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# All Homework and No Play Makes Students Have a Bad Day – California Seeks to Ease Homework Related Stress

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On September 27, 2024, Governor Gavin Newsom signed Assembly Bill (AB) 2999, also known as the Healthy Homework Act, into law, following growing concern about students' mental health amid an increasing volume of homework. AB 2999 encourages (but does not require) local educational agencies (LEAs) to develop a homework policy by the 2027-28 school year and adopt it by the 2028-2029 school year.

## More Homework, More Problems

According to the legislative declaration included in AB 2999, research assessing the impact of time spent completing homework found that students who spent more than two hours working on homework experienced higher levels of stress, anxiety, sleep loss, depression, and physical conditions such as headaches, exhaustion and weight loss. Studies also found that asking students to spend more time per day completing homework did not lead to higher grades or academic achievement. Current homework practices are inconsistent and can sometimes lead to hours of homework per night for a student's already strained schedule.

These issues are further exacerbated for students who lack stable housing and access to a reliable internet source. The "homework gap" is felt hardest by communities of color, low-income populations, and students in rural areas, who are more likely to fall behind their high-income peers. Studies suggest that one in five teens cannot regularly complete their homework due to a lack of internet access. AB 2999 seeks to have LEAs create clear and effective homework policies based on research to target academic inequities and support students' academic success.

## A Cure for the Homework Blues

To ease the burden on students, AB 2999 encourages LEAs to adopt thoughtful homework practices by the 2028-2029 school year. LEAs are encouraged to consider the following when creating homework policies:

- The quantity of assignments assigned per grade;
- The amount of days in which homework is assigned;

- The availability of supports needed to successfully complete homework, including parental and technological support;
- The type of homework assigned, including practice-based, continuation of in-class work, preparation work and extended assignments;
- The educational placement and programs of student populations, including Advanced Placement courses, International Baccalaureate courses, Special Day Class settings and English Learners;
- The age-appropriateness of the material assigned;
- The grading practices of the material assigned and the opportunity to complete makeup work; and
- The need for coordination of teachers and staff to implement effective homework practices.

In addition, LEAs are encouraged to limit the amount of homework which may be assigned pursuant to students' grade level. To facilitate this conversation, LEAs are also encouraged to reach out to the communities they serve to determine the unique circumstances and needs of their student population. Once adopted, LEAs should distribute the policy at the beginning of the school year or upon a student's enrollment. These policies should be updated at least once every five years to continue to meet the changing needs of the community.

## Takeaways

While AB 2999 does not mandate homework policies, LEAs are strongly encouraged to consider adopting them. For student engagement and success, quality is more important than quantity. Students are more likely to complete assignments when they find the material interesting and relevant to their studies. By engaging with communities and considering the specific needs of diverse student populations, LEAs can create homework policies which promote equity and the academic success of their student population. Further, LEAs should consider the impact of homework practices on underrepresented communities to better meet the needs of these students.

For more information on AB2999, please contact the authors of this Client News Brief or any attorney at one of our [eight offices](#) located statewide. You can also subscribe to our [podcasts](#), follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) or download our [mobile app](#).

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