**PROP CASE**

**My partners and I affirm the resolution – Most homework should be banned.**

**Contention One – Homework causes student stress and anxiety.**

* **Stress leads to mental health issues beyond high school. (Alan Shusterman, Contributor, San Diego Union-Tribune,** [**https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/**](https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/)**)** With the seeds sown during secondary school, mental health illness continues to be a significant risk for students in college. According to a 2014 national survey by the American College Health Association, 14 percent of college students had been diagnosed or treated for anxiety and 12 percent for depression within the previous 12 months.
* **Stress induced by homework causes physical harm.** **(Sandra Levy, Contributor, 2017, https://www.healthline.com/)** When it came to stress, more than 70 percent of students said they were “often or always stressed over schoolwork,” with 56 percent listing homework as a primary stressor. Less than 1 percent of the students said homework was not a stressor. The researchers asked students whether they experienced physical symptoms of stress, such as headaches, exhaustion, sleep deprivation, weight loss, and stomach problems. More than 80 percent of students reported having at least one stress-related symptom in the past month, and 44 percent said they had experienced three or more symptoms.
* **Stress over homework leads to cheating.** **(Kenny Gill, Contributor, 2019, https://atlasofscience.org/)** Homework becomes an uphill battle, which they feel they will never win despite putting an effort. When they continue to find homework difficult, they consider other ways of working on it, such as cheating.

**As homework is the primary source of stress, eliminating most homework is needed.**

* **Homework primary source of stress; causes stress and sleep disruption. (Sara Moniuszko, Reporter, 2021,** [**https://phys.org/**](https://phys.org/)**)** Emmy Kang, mental health counselor at Humantold, says studies have shown heavy workloads can be "detrimental" for students and cause a "big impact on their mental, physical and emotional health." "More than half of students say that homework is their primary source of stress, and we know what stress can do on our bodies," she says, adding that staying up late to finish assignments also leads to disrupted sleep and exhaustion.

**Eliminating most homework would be beneficial to students.**

* **Impact - Less homework leads to less stress and better classroom performance. At the iSchool, with less homework, students are able to participate in clubs and other extracurricular activities, as well as spend valuable time with loved ones. Slava Hasuler-Lew, a freshman at the iSchool, explains how less homework has improved her school life. “….Whenever I talk to my friends, they always say they have several hours of homework, and how they’re so stressed out about [it].” “Having a light homework load has gotten rid of a lot of the negative feelings I used to have surrounding school,” Slava explains. “The less stressed out I am, the better I do in my classes, and homework used to be my main source of stress in middle school.”**
* **Impact - Students still excel academically with less homework. (Kevin Forestieri, Asst. Editor, 2017, https://mv-voice.com/) Thousands of teens at Mountain View and Los Altos high schools say they have benefited from a new homework policy aimed at bringing down homework loads, reducing stress and freeing up time during weekends and breaks, according to a survey released earlier this month…. Early results from the Advanced Placement tests during the last school year show a slight improvement in the number of tests taken and a high passage rate of 82 percent, which should dispel any concerns that the policy forced teachers to cut content due to time constraints, Associated Superintendent Margarita Navarro told school board members at a Sept. 5 meeting. "If the question is, 'Did this policy have a negative impact on our AP results, enrollment or number of tests?' we would probably safely assume it did not," she said.**

**Contention Two – Homework dramatically reduces student free time.**

* **Homework significantly cuts into student free time. (Clifton Parker, Contributor, 2014,** [**https://news.stanford.edu/**](https://news.stanford.edu/)**)** Both the survey data and student responses indicate that spending too much time on homework meant that students were “not meeting their developmental needs or cultivating other critical life skills,” according to the researchers. Students were more likely to drop activities, not see friends or family, and not pursue hobbies they enjoy.
* **Free time essential to student well-being.** Most students, especially at high-achieving schools, they're doing a minimum of three hours (of homework), and it's taking away time from their friends from their families, their extracurricular activities. And these are all very important things for a person's mental and emotional health.
* **Homework overload leads to isolation. (Clifton Parker, Contributor, 2014,** [**https://news.stanford.edu/**](https://news.stanford.edu/)**)** In places where students attend high-performing schools, too much homework can reduce their time to foster skills in the area of personal responsibility, the researchers concluded. “Young people are spending more time alone,” they wrote, “which means less time for family and fewer opportunities to engage in their communities.”

**Both parents and teachers support having less homework so students can have more free time.**

* **Teachers see benefit in no homework policies.** **(Sara Moniuszko, Reporter, 2021,** [**https://phys.org/**](https://phys.org/)**)** Catchings, who also taught third to 12th graders for 12 years, says she's seen the positive effects of a no homework policy while working with students abroad. "Not having homework was something that I always admired from the French students (and) the French schools, because that was helping the students to really have the time off and really disconnect from school," she says.
* **Parents find no homework beneficial. (Sandra Levy, Contributor, 2017, https://www.healthline.com/)** Some parents, in fact, have decided to opt out of the whole thing. The Washington Post reported in 2016 that some parents have just instructed their younger children not to do their homework assignments. They report the no-homework policy has taken the stress out of their afternoons and evenings. In addition, it’s been easier for their children to participate in after-school activities.

**Less homework beneficial to students.**

* **Impact: Less homework works – students happy and not stressed. (Lisa Rathke, Contributor, 2016,** [**https://www.salon.com/**](https://www.salon.com/)**) At the Orchard School, the children's daily home assignment now is to read books, get outside and play, eat dinner with family — including helping with setting and cleaning up — and get a good night's sleep. "It's awesome," 9-year-old Avery Cutroni said of the no-homework policy. She had dance and piano lessons after school recently, so said she had a busy schedule. Plus, she's reading more on her own, her mother said. "I think it gives kids a lot time for mental and physical rest which I think is super important," said Heidi Cutroni, of the school's elimination of homework. "I think it's really good for parent-teacher-student relations in all directions and I think it just gives kids a chance to use their time for what their passionate and excited about."**

**Contention Three – Homework widens inequality gaps.**

* **Disadvantaged students lack resources available to affluent students. (Joseph Lathan, PhD,** [**https://onlinedegrees.sandiego.edu/**](https://onlinedegrees.sandiego.edu/)**)** One of the great, yet often forgotten problems with homework is how it disproportionately affects students from less affluent families. The American Psychological Association (APA) explained: “Kids from wealthier homes are more likely to have resources such as computers, internet connections, dedicated areas to do schoolwork and parents who tend to be more educated and more available to help them with tricky assignments. Kids from disadvantaged homes are more likely to work at afterschool jobs, or to be home without supervision in the evenings while their parents work multiple jobs.”
* **Homework widens achievement gap.** When you add economic inequity into the equation, homework’s prognosis looks even worse. Research suggests that increased homework can help widen the achievement gap between low-income and economically advantaged students.
* **Parents lose jobs trying to keep children in school. (Alissa Quart, Executive Editor and Author, 2016,** [**https://www.theatlantic.com/**](https://www.theatlantic.com/)**)** When Nique Williams started working at a Target in Emeryville, California, she says she told her employer that she need a “very strict” daily schedule, from 10 in the morning to 2 in the afternoon, so that she could drop off and pick up her 5-year-old, Nyla, from school every day. Williams told me that in the end, she lost her job for refusing to work the schedules she was presented with. Anya Svanoe, an Oakland-based organizer for the Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment believes that Target let go of Williams, along with other workers, because the chain was displeased that their employees’ schedules were, in Svanoe’s words, “dictated by childcare needs.” It’s flexible scheduling that only goes one way, Svanoe says: in the employer’s direction.

**Educational inequality stemming from homework is being criticized.**

* **Teachers taking stand against homework due to inequities. (Sara Moniuszko, Reporter, 2021,** [**https://phys.org/**](https://phys.org/)**)** Some teachers are turning to social media to take a stand against homework. Tiktok user @misguided.teacher says he doesn't assign it because the "whole premise of homework is flawed." For starters, he says he can't grade work on "even playing fields" when students' home environments can be vastly different.

**Less homework lead to better performance from marginalized students.**

* **Impact – No homework/curriculum change leads to better results for disadvantaged students. (Tim Walker, Contributor, 2019,** [**https://www.nea.org/**](https://www.nea.org/)**) Juda is a small, rural school district and some students don't have adequate access to the Internet, impairing their ability to wade through too much homework. Believing all students have this access, says Anderson, is a “gigantic assumption.” …A no-homework policy was just the beginning. “I took a butcher knife to the curriculum. I thinned it something fierce,” he said. According to standardized test scores, the results of the no-homework policy have been positive. “We have been able to document the improvement of our student body moving roughly from 30 percent not ready for college math to almost 100 percent being ready,” Anderson said.**
* **Impact – Intervention programs for marginalized students leads to better academic performance. (HB Ferguson (PhD), S Bovaird (MPH), MP Mueller (PhD), 2007,** [**https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/**](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/)**) An evaluation of the Chicago Child Parent Center Program was completed… using a sample of 1106 black children from low-income families. They were exposed to the intervention in preschool, kindergarten and follow-up components. Two years after the completion of the intervention, the results indicated that the duration of intervention was associated with greater academic achievement in reading and mathematics, teacher ratings of school adjustment, parental involvement in school activities, grade retention and special education placement**

**Answers to Opp Contention One – Homework develops student time management skills.**

* **Students with too much homework perform worse academically.** It has been shown that students who do too much homework tend to have lower grades and lower test scores. There are several reasons why too much homework can have these detrimental effects. First, when students are excessively busy with assigned work, they may lose opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities or other enrichment programs that could help them improve their skills and knowledge. Second, when students become bogged down by excessive amounts of homework, they may find it difficult to devote sufficient time to studying for tests or completing other academic tasks.
* **Parents should help students with time management. (MCEC Parents Programs Report, 2020,** [**https://www.onslow.k12.nc.us/**](https://www.onslow.k12.nc.us/)**)** More homework from more teachers requires students to develop organizational and planning skills. Parents can play an important role in their children’s success by providing a support system for meeting homework requirements.
* **Systemic problems don’t let students manage their own time. (Richard Rende, PhD, 2017,** [**https://www.psychologytoday.com/**](https://www.psychologytoday.com/)**)** First, we may sometimes set up the conditions for inducing learned helplessness by telling kids that they need to manage their time better when we usurp their time; it's like giving them an unsolvable equation and demanding that they come up with a solution. How are kids supposed to "manage" increasing workloads with decreasing time using the time management skills we give them? So kids are not only being deprived of the opportunity to try out and refine time management skills, they are also being told that they are not doing something well when they don't really have a shot at pulling it off.
* **Technology, not homework, helps most with student time management. (EdCircuit Staff, 2021,** [**https://edcircuit.com/**](https://edcircuit.com/)**)** Today’s students have a more powerful tool, one that fits easily in a pocket, goes everywhere, and that students adore. You already know where the argument is headed. That tool is the phone. Instead of viewing it as a distraction, what if we put it to work as the place where everything they need to do comes together?
* **Teaching time management skills and providing framework is a superior system. (EdCircuit Staff, 2021,** [**https://edcircuit.com/**](https://edcircuit.com/)**)** The master teacher helps students identify the steps between here and the goal... A good system makes forgetting irrelevant. Even one teacher with a vision for helping students organize their lives makes a difference. Imagine the difference we can make when an entire academic team or faculty begins to model the same system. Instead of commitments being written on random pieces of paper, written on hands (which we have all seen), or kept in students’ heads, we can give them something that actually works: 1) trap every commitment in a central place; 2) organize the commitments using due dates; 3) do the work. It’s a successful recipe for the 7th grade classroom and the executive boardroom alike.

**Answers to Opp Contention Two – Homework tracks student progress.**

* **Tracking student progress difficult to measure. Natalie Wexler, Senior Contributor, 2019,** [**https://www.forbes.com/**](https://www.forbes.com/)**)** Even if teachers do manage to assign effective homework, it may not show up on the measures of achievement used by researchers—for example, standardized reading test scores. Those tests are designed to measure general reading comprehension skills, not to assess how much students have learned in specific classes. Good homework assignments might have helped a student learn a lot about, say, Ancient Egypt. But if the reading passages on a test cover topics like life in the Arctic or the habits of the dormouse, that student’s test score may well not reflect what she’s learned.
* **No standard way to measure how much time spent on homework. (Cari Nierenberg, Contributor, 2016,** [**https://www.livescience.com/**](https://www.livescience.com/)**)** It's also hard to know how much actual time students truly spend on homework, because most research relies on self-reported data from students, parents or teachers…The amount of time a student reports spending on homework can differ from a parent's report of it, and it can also differ from the amount of time a teacher estimates students will need in order to complete the assignment.
* **Student progress monitoring better indicator of academic success than tracking homework. (Kathleen, McLane, Contributor,** [**https://www.readingrockets.org/**](https://www.readingrockets.org/)**)** Student progress monitoring helps teachers evaluate how effective their instruction is, either for individual students or for the entire class. You are probably already familiar with the goals and objectives that must be included in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for each child who receives special education services. A teacher who uses progress monitoring works with the goals in the IEP, and the state standards for the child's grade level, to develop goals that can be measured and tracked, and that can be used to divide what the child is expected to learn by the end of the year into shorter, measurable steps.
* **Student led assessment better indicator of academic success than tracking homework. (Carla Moore, Administrator and Author, 2017,** [**https://www.learningsciences.com/**](https://www.learningsciences.com/)**)** Research shows that student-led formative assessment is significantly more effective at increasing student achievement compared to teacher-directed formative assessment, with a recent review reporting an effect size that meant students who scored at the 50th percentile in the control group would have been at the 73rd percentile if their classroom had used student-initiated self-assessment (Lee et al., 2020) – read more research here.

**Answers to Opp Contention 3 – Homework lessens amount of unproductive screen time.**

* **Being outside best way to decrease student screen time. (Noah Rue, Journalist, https://parenting.kars4kids.org/ )** (Getting children away from screens) puts them in an environment where they can rest their eyes by focusing on things that are far away. On top of that, being outside gives your child access to a slew of other powerful, scientifically backed health benefits that can help to counter the negative side effects of too much screen time, such as: An immunity boost from vitamin D, decreased stress and better mental health, physical activity and exercise, greater creativity and life satisfaction, and better sleep.
* **Parents should focus on quality of screen time.** If you find that even with your best efforts, your child is still getting way too much screen time, you may want to focus more on the quality of that screen time rather than the quantity. Rather than allowing your kids to binge on Netflix or turn on the Disney Channel after school, try to limit their options to more constructive screen-time activities.
* **Students need screen time to feel connected. (Kem Smith, PhD, 2022, https://www.chalkbeat.org/)** Remote learning over the past two years seems to have intensified their need to escape into their electronic devices. The sad reality is that we, as teachers, cannot compete with such enticing distractions. Daily, they see students as young as 15 who have become YouTube stars, social media influencers, Amazon resellers, or well-paid gamers. Those challenges are outside our control.
* **Screen time beneficial to student well-being. Eric Mack, Contributor, 2019,** [**www.forbes.com**](http://www.forbes.com)**)** Researchers found that children who spend 1 to 2 hours daily watching television or using digital devices had higher levels of social and emotional well-being versus those who reported no screen time. “In light of our findings, calls for blanket technology bans and age restrictions on technology access do not constitute evidence-based or indeed ethical advice, particularly as screen usage in some cases has a net positive impact,” said Professor Andrew Przybylski, Director of Research at the Oxford Internet Institute.

**OPP CASE**

**My partners and I oppose the resolution – most homework should be banned.**

**Contention One – Homework develops student time management skills.**

* **Homework develops student focus and responsibility.** Many students believe that homework is a waste of time because they think it only helps teachers track their progress and keeps them from having fun. In reality, homework is one of the most important tools teachers have to help students develop time management skills. The reason homework helps students develop these skills is because it forces students to focus on their schoolwork in addition to their other responsibilities. By doing this, students learn how to manage their time better and stay on track with their goals.
* **Homework leads to learning life balance. (Lauren Gilchrist, 2020,** [**https://www.skyward.com/**](https://www.skyward.com/)**)** Children often have a wide range of after school activities to undertake. They need to develop the skill of managing all these activities to fit homework in. At school, children’s time is closely managed and controlled. Every lesson ends and begins with a bell or a teacher command. At some point, children need to learn to manage their own time. Homework is an easy way to start refining this important soft skill.

**Good time management leads to independent thinking.**

* **Homework leads to problem-solving and independent thinking. (Staff,** [**https://www.uopeople.edu/**](https://www.uopeople.edu/)**)** Homework is much more than just completing the assigned tasks. Homework can develop time management skills, forcing students to plan their time and make sure that all of their homework assignments are done on time. By learning to manage their time, students also practice their problem-solving skills and independent thinking. One of the positive effects of homework is that it forces decision making and compromises to be made.

**Student time management has many benefits.**

* **Impact-students can have free time if they utilize time management skills. (Staff, 2019,** [**https://www.acc.edu.au/**](https://www.acc.edu.au/)**) By using time efficiently, students can complete their work on time, stay engaged with their learning, and have more time free for pursuing activities that are important to them, such as sports, hobbies, youth group and spending time with friends and family. Good time management allows students to make the most of their abilities and enjoy the satisfaction of accomplishment. It is also one of the most desirable skills for employment.**
* **Impact – Time management leads to better health. (Team Leverage Edu, 2021,** [**https://leverageedu.com/**](https://leverageedu.com/)**) Good time management efforts also reflect on your health. When you manage your time effectively, you don’t have to stay up late to finish your tasks. Cutting down on your sleep time will lead to tiredness, which will hamper your schedule for the day. Getting a good night’s sleep is essential for your brain and body to recharge itself, and this reflects positively on your health and energy levels.**

**Contention Two – Homework tracks student progress.**

* **Starting homework when young is beneficial. (Cari Nierenberg, Contributor, 2016,** [**https://www.livescience.com/**](https://www.livescience.com/)**)** Even in kids as young as age 7, research shows that homework in particular areas can help students learn, especially things children need to learn through practice, said Cooper, the author of “The Battle Over Homework.”
* **Tracking highlights areas of needed improvement. (Lauren Gilchrist, 2020,** [**https://www.skyward.com/**](https://www.skyward.com/)**)** Students can track their own progress. Homework makes it easy for them to identify what they know and what they need to work on.
* **Parents gain knowledge from student homework. (MCEC Parents Programs Report, 2020,** [**https://www.onslow.k12.nc.us/**](https://www.onslow.k12.nc.us/)**)** Teachers assign homework for many reasons—to give students an opportunity to review class lessons, to measure students’ understanding of those lessons, and to help students extend their learning by finding and using new information on a subject. Homework can be an extension of the classroom; it allows students to practice applying skills they have already learned. Homework also can benefit parents because it offers them a chance to learn what their children are expected to accomplish during the school year.

**Tracking progress essential to scholastic achievement.**

* **Tracking provides valuable information. Pedro Rosário1\*, José C. Núñez, Guillermo Vallejo, Jennifer Cunha, Tânia Nunes, Natalia Suárez, Sonia Fuentes and Tânia Moreira, Researchers, 2015,** [**https://www.frontiersin.org/**](https://www.frontiersin.org/)**)** Our findings indicate that the time and effort teachers devote assessing, presenting, and discussing homework with students is worth the effort. In fact, students consider limited feedback an impediment to homework completion, and recognize teacher's feedback as a homework completion facilitator (Bang, 2011).

**Feedback from homework leads to academic improvement and college admission.**

* **Impact: Feedback leads to academic improvement. These results stress how important teachers' feedback may be not only because of its positive effect on homework, but also because it provides students with information on how to improve their work. The synthesis…confirmed the results of previous studies and showed that “commented upon or graded homework” increased the positive effect of homework on academic achievement of elementary and secondary students.**
* **Impact – Tracking Progress leads to college and better future. (Lory Hough, Contributor, 2012,** [**https://www.gse.harvard.edu/**](https://www.gse.harvard.edu/)**) Annie Brown, Ed.M.'01, feels (homework) is particularly critical at less affluent schools like the ones she has worked at in Boston, Cambridge, Mass., and Los Angeles as a literacy coach. "It feels important that my students do homework because they will ultimately be competing for college placement and jobs with students who have done homework and have developed a work ethic," she says. "Also it will get them ready for independently taking responsibility for their learning, which will need to happen for them to go to college."**

**Contention Three – Homework lessens amount of unproductive screen time.**

**Currently students have too much unproductive screen time.**

* **Presently students participate in excessive unproductive screen time. (Noah Rue, Journalist, https://parenting.kars4kids.org/ )** Excessive screen time for children was already a concern long before the world shifted en masse to a screen-heavy virtual school model. According to a report shared by the CDC, on average, kids between the ages of 8 and 18 spend a staggering 7.5 hours each day in front of a screen. Just to clarify, this is entertainment-related screen time that was already taking place before virtual school was soaking up additional hours of children’s time on a daily basis. While 7.5 hours is clearly too much screen time no matter how you slice it, it is interesting to compare this to the officially recommended amount of time that a child should spend in front of a screen. Younger children, in particular, should have no more than one hour of screen time per day — and even then, only with high-quality programs
* **Screen time damages student well-being. (Andrei Ionescu, Staff Writer, 2022,** [**https://www.earth.com/**](https://www.earth.com/)**)** The analysis revealed that most students watched TV about four days of the school week and spent time on social media approximately three days. According to the researchers, such activities have a negative impact on children’s health and well-being. “Screens are a massive distraction for children of all ages. Most parents will attest to this. And whether children are gaming, watching TV or on social media, there’s something about all screens that’s damaging to their well-being,” said study lead author Rosa Virgara, an expert in Health and Human Performance at UniSA.
* **Excessive screen time leads to student dissatisfaction.** (S)creen time appears to be the main culprit behind children’s mental health problems. The study results show that children who used social media or played video games were up to nine percent less likely to be happy, up to eight percent less likely to be optimist, and 11 percent more likely to give up on things.
* **Excessive screen time damages ability to learn. (Staff, 2020,** [**https://www.openaccessgovernment.org/**](https://www.openaccessgovernment.org/)**)** A study found that too much screen time was negatively affecting children’s learning abilities. Watching two or more hours of television per day at the age of 8 or 9 was associated with lower reading performance compared to peers two years later. The impact was equivalent to losing four months of learning.

**Students need less unproductive screen time.**

* **Balance needed in screen time for students. (Andrei Ionescu, Staff Writer, 2022,** [**https://www.earth.com/**](https://www.earth.com/)**)** T The message is clear – gaming, watching TV, playing on computers, and scrolling through social media are not helping build or sustain positive wellbeing in children,” said Dr. Virgara. “It’s certainly a challenge, especially as most children have been brought up on devices. But if families can be more aware of the issues associated with screens, then perhaps we can find a better balance of screen time and other out-of-school activities.”

**Students benefit from less unproductive screen time.**

* **Impact – Homework lessens harmful screen time similar to an extracurricular activity. (Staff,** [**https://www.uopeople.edu/**](https://www.uopeople.edu/)**) Many students in North America spend far too many hours watching TV. If they weren’t in school, these numbers would likely increase even more. Although homework is usually undesired, it encourages better study habits and discourages spending time in front of the TV. Homework can be seen as another extracurricular activity, and many families already invest a lot of time and money in different clubs and lessons to fill up their children’s extra time. Just like extracurricular activities, homework can be fit into one’s schedule.**
* **Impact -There is great value in homework time off-screen. (Chris Drew, PhD, 2022,** [**https://helpfulprofessor.com/**](https://helpfulprofessor.com/)**) Paper-based homework can take students away from their afternoon cartoons and video games and get them working on something of more value. Screen time is one of the biggest concerns for educators and parents in the 21st Century. Children spend approximately 5 to 7 hours in front of screens per day. While screens aren’t all bad, children generally spend more time at screens than is necessary. Homework tasks such as collecting things from the yard or interviewing grandparents gets kids away from screens and into more active activities.**

**Answers to Pro Contention One - Homework causes student stress and anxiety.**

* **Balanced approach for homework best for students. (Joseph Lathan, PhD,** [**https://onlinedegrees.sandiego.edu/**](https://onlinedegrees.sandiego.edu/)**)** In order to help students find the right balance and succeed, teachers and educators must start the homework conversation, both internally at their school and with parents.
* **Parental help eases student stress. (Kenny Gill, Contributor, 2019, https://atlasofscience.org/)** Being an active parent in the life of your child goes a long way towards promoting the health and well-being of children. Participating in their process of doing homework helps you identify if your child is facing challenges, and provide the much-needed support.
* **Doing homework with friends reduces stress and develops communication skills. (Kenny Gill, Contributor, 2019, https://atlasofscience.org/)** Homework is better done with friends as it helps them get these benefits. Through working together, interacting, and sharing with friends, their stress reduces. Working on assignments with friends relaxes the students. It ensures they have the help they need when tackling the work, making even too much homework bearable. Also, it develops their communication skills. Deterioration of communication skills is a prominent reason as to why homework is bad. Too much of it keeps one away from classmates and friends, making it difficult for one to communicate with other people.
* **Social-emotional learning reduces stress better. Alan Shusterman, Contributor, San Diego Union-Tribune,** [**https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/**](https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/)**)** Paramount among them is social-emotional learning. This approach blends traditional academic curricula with integrated methods for understanding and honing self-awareness, self-regulation, social awareness, relationship-building, and effective decision-making. According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Leaning, students who follow a social-emotional learning track display a greater desire and capacity to learn – and reduced levels of anxiety and stress – than those who don’t. They also score better on academic achievement tests.

**Answers to Pro Contention Two – Homework dramatically reduces student free time.**

* **Being more organized leads to more student free time.** **(Sara Moniuszko, Reporter, 2021,** [**https://phys.org/**](https://phys.org/)**)** To help manage workloads, she suggests students "get organized." "There's so much mental clutter up there when you're disorganized... sitting down and planning out their study schedules can really help manage their time," she says.
* **Homework covers essential material that is more important than free time.** **(Lory Hough, Contributor, 2012,** [**https://www.gse.harvard.edu/**](https://www.gse.harvard.edu/)**)** So should homework be eliminated? Of course not, say many Ed School graduates who are teaching. Not only would students not have time for essays and long projects, but also teachers would not be able to get all students to grade level or to cover critical material, says Brett Pangburn, Ed.M.'06, a sixth-grade English teacher at Excel Academy Charter School in Boston.
* **Relevant homework more important to learning than free time. (Sandra Levy, Contributor, 2017, https://www.healthline.com/)** Experts continue to debate the benefits and drawbacks of homework. But according to an article published this year in Monitor on Psychology, there’s one thing they agree on: the quality of homework assignments matters. In the Stanford study, many students said that they often did homework they saw as “pointless” or “mindless.” Pope, who co-authored that study, argued that homework assignments should have a purpose and benefit, and should be designed to cultivate learning and development.
* **Free time can be detrimental to individual well-being. (Staff, 2021, https://www.news18.com/)** “We found that having a dearth of discretionary hours in one’s day results in greater stress and lower subjective well-being,” says Marissa Sharif, the lead author of the study and assistant professor in marketing at the University of Pennsylvania, in a statement.
* **Students not assigned enough homework to monopolize free time. Eric Mack, Contributor, 2019,** [**www.forbes.com**](http://www.forbes.com)**)**  While that may be true at schools serving affluent populations, students at low-performing ones often don’t get much homework at all—even in high school. One study found that lower-income ninth-graders “consistently described receiving minimal homework—perhaps one or two worksheets or textbook pages, the occasional project, and 30 minutes of reading per night.” And if they didn’t complete assignments, there were few consequences.

**Answers to Pro Contention Three - Homework widens inequality gaps.**

* **Safe spaces exist for disadvantaged students to do homework. (Kem Smith, PhD, 2022, https://www.chalkbeat.org/)** (School systems should) create a safe space for students by coordinating with school counselors and social workers to help them feel included in the school’s culture both inside and outside the classroom. Are there any groups of students who, based on their identities, feel isolated and disconnected from other students? Find out if there are areas where students do not feel welcome and work with them to build connections.
* **Internet access available for all students. (MCEC Parents Programs Report, 2020,** [**https://www.onslow.k12.nc.us/**](https://www.onslow.k12.nc.us/)**)** They may also expect students to have access to a computer and the Internet, which most school and public libraries make available for everyone's use.
* **Badly funded school systems are the problem, not homework.** The first approach would be to eliminate the property tax as a key financing source, therefore reducing class inequalities among children. Because low-income kids will get less by default, this is a key source of educational inequality. Instead, the state government should develop more major projects and resources to ensure that everyone gets a fair share of the pie.
* **Parents can forge connections at school to help students. Eric Mack, Contributor, 2019,** [**www.forbes.com**](http://www.forbes.com)**)**  Students from less educated families are most in need of the boost that effective homework can provide, because they’re less likely to acquire academic knowledge and vocabulary at home. And homework can provide a way for lower-income parents—who often don’t have time to volunteer in class or participate in parents’ organizations—to forge connections to their children’s schools. Rather than giving up on homework because of social inequities, schools could help parents support homework in ways that don’t depend on their own knowledge—for example, by recruiting others to help, as some low-income demographic groups have been able to do. Schools could also provide quiet study areas at the end of the day, and teachers could assign homework that doesn’t rely on technology.