determine "success" in learning. I encourage you to throw out the old paradigm and boldly let our children be children. I appreciate your interest and proactive approach to this matter!!
- The homework packets are very predictable for both of my children. The worksheets have been the same formula each year (2-3 math sheets, 2-3 writing sheets, challenge sheet, etc.). I feel by the middle of the year, they are just going through the motions and not thinking critically about the homework subjects.



## Section 5 - Additional comments, continued

### Regular homework – issues and recommendations for improvement (34 comments), continued

#### Misguided homework objectives (13 comments), continued

- I don't want to have to do my child's homework, they should have the skills to do it, homework should be practice or review.
- Homework at Rieke has "felt" like it is more for training the parents than enhancing student learning. I would prefer fewer pages each week and more enriching materials (challenge homework, puzzles, etc.). Because equity in home support can be an issue, I prefer a "non-graded" homework approach for students.
- I don't mind a small amount of homework (no more than 20 min in upper grades) but it should always be something at the students level that does not require parent involvement. I have never seen homework differentiated in this way. You can't hand out the same homework sheet to 30 kids and have it be at everyone's level. I think parents should not be asked to sign off. If we sign off, then we feel that we will be looked down upon if everything isn't correct in the homework. Not only does this take more time but we end up having to teach concepts as well. This also does not teach independence in kids but a reliance on parents that extends well past the elementary years. I think homework can also be optional. There are kids who are bored in school and need more challenge. Let them have it! Make a plan with that student as to what their homework will be. There are other students who work so hard just to make it through an academic day and don't need to feel more failure at home in the evening. This differentiating won't be as hard as it sounds - 65-75% of students will be in the middle. They can all get the same thing. Individual attention will only be need for those outliers on either end of the homework spectrum.

#### Too much homework (10 comments)

- Take the home out of homework!
- Homework is important to develop learning and time management skills, but should not be given in quantities where it infringes on a reasonable amount of 'non-school' activities such as free play, music, sports, art, etc.
- Children In grade school should get very little homework. Free time is a precious and valuable time to learn and develop skills that are otherwise void in a school setting. Most professional people would agree that free time is highly needed for a well-rounded child. There have been several studies stating in early childhood development that imagination and a creative play environment is lacking in most homes due to a high volume of homework causing stress and depression.
- I believe there's too much homework Kindergarten through 3rd grade that is "make work". I think reading and projects are valuable. But spelling tests are a waste of time and energy
- 20 minutes of reading a night is difficult to get in when there is only 2 hours between when the parent gets home from work and the kids go to bed (bedtime=8:00pm).
- I don't think homework should be given in grades K-2. Kids get burned out and then they come to not like homework. As a child, I didn't have homework til 5th grade and I was eager to have it by then.
- [Homework] should not be increased. IF changes are made, I would only support less homework.
- I don't like tons of homework. Kids (all ages) need time to play outside or pursue their own interests. I don't care about grades and I don't want my kids worrying about grades or standardized tests. Busy work is pointless. I want my kids to love learning, to be inspired, and to be creative thinkers. I'm a little dismayed about certain standards forced upon teachers and kids. I hope they don't spend too much time teaching to the test.
- If I had my choice, I'd dial WAY back on the homework for all grades.
- I have a child that is extremely resistant to doing homework. It is a struggle every night and I have to sit with her almost the entire time. I understand that homework should be geared to the child's ability but I don't want to give her the message that she doesn't have to complete all of it because it is so hard for her. Of course, I make her do all of it, even the challenge problems. We spend about an hour or more almost every day on homework and it is a time of tears and resistance. I hate it and so does she. I am not looking forward to doing the projects although she does enjoy student directed projects. She loved doing her expert project and it was fun to do it with her because it was something she loved doing and was fully engaged and felt proud. I feel she has very little free time in the evening because of homework and it is very stressful for our family.

#### More guidance to parents and students (6 comments)

- When teachers review/grade homework to please include the correct answer/math, so that I can go back with them and see where the mistake lies. Otherwise, the whole exercise of grading/reviewing seems pointless on where she got the math problem wrong!!!!!!!!!!!!!!
- Sometimes it is difficult to assist math homework, since I am not sure what my children are currently learning at school, or how they are taught to solve certain math problems.
- I would love more direction about our role with homework, how much helping is good? Is it better to have my student do it by himself and perhaps err? I would appreciate guidance; things are different than when I was a student and I want to help, but not too much.
- Make sure clear examples as we parents learned how to do the tasks different than current teaching methods.
- It's about the right level of homework for each kid. That is the struggle. And for parents to know what and how things are being taught in the classroom. My older child doesn't understand the homework and if she did, wouldn't be able to explain it to me. And, as dual working parents, getting homework done during the week is EXTREMELY stressful! Some weekend time to work on things when my kids aren't worn out makes far more sense than me pushing them to do it on a week night.
- Homework is important for children with learning challenges because it gives them a chance to work without distraction with a supportive and attentive adult. Therefore:  
1) students should be allowed to use the weekend to complete homework because many students have lessons and sports (and dinner!) that make homework on weeknights impossible. 2) Information about large projects should be distributed far in advance so that projects don't interfere with family plans. 3) Most of all, teachers SHOULD CHECK THAT ALL CHILDREN BRING HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS, FLYERS, AND PROJECT INFORMATION SHEETS HOME. The lesson in independence supposedly learned through forgotten homework is immaterial compared to the skills lost when homework isn't done. We wish all 5th grade students have independence, but many children at this level do not have the mental ability yet to remember to bring home paperwork. Because there was no supervision in this area, my child frequently missed out on the benefits of after-school lesson reinforcement, and fell further and further behind.