



# BURNSIDE BEATS

Issue #27, January 2023

## Closing the Learning Gap



*A Message from our Principal, Nicole A. Tiné...*

Happy New Year! As we start 2023, it is time to reflect on our lives and set some resolutions for the year ahead. This year I hope I can convince all of you to make a “**Homework Resolution**” for you and your children.

I am sure you are aware that over the past three years COVID has had a significant impact on students both here at PS 396 and across the country. On average in the U.S., students are testing 9-12 months behind in both reading and math, with the most pronounced learning losses seen for students of color and those from low-income homes. Schools are now racing to help students catch up on missed learning by filling in the gaps and at the same time moving forward by teaching grade level work.

Getting our students back on track is going to take ALL of us- teachers, students, and families working together. So, this month I am reaching out to all families for your support to not only ensure all students are in school learning each day but are also going home and completing assigned homework. Now I am aware that homework is a highly debated topic, but here are some of the benefits as I see it, particularly in this time of great need.

There is a strong connection between regularly completing homework and higher performance in academic subjects like reading and math. Homework provides a chance to solidify what is taught in the classroom that day, week or unit. However, it also develops core skills in young children that will serve them throughout school and working life. Improved grades, discipline, time management, using resources and improving communication are all vital life skills that will open the door to unique opportunities and help children find success in their careers. Doing regular homework is an investment in your child’s future.



Through encouraging regular homework and supporting your child with their assignments, you can expect to see the following advantages:

### 1. Discipline of Practice

Repeating a task multiple times can feel difficult, but it’s necessary to help increase your child’s skill and understanding of a subject.

### 2. Time Management Skills

Homework helps children take control of their workload and increase their time management skills. Homework is set with a deadline and taking ownership of this deadline helps them think independently and develop problem-solving skills. This is a prime example of why homework is important because time management is a vital life skill that helps children throughout higher education and their careers.

### 3. Communication Network

Homework acts as a bridge and can help teachers and families learn more about how students like to learn, providing a deeper understanding of how to approach their learning and development. Homework also helps you understand what your children are learning at school.



#### 4. Comfortable Work Environment

Some children struggle to learn outside of their comfort zone, and while classrooms are designed to be warm and welcoming, there is often no place like home. Homework is an opportunity to learn and retain information in an environment where they feel most comfortable, which can help facilitate understanding.

#### 5. Using Learning Materials

Throughout a child's education, understanding how to use resources such as libraries and the internet is important. Homework teaches children to actively search for information using these resources to complete tasks, and this is a skill that will be fundamental throughout their lives.

#### 6. Revision Discipline

Regular homework helps children discover a pattern that will help them when they're required to study for important tests and exams. Children who are familiar with a routine of completing homework will find it easy to adapt to a schedule of doing regular revision at home. Skills such as accessing learning materials, time management, and discipline will help improve how children revise, and ultimately, improve their grades.

#### 7. Additional Time to Learn

Children learn at different paces, and the time spent in the classroom might not be enough for some students to fully grasp the key concepts of a subject. Having additional time for learning at home can help children gain a deeper understanding than they would if they were solely reliant on their time in school. Homework is important because it gives parents and children the freedom and the time to focus on subjects that they may be struggling with. This extra time can make a big difference when it comes to exams and grades.



Ok, so I hope I've convinced you that homework is valuable, but I also want to help get you and your children setup for homework success. Here are some ways to make homework work:

##### 1. Create a Homework-friendly Area

Having a dedicated space for children to do homework will help them stay focused. Make sure it is well-lit and stocked with everything they'll need for their assignments (pencils, erasers, paper, etc.).

##### 2. Routine Study Time

A regular routine helps children get used to working at home. Some children work best right after they get home, while others may prefer a break before getting started or even work best after dinner. Work out a routine where your child is their most productive.

##### 3. Make Sure They're Learning

Homework is important, but only if children use this time to learn. If you do the work for them, they're not going to see any of the benefits we listed above. It's important you're there to support and help them understand the work, so they can do it themselves.

##### 4. Praise Work and Effort

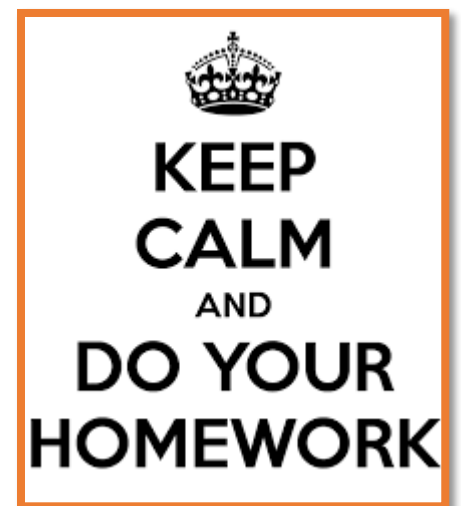
Recognizing the hard work that they're putting in and praising them for it is a great way to get children to respond positively to homework. Pin their impressive test grades up in their homeworking space or around the house for extra motivation.

#### 5. Make a Plan

Children can get overwhelmed if they have a lot of work to do. On homework-heavy nights, help them make a plan and break down the work into sections. This will help make the work more manageable. If your child responds well to this, you could do this each time they sit down to do work at home.



Understanding why homework is important and necessary helps improve both motivation and productivity in young children. My hope is that by bringing our students, families, and teachers together in a common effort to improve student learning through homework we can continue to close the learning gaps, set our students up for continued success both here at PS 396, and well beyond into middle school, high school, and college.



# OUR ROCKIN' LIBRARY

Ms. Mathis, our school librarian, hosts monthly book challenges for all students in grades 3, 4 and 5. The top 3 readers in each grade receive a certificate and invitation to a lunchtime movie party. Encourage your child to DROP EVERYTHING AND READ today!


**JANUARY BOOK CHALLENGE!**  
**FOR GRADES 3,4,5**

The P.S. 396 book challenge is a monthly challenge that will excite, encourage, and empower families with the essential information to improve their child's literacy skills.

Please encourage your child to read as many books as they can. After they complete a book, please write your initials on their book log. This is the way we 'prove' they read the book.

Each month, winners get a special lunch and movie party in the library if they are one of the TOP 3 readers in their grade.

January's book challenge is from winter break and book logs are DUE to Ms. Mathis on January 27<sup>th</sup>





**CONGRATULATIONS**  
On winning the December Book Challenge with \_\_\_\_ books!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



## PARENT REMINDERS

- Make sure we have current contact information on your child's Emergency Blue Card. If you change your cell phone number, please update us immediately.
- All students need to register at school Health Clinic in order to receive services.
- Download and check ClassDojo to stay informed on school and citywide updates.
- Arrival begins at 7:55AM for all students.
- Dismissal for Prek – 2<sup>nd</sup> grade is at 2:15PM, 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade is at 2:20PM.
- As the weather turns colder, please remember to send your child with a warm coat and accessories. If your child needs a coat, please reach out to our Parent Coordinator Ms. Gonzalez, who is happy to help provide one to you.

Your NYC Schools Account is your gateway to family-facing technology to support and track your children's progress through public school education at the NYC Department of Education. Open an account today to apply to schools, track your children's progress from Pre-K through high school graduation, and get access to other digital content for New York City families exclusively available to NYC Schools Account holders!

[www.schoolsaccount.nyc](http://www.schoolsaccount.nyc)





**ATTEND TODAY**  
ACHIEVE TOMORROW



Regular school attendance is essential for student success, even beginning in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten. Early chronic absence can leave children unable to read well by the end of third grade. It can establish patterns of poor attendance and academic failure for older students, and increases the percentages of children who drop out of high school. Parents and families are essential partners with their child's school in promoting good attendance because they, ultimately, have the "bottom-line" responsibility for making sure their child gets to school every day. Families often do not realize that attendance is important in Kindergarten, as it is in the higher grades. It is important that patterns of non-attendance do not develop, and that families build a healthy habit of daily school attendance right from the beginning. Children can quickly fall behind with their learning with frequent absences. Kindergartners who miss 10% or more of the school year, often have lower achievement in first grade, and for some, throughout elementary school. Even missing a day or two every few weeks can cause children to fall behind. Children do not do as well in school when they frequently miss part of or an entire school day. You can help your child succeed by understanding how

schools define absences and learning ways to support your child's school attendance. An unexcused absence is when a child miss school for reasons not accepted by the school district. Parents and Guardians can help their child to be academically successful by ensuring regular school attendance and that their child is at school on time, every day.

#### **Strategies for Parents to Encourage Attendance:**

1. Let your child know that your family values education. Tell your child that you believe he/she can make academic progress. Make education a family priority.
2. Insist that your child goes to school on time every day.
3. Talk with your child about school. Listen to your child's concerns. Ask how you can help.
4. Help your child develop personal interests and strengths. Connect those interests and strengths to what your child is doing in school.
5. Support your child's efforts with studying, completing homework, and working on academic skills and responsibilities.
6. Check your child's backpack and agenda daily.
7. Discuss concerns with your child's teacher and work together to support your child's school success. Attend Parent/Teacher conferences and other school meetings that are scheduled.
8. Be sure that your child knows that you do not approve of his/her being late for school.
9. Attend school functions, PTA meetings, and activities, etc. Be involved with your child's school.
10. Set a regular bedtime and morning routine. Lay out clothes and backpacks the night before.
11. Have your child relax before bedtime with a story, instead of the stimulation of television, video games, etc.

12. Have schoolwork and lunch ready and laid out and create a special folder for completed assignments. Provide regular study times and a quiet, clean area for doing homework.
13. Don't allow your child to stay home unless he/she is truly sick. Keep in mind complaints of a stomachache or headache can be a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay home.
14. If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers, members of the school's Student Services Team (school counselors, school social workers, school psychologists, behavior specialists, school nurses) or other parents for advice on how to help/him/her feel comfortable and excited about learning.
15. Do not let your child persuade you into making excuses for him/her.

In unity,

Alma Gonzalez  
Parent Coordinator

