

**Our Mission: Calvary Episcopal School is dedicated to developing the whole child by building a foundation for excellence within a Christian environment.**



# What's Up at Calvary?

**October 27, 2003**



### Red Ribbon Week

Schools throughout the country observe Red Ribbon Week, which is a statement

from schools for students to become aware of the dangers of drug and alcohol usage. During the week students can bring recognition of their support by participating in the daily theme: Monday-“Give Drugs the Slip,” students wear house slippers; Tuesday-“Hugs not Drugs,” student may bring a stuffed animal to school; Wednesday-“Put a Cap on Drugs,” students may wear caps to school; Thursday-“Team Up Against Drugs,” students may wear their favorite sports team shirt with regular uniforms; Friday-“Wash Out Drugs,” students may bring soap, towels, shampoo, or any personal items which will be donated to a homeless shelter.

### Flu Immunizations

Each year CES provides flu shots. This year the flu shots will be given at school by the staff of Polly Ryon Hospital on November 4, 1pm-4pm in the parish hall conference room. The charge for flu shots will be \$15, which can be paid at the time services are rendered. **No one**

**under 18 will be given the vaccine.**

If you would like to receive your flu shot, please call or email Vicki Ward, RN. (281-342-3161; vward@ces-richmond.org)

### Honor Roll Chapel

Students who qualify for the **All-A** and **A/B Honor Roll** will be recognized at **Honor Roll Chapel** on **Wednesday, Nov. 5.**

(Please check the Student Handbook for Honor Roll guidelines.) **All**

**students are required to wear dress uniforms on Nov. 5.**



### Blue Jean Spirit Day

The CES National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) is sponsoring a Blue Jean Spirit Day on Thursday, Nov. 6. There will be four NJHS Blue Jeans Spirit Days this year when students may wear jeans with any CES Spirit Shirt.

### Volleyball Tournament

Volleyball season has come to an end with a bang! Both Gold and Blue teams did very well this year. This past weekend the Gold Team



participated in the West Houston Christian Athletic Conference Tournament. CES came away with two trophies: one for being the runner up in the conference and the other for 2<sup>nd</sup> place in the conference tournament. Congratulations to **Coach McDougal** and all of the student athletes for a great season!

### **All Stars Named**

As the volleyball and football seasons end, students were selected to compete in post season play as All Stars. The volleyball All Stars were **Lea Armes, Christine McCarter** and **Audrey Lamb**. The football All Stars were **Travis Honeycutt** and **Andrew Brunkhorst**. The Volleyball All Star Game will be held Tue. Oct. 28 at 5:00. Congratulations to our Super All Stars!

The following article is republished on a topic of interest to CES parents. Homework is a regular part of the CES educational process.

From Education Week-American Education's Newspaper of Record

October 8, 2003

## **Homework Not on Rise, Studies Find**

By Debra Viadero  
*Education Week*

*Washington*

Most American students spend less than an hour a day on homework, according to a pair of national studies presented last week, and that workload is no bigger than it was half a century ago.

"There is this view in the popular media that there has been this terrible burden of homework on children, and that the homework is increasing," said Tom Loveless, the director of the Brown Center on Education Policy at the Brookings Institution. "That is not the case."

The Washington think tank released one of the studies at a press conference here. The second study, which is scheduled to be published next month in the journal *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, is by the RAND Corp.

From Half Moon Bay, Calif., to Piscataway, N.J., parents have been in the news in recent years calling on local educators to lighten their children's homework loads. Some school boards have responded to the complaints by limiting the amount of homework teachers in their districts could assign.

The stories of crushing homework burdens in those communities and elsewhere were bolstered by a 2000 study by the University of Michigan's Population Studies Center. Using time diaries kept by nationally representative samples of families, the Michigan researchers found that, among children between the ages of 3 and 12, the average amount of time devoted to studying each week had increased from one hour and 53 minutes in 1981 to two hours and 16 minutes in 1997—a gain of 23 minutes a week.

What the news stories often didn't report, Mr. Loveless said, was that much of that increase came among 6- to 8- year-olds. Among those children, time spent on homework more than doubled, rising from 52 minutes a week to two hours and 8 minutes.

"I think that's probably real and probably due to the emphasis on reading that started in the 1990s," Mr. Loveless said.

For the two other age groups studied, though, fewer children were doing homework in 1997 than in 1981.

Statistically speaking, Mr. Loveless added, the increase in homework for younger children seemed especially large because many pupils in their age group were not doing any homework when the study began in 1981.

"What's driving the average is that there were a lot of zeroes in the Michigan data," he said, "and now those kids are doing some homework."

Likewise, he added, the National Assessment of Educational Progress, a congressionally mandated set of exams given to nationally representative groups of students, shows that the percentage of students who said they had done an hour or more of homework the previous night dropped slightly from 1984 to 1999. By 1999, only a third of the 13- and 17-year-olds in that survey reported doing an hour or more of homework.

The same was true of the 282,000 college freshmen surveyed last year by researchers at the University of California, Los Angeles. Only 34 percent of that group reported spending

more than an hour each weekday on homework during their senior year of high school. That's the lowest percentage since the California researchers first put that question on their surveys in 1987.

In fact, said Brian P. Gill, the author of the upcoming RAND study, high school students' homework loads have not increased much since 1948—except for the decade after 1957, when the Soviet Union's launch of its first Sputnik satellite spurred a push for more rigor in U.S. schools.

"There was no golden age for homework that we could find," said Mr. Gill, who is a social scientist in RAND's Pittsburgh office. "Even at the peak, no more than one in four high school students were studying more than two hours a night."

What's more, the researchers said, international studies show that, in their final year of secondary school, students in France, Italy, Russia, and South Africa spend twice as much time on homework as their American counterparts do.

It's not that the stories that children are shouldering backbreaking homework loads are untrue, Mr. Loveless said. "The question is whether or not they are typical, and they are not," he said.

Harris M. Cooper, a Duke University researcher who is nationally noted for his studies on homework, said that Mr. Loveless' and Mr. Gill's conclusion made sense.

"I think, nationwide, the general statement would be that educators generally have it right," said Mr. Cooper, who has developed guidelines

suggesting that students' homework should increase by 10 minutes for every year they are in school.

Like Mr. Loveless and Mr. Gill, he suspects that the complaints about homework may be coming from specific groups in society. Besides the parents of young children, he said, those groups might include parents in middle-class communities where there's a strong public press for academic achievement, from single parents, and from families in which both parents work.

"Some of these parents are getting home late and they have their own work to do, and they may have more than one child who has homework," Mr. Cooper explained.

*'Parents Complain'*

Anthony B. Harduar, the principal of Central Elementary School, a K-6 school in rural Ferndale, Wash., said he agrees with the researchers' contention that students are doing no more homework than they've always done. That's been the case at least in his 10 years as principal of Central.

"One reason for that is when we actually assign homework that takes a little bit of time, many parents complain," said Mr. Harduar, who is also the president of the 30,000-member National Association of Elementary School Principals. "But there is not enough time in the school day to get in all the practice that students need."

His solution: before- and after-school homework clubs where students can practice new academic skills while teachers supervise them.

But Etta Kralovec, a co-author of the 2000 book *The End of Homework: How Homework Disrupts Families, Overburdens Children, and Limits Learning*, said problems with onerous homework assignments may be more pervasive than the national numbers suggest.

"The nuances and experiences of people in society really get covered over by the larger statistical databases," she said. "People in the media are actually much more connected to the stuff that people in the grocery store are talking about."

Ms. Kralovec said the findings also gloss over the question of whether giving more homework improves achievement. Studies show a correlation between homework and higher test scores in the upper grades. But in elementary school, she said, the opposite is often true—possibly because the students who spend the most time on homework at that age are those who need the most help.

Mr. Gill said the uproar over homework in some communities now is reminiscent of similar debates in the early 1900s. The public debate in those years led lawmakers in California to ban homework altogether at one point.

Then, as now, public-opinion surveys showed that most parents favored the practice of assigning homework, he said.

"I don't think parents think it's too much," said Denise Motz, a mother of two elementary school children in suburban Deale, Md. "I actually saw a note from another parent the other day who said we need more homework."

Those pro-homework parents may yet get their wish, some educators suspect, if schools pile on homework to meet the goals of the federal No Child Left Behind Act. Mr. Gill, however, is skeptical that will come to pass.

### On the Web

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["Changes in American Children's Time, 1981-1997,"](#) Sept. 11, 2000, a study from the University of Michigan's [Population Studies Center](#), holds that the average amount of time children spent studying increased substantially from 1981 to 1997. (Requires [Adobe's Acrobat Reader](#).)

The April 2001 volume of [Educational Leadership](#), the magazine of the [Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development \(ASCD\)](#), features "[End Homework Now](#)," an article by Etta Kralovec and John Buell. The authors argue that "[h]omework reinforces the social inequities inherent in the unequal distribution of educational resources in the United States."

Listen to Etta Kralovec discuss the "[homework blues](#)" on PBS' radio program [The Merrow Report](#). (Requires [Macromedia Shockwave Player](#).)

In "[The Homework Ate My Family](#)," a June 23, 2003, article from [Time](#), Romesh Ratnesar asserts that "all the swirling arguments over homework underscore the bigger questions that confound American teachers, parents and policymakers: What should we expect from our children? What do we want them to learn? How much is enough?"

The [ERIC Clearinghouse on Elementary and Early Childhood Education](#) posts answers to FAQs about [homework](#). Questions include "What role should parents play in helping their children with homework?" and "Why do teachers assign homework and does it improve academic achievement?"

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### Up and Coming Events

(Our Official School Calendar can be found on our website at [www.ces-richmond.org](http://www.ces-richmond.org).)

**Oct. 28-** 5pm, Volleyball All Star Game; 7pm, Calvary Board Meeting

**Oct. 29-** Field Trip-PK-Blue Barn Farm

**Nov. 3 -** 8th Grades to Episcopal HS; Field Trip-3<sup>rd</sup> grade-Dewberry Farm

**Nov. 4-** Flu Shots for Adults, Parish Hall, 1-4pm, \$15

**Nov. 5-**7pm Honor Roll Chapel; 4:30 LOGOS

**Nov. 6-** Blue Jean Spirit Day-Sponsored by NJHS; Art Field Trip-Museum of Fine Arts-MS Art Students; Kindergarten Field Trip-Dewberry Farm

**Have a great week!**