



James Bowie High School

❖ Pride In Performance ❖

Thursday, November 21, 2019

Greetings Bulldog Nation,

I know that everyone is ready for a nice, long break! For the staff at Bowie, next week is our first holiday since Labor Day! The Monday we return from Thanksgiving Break, December 2, is officially National Special Education Day, and this time of year we are all more thankful in general for our relationships and the people that have a positive impact on our lives. Please consider taking a minute to **send a quick note to a teacher or staff member**, or message me letting me know about a teacher who is making a difference for your child so that I may recognize the teacher or staff member. When we return after the holiday our focus will quickly turn to finals and the second semester, and we will begin planning for the next school year!

As we prepare for some time off and start to think about next year, I wanted to share a reflection and consider the role of homework in our students' lives. What is the **purpose of homework**? Is homework necessary or a necessary evil? Many of the faculty and staff at Bowie also struggle with this subject as parents ourselves, who are keenly aware of the importance of safeguarding our students from unnecessary homework stress, while also ensuring that learning is reinforced and skills are practiced.

Just like the type of homework assignments assigned vary, results from **research about homework also vary**. Some studies suggest a strong correlation between academic achievement and time spent doing homework, while research in other studies raises concerns that homework undermines students' social, emotional and/or familial well-being. Because research also suggests that the benefits of time spent doing homework increases with the age of the student, educational experts recommend a "10-Minute Rule" for homework. That is on any given school night, the amount of time dedicated to homework should be the child's grade-level multiplied by ten minutes. Using these parameters, for example, a 3rd grader should have 30 minutes of high-quality homework per night while a senior should have about 2 hours of high-quality homework per night.

When considering if advanced courses like Pre-AP or Advanced Placement (AP) are right for your child, you should certainly consider the additional homework load that AP courses typically require. The additional homework in AP courses is not a function of teachers simply wanting to make the students in those GPA-weighted classes work harder. AP courses follow a college-level curricula prescribed by the College Board that prepares students for national, norm referenced exams to earn college credit. It is, therefore, reasonable to think of signing up for **an AP class as the equivalent of signing up for a college course**. For example, a student who takes four AP courses at Bowie is experiencing about 12 credit-hours of college coursework. When you consider that colleges generally advise students to expect to spend 15 hours OUTSIDE of class to prepare for every three credit-hour course, you can quickly start to see how much time students in AP courses could be spending studying or completing homework. We don't expect *quite* so much from our students here at Bowie, but given the content required for students to be prepared for exams by the College Board on the AP exams, time in class alone is generally not enough to cover the course concepts and skills, as well as provide time for students to practice and study for the year-end exams.

When it comes to managing homework in general and maintaining a healthy school-life balance, every student and every family has varying expectations, as well as different thresholds of tolerance. Here are a few things to think about to support your child:

- **Consider whether your child is over-scheduled.** Over-scheduling is a big source of school stress for many Bowie students who enroll in multiple AP courses and participate in a high number of

extracurricular activities or have other significant commitments. Help your student choose courses and activities that allow them time to reasonably complete homework with adequate sleep, down time, and family time.

- **Monitor parental pressure.** As parents, we may occasionally, unintentionally fuel the college-admissions race in a manner that adds to our students' school stress. A few low grades won't torpedo your child's future, but an enjoyment of learning can propel them. Consider your child's strengths and interests. Be mindful about assigning priorities and how you are defining success in your family.
- **Communicate homework concerns.** Teachers generally appreciate thoughtful feedback about their homework assignments. If homework seems unduly time-consuming, unnecessary for the intended learning, or problematic for other reasons, encourage your student to share their perspectives with their teacher first, and then follow up with teachers when/if appropriate. Students who have established solid work habits may request an extension from a teacher if they are experiencing an unusual surge of homework and are struggling to meet the deadlines. Teachers are reasonable people and not above feedback.

PSAT 8/9 and PSAT/NMSQT scores will be released on December 11, 2019. Information on scores will be sent to the email address provided by each student on his/her answer document during testing. When student's PSAT scores are ready online, they will get an email with instructions on [creating their College Board account](#), finding [online score report](#), and using their unique access code to view scores. Additional information on PSAT/NMSQT scores and account assistance can be found on the [College Board website](#).

The [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#) opened the 2020-2021 application on October 1, 2019, and we are encouraging all Bowie families to **complete this application by December 15**. The sooner families submit the FAFSA, the better chances you have of being considered for the maximum amount of financial aid for which you may be eligible. Please also be mindful of each university's scholarship deadlines and processes to ensure students will be considered for those awards as well. For additional information about the FAFSA and to see what questions are asked on the application, please click [here](#).

AISD's Annual Scholarship Fair will be held on December 9, 2019, at the Performing Arts Center for Seniors wanting to learn more about possible scholarships, work on their FAFSA, or receive more information about financial aid. **Ms. Valverde will be taking a group of seniors to this event**, so if you are interested in attending, please sign up in Naviance. For more information, contact Ms. Valverde or view the flyer [here](#).

The district will be closed for the Thanksgiving Break from November 25 through November 29, 2019. Happy Thanksgiving!

Go Dawgs!
Mark Robinson

Principal
James Bowie High School
Follow me on [Twitter](#) @robinson_mark_a

A Recognized School of Excellence

4103 W. Slaughter Lane • Austin, Texas 78749 • 512-414-5247 • FAX 512-292-0527