

## **For parents and adult supporters: Some brief thoughts on homework**

**I rarely assign homework. Research indicates it does little to promote real learning, and frequently is a source of conflict in the home between tired and frustrated students and their equally tired and frustrated adult supporters.**

**Occasionally I do assign a project to be done in school and at home over a period of time.**

**Students are welcome to work on what we are doing in school... if that gives them pleasure or satisfaction, but not if it is a source of stress or worry.**

**However, I do understand that parents are anxious to help their students... and may feel homework is a discipline that will help.**

**If you want to help your student at home, the most effective way, in my view, is to ask your student to explain the ideas we are tackling in class. Talking math is learning math. Exploring the ideas, is learning math.**

**“When pupils are talking about mathematical ideas... they are using and constructing the language of mathematics. 'Talking the talk' is an important part of learning.” (*Mathematics Inside the Black Box*, Dept of Education & Professional Studies, King's College London)**

**Try to listen and not intervene. Ask a few probing, open questions. If the explanation does not help you understand the idea, suggest your student raises the matter in class to seek a better explanation.**

**Please, do not push the conversation to a confrontation or anything that is anything other than a pleasant interaction between adult and child in the evening in the home. Please do not try to teach your student the point under question. Just suggest the student seeks a better explanation in school from other students or in class discussion.**

**If you'd like to talk about this further please do not hesitate to contact me on 503 408 2647 or on [david\\_whitfield@parkrose.k12.or.us](mailto:david_whitfield@parkrose.k12.or.us)**

Sources:

*The Homework Myth: Why our kids get too much of a bad thing*. Alfie Kohn

[www.alfiekohn.org/teaching/rethinkinghomework.htm](http://www.alfiekohn.org/teaching/rethinkinghomework.htm)