



NATICK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MIDDLE SCHOOLS HOMEWORK REVIEW AND GUIDELINES 2016-2017

Teresa Carney & Andy Zitoli
MS Principals
May 22, 2017



REVIEW OF LITERATURE (CONT.)

“Working on Homework” (A White Paper on Homework by Sharon Public Schools, November 2016)

- Moderate correlation between amount of homework and academic achievement in middle schools
- Impact of homework is negative when it exceeds over 90 minutes
- Homework and grades are the leading source of student stress



Goal: Develop common procedures and guidelines for homework and reviewing latest research, examining best practices and seeking input from all stakeholders

- Review of literature
- Review of neighboring middle schools
- Parent Survey/Staff Input
- Discussions of value, proposed guidelines and next steps from perspective of teachers, parents and School Council



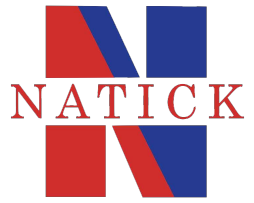
REVIEW OF LITERATURE (CONT.)

- **“Is Homework Helpful?” by Brian Sztabnik, Edutopia 2014**
 - Homework is effective when classroom learning is transferred beyond the school walls.
 - Make the learning applicable to everyday life, and it will be worth the time to complete.



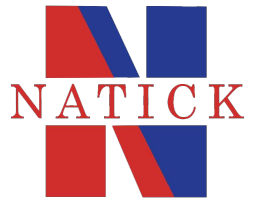
REVIEW OF LITERATURE (CONT.)

- **“Impact of Homework on Student Learning” by Hanover Research, June 2014**
 - Homework influences students’ ability to retain course content as well as their self-efficacy and time management skills.
 - Homework should be commented on, not necessarily graded, to be effective.



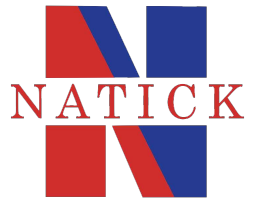
DISTRICTS WE CONSULTED

- Holliston
- Medfield
- Ashland
- Needham
- Dover/Sherborn
- Westwood
- Framingham
- Medway
- Hopkinton



NEIGHBORING MS DATA THEMES

- assign homework that is meaningful, reasonable and can be done independently
- encourages and works to develop and support independence and self-advocacy
- focus on preview or practice
- communicates with students and parents if pattern exists with incomplete or missing homework
- collaborates with students when struggling with assignments
- coordinates dates for assessments and projects with other teachers (team model)



MS TIME ALLOTMENT GUIDELINES

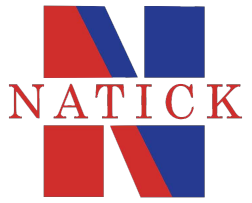
5th grade: 45-60 minutes

6th grade: 60-90 minutes

7th grade: 60-120 minutes

8th grade: 90-120 minutes

*This was the same across most districts we consulted with.
Some had longer time allotments.



STAFF HOMEWORK REVIEW AND PRACTICES

-Types of homework:

1. L&L: Membean (online vocabulary), reading/novel journals, preparing for writing tasks
2. World Language: Grammar & vocab
3. Science/SS: Vocab, finishing work, projects, studying, pre-reading/rereading documents, Previewing videos
4. Math: Skill practice (worksheets, TenMarks, textbook work)

*It is important to be proactive with team/PLC discussions around amount of hw, long term projects, tests/quizzes

*Consistent across grade levels

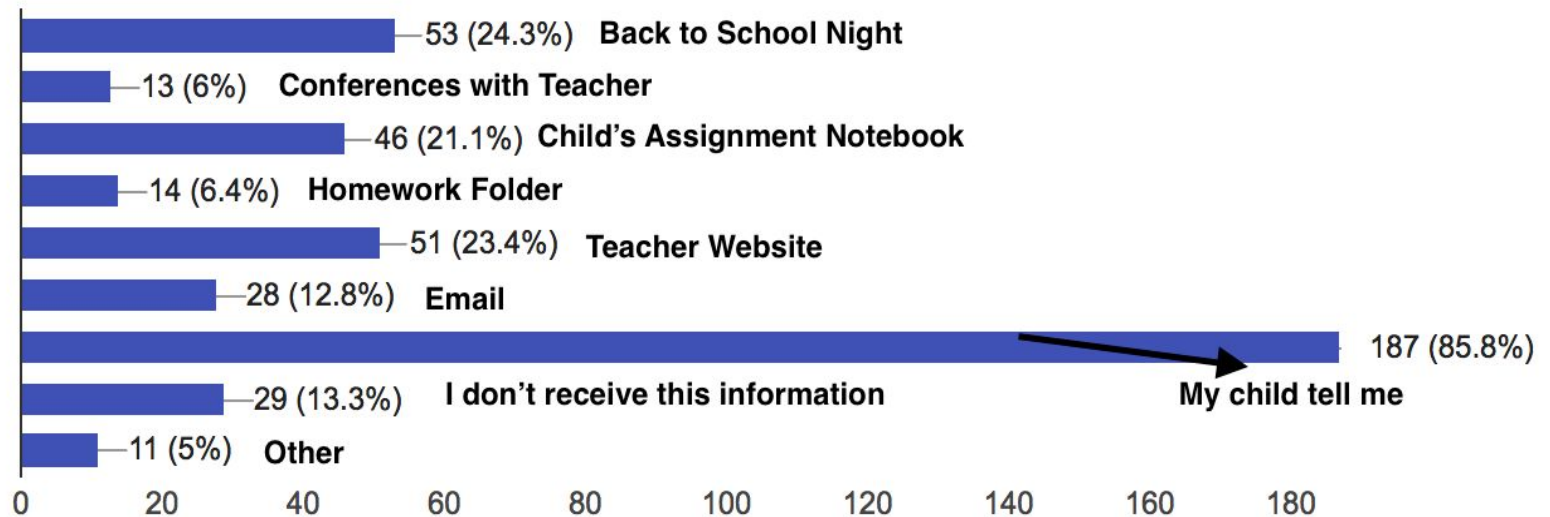


PARENT SURVEY RESULTS

(OVER 200 RESPONSES)

How do you get information about your child's homework? (Check all that apply.)

218 responses

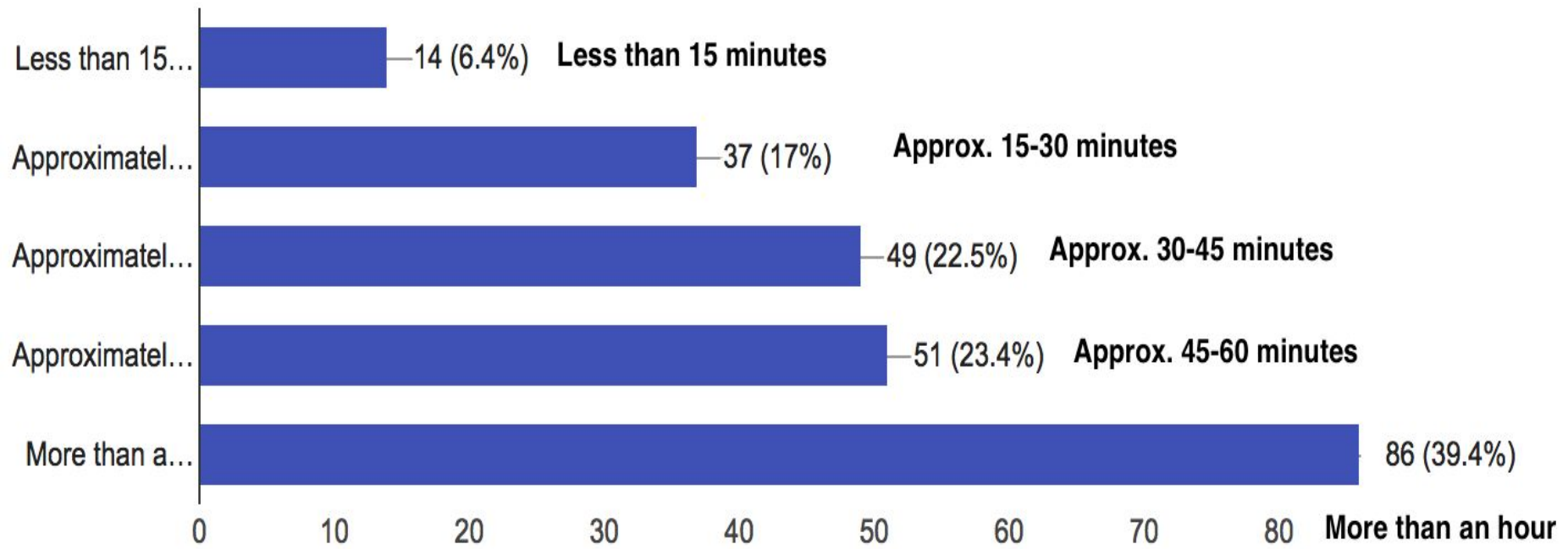




PARENT SURVEY RESULTS (CONT.)

About how much time does your child spend on homework on a daily basis?

218 responses

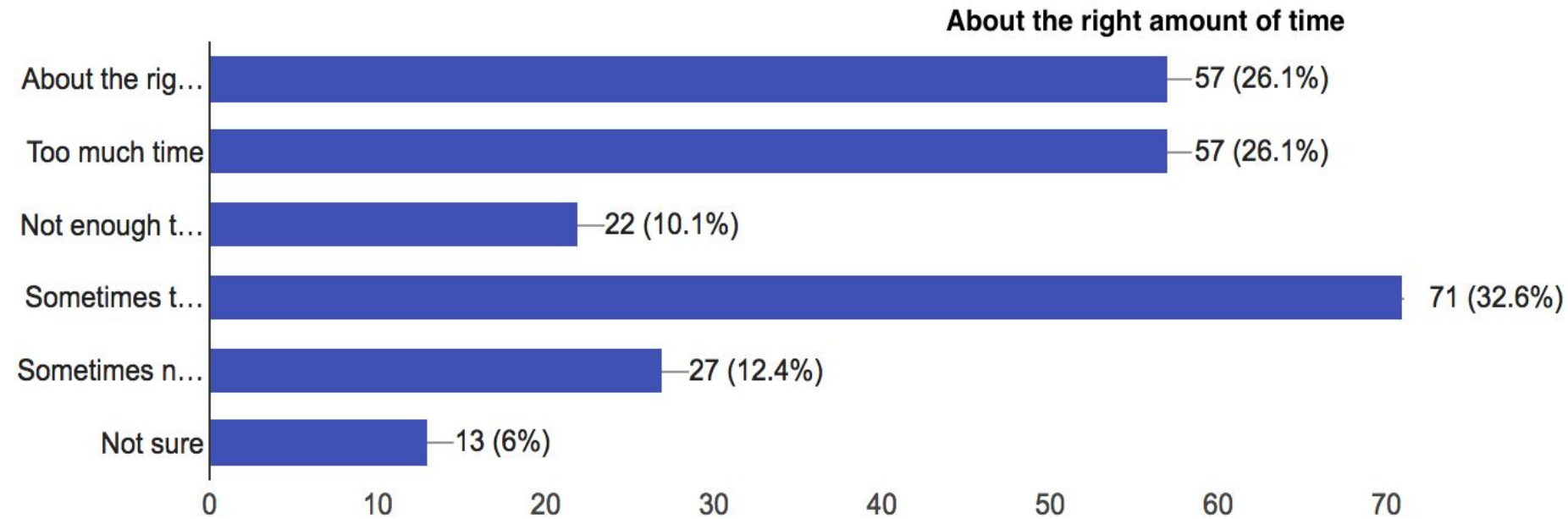




PARENT SURVEY RESULTS (CONT.)

The amount of time my child usually spends doing homework is: (Check all that apply.)

218 responses

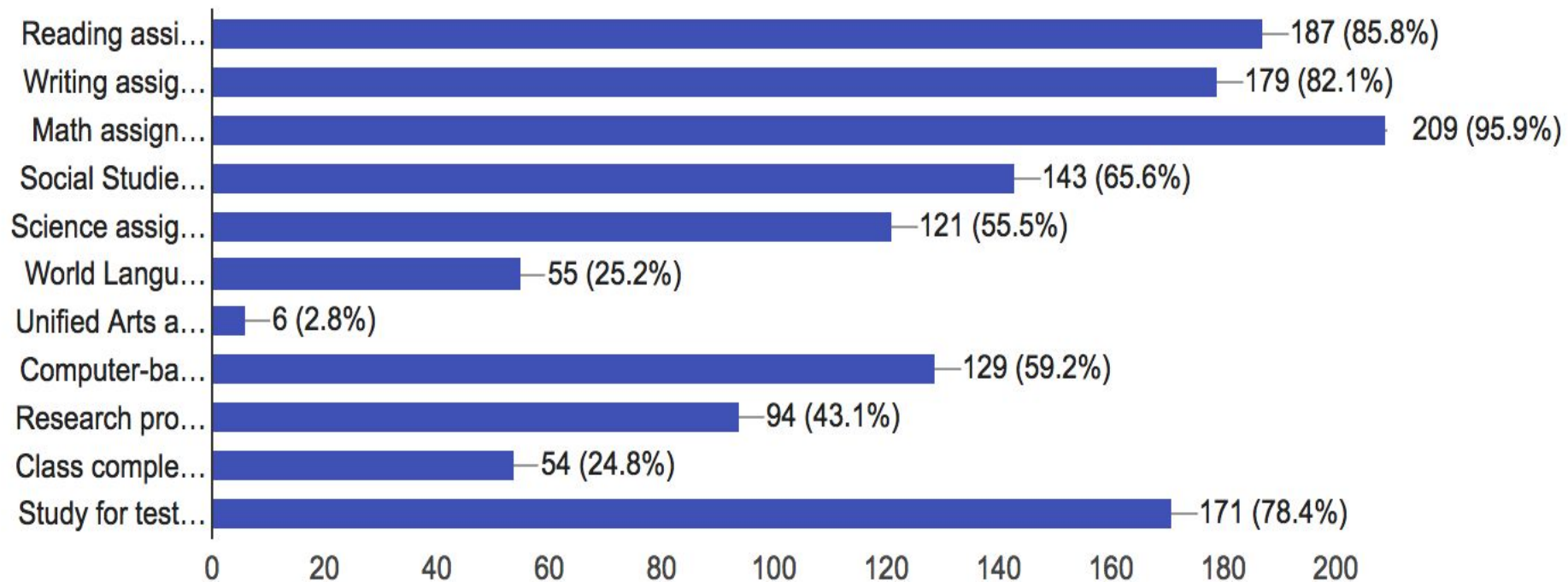




PARENT SURVEY RESULTS (CONT.)

What type of homework assignment does your child typically receive? (Check all that apply.)

218 responses





PARENT HOMEWORK PERCEPTION SURVEY

Emerging Themes:

- websites hard to navigate when teachers post on different sites
- lack of balance amongst assignments within teams
- hard to manage moodle, vs. google classroom, etc. depending on teacher. Not all use the same platform
- Homework balance varies by child's extra-curricular activities
- Group work assigned for homework makes it difficult if not all members contribute equally
- Need for more differentiated homeworks (some are)
- too much time on homework and less time for play



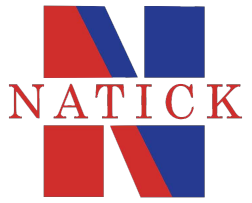
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARENTS

- Provide a space that is conducive for studying and completing school work effectively
- Check assignment notebooks, teacher websites and ipass
- Communicate with teacher if student's homework time is consistently extended well beyond designated guideline limits
- Encourage parents to cut off students who are spending well beyond the designated guideline limits
- Monitor screen time, texting and other distractions during work time



RECOMMENDATIONS & NEXT STEPS

- Ensure that teams calibrate and balance homework regularly
- Build in consistency with assignments (grade level, PLC and teams)
- Continuous discussions by PLC's grade level, and teams where merits of homework are evaluated, critiqued, and/or supported:
 - What's kinds of homework are assigned?
 - What purpose do they serve?
 - How should homework be defined for 21st century digital world and academic setting?
 - Is student choice offered for homework?
- Quantity vs. Skill Mastery



RECOMMENDATIONS & NEXT STEPS(CONT.)

- Articulation of the purpose and connection homework has to lesson objectives
- Homework doesn't count for more than 10% of their overall grade
- No homework assigned on most weekends and all religious holidays and school vacations (except when necessary)
- After school teacher support Monday-Thursday
- Spend time discussing and teaching students the difference is between "Stress" and "Work"
- Communicate to students and families if homework completion is inconsistent or lacking



John Dewey reminded us
that the value of what
students do 'resides in its
connection with a
stimulation of greater
thoughtfulness, not in the
greater strain it imposes.

Alfie Kohn