



# ACACIA HOMEWORK PHILOSOPHY

As you know, at Acacia School we believe in the strengths, talents, passions, and interests of our students. To support our Schoolwide Enrichment Model (SEM) approach both at school and at home, we also believe that students need time after school to pursue their interests and passions. As a result, it is our hope that students utilize at-home time to be self-directed learners who:

- **Read widely** – Read a variety of texts for pleasure and visit the library.
- **Take time to pursue their passions and interests** – From sports to the arts to scientific experiments to research or deeper reading on a topic of study from the classroom to helping cook dinner and so much more!
- **Work toward personal learning goals** – These might be benchmarks to master, a test to study for, independent research inquiries, or challenge activities to take them above and beyond grade level expectations.

Overwhelmingly, research shows that traditional homework in the elementary grades does not actually increase student achievement and grades. In fact, homework in the elementary grades tends to be busywork, contribute to negative attitudes about school, cause a burden on parents, increase stress on children and the family, and leave little time for kids to explore other interests. The Acacia homework philosophy TK-5 encourages creativity, curiosity, and childhood through self-directed choices after school. Our teachers ask students to share how they are spending their after school time in a calendar format, through discussions during class with peers, and with monthly student-teacher conferences to set and reflect on learning goals and focus on the individual child's needs, strengths, interests, and passions.

If a parent wants more “homework” options, teachers offer extension activities, learning software that is internet/cloud based, as well as some targeted skill practice when a child needs it. With this approach, students and families gain more time to spend together on family interests, and truthfully, teachers gain time in class, not to mention their prep time, by not needing to prepare, track, grade, reward and punish homework.

Through self-directed learning at home, students can purposefully and joyfully choose what and how they learn, develop intrinsic motivation and a growth mindset, and ultimately develop personal responsibility and self-reflection skills that lead to a love of learning as well as success in school and life.

***How do YOU learn?*** 😊