

Partnering with Parents Program

I know that you want your student to be successful in school. School success goes a long way in building the kind of self-confidence that translates into “real-world” success later in life. Also, school success can open many doors and provide numerous options for your child. I believe that scholastic success can be defined as the students’ ability to understand, retain, and apply the curriculum. The actual grade they receive is, hopefully, a reflection of that understanding, retention and application.

I believe that with very few exceptions, every student can succeed in my classes if they adopt a few basic rules. As I see it, we are partners in your students’ education.

I have put this material together to make it easier for you to get involved in my class. It is far more effective to say, “Let’s look over the Chapter 7 homework assignment that is due tomorrow” than to ask, “Is your homework finished?”

You might be asking yourself, “How can I help? I don’t know anything about this subject.” While this might be true, you will be surprised at just how effective you can be!

There are three distinct areas to focus on in order for your student to succeed. They are Attendance, Homework and Tests.

ATTENDANCE

Generally, this is the easiest area to be successful in. As you know, Lehi High School has a strict policy about attendance. I will not bore you with the history of why our policy is in place but, suffice it to say, students can’t learn the curriculum if they are not in class! I talk about the need for good attendance all the time in my classes so that every student has heard the message repeatedly.

Here is what I suggest you do to help your student with attendance.

First, you can stress the importance of not being tardy or absent to your child and let them know that you’ll be keeping track. I am very accurate with the roll in my class. The only mistake I might make is if they come into class very late I may forget to change an absence into a tardy. (If I marked them absent I guarantee they were not in class when I took roll!)

Second, you should check their attendance on Powerschool at regular intervals and discuss any issues with them before it becomes a real problem.

Third, you should always remember to call the school and excuse any legitimate absences. With our system an excused absence is far better than an unexcused one.

Be assured that if attendance becomes a problem we can solve it with early intervention. That's why it is so important to monitor it constantly. With serious attendance problems, the last two weeks of the term can be too late for students to save themselves.

HOMEWORK/PROJECTS

In my opinion this is the area where you can be of the greatest help. In order for homework to contribute to classroom success it must be:

1. **Timely:** Late work is a real problem. My disclosure document states that 50% of the available points will be subtracted if homework is late. Generally, I take off about 25%. Chronic late work can KILL a grade.
2. **Complete:** You would be surprised by how many assignments I receive incomplete. Of course, unfinished homework negatively impacts the grade but, also, I have a difficult time assessing any problems that the student might be having with the material.
3. **Legible:** If I can not read the work I have a hard time grading it! The quality and look of what they turn in says something about their own self-image. I believe that if you can help your child to turn in better looking work they will take more pride in their accomplishments.
4. **Accurate:** Obviously, for a student to receive full points for an assignment the work needs to be correct. Most of the answers for the homework assignments can be found in the textbook and yet, I see many students treating homework like a test and not bothering to look the answers up. Your student should be careful with the homework and take the necessary time to do it correctly.

I would suggest the following steps to help your child succeed in the area of homework.

First, I would keep track of what homework is assigned and when it is due. This may sound complicated but I have created a Homework Tracking Sheet that the students are expected to fill out when an assignment is given. The form is kept in their textbook (or binder) at all times. Also, on my website (kanesworld.org) you'll find a

Course Outline for each subject I teach. This outline lists the homework that is assigned for each chapter or unit. (FYI: there are rare occasions where I may adjust the assignment slightly). With the Tracking Sheet and the Course Outline it should be relatively “painless” for you to keep yourself informed.

Second, I would look over all homework assignments before they are turned in. If you did this, you would quickly catch all sloppy and incomplete work. This would be a great benefit to your student. I often give some class time for the students to work on their homework (this is a good opportunity for them to ask me questions). Some students finish their homework and turn it in immediately. If homework is a problem area for your student, you might consider requiring them to bring it home so that you can look at it.

Third, if your child is struggling with the material you can either use the textbook to help them or refer them to me. I am available during lunch and after school almost every day and I am happy to explain a concept or principle to your student.

Two other quick points about homework:

1. Because of our A/B schedule, homework is NEVER due the next day. I would try to establish a policy where homework is completed the day it was assigned, not the night before it is due. Generally, the student will remember more of what was done in class and they could come in and ask me for help if they have any questions. Normally, I don't help students with the homework at the beginning of the class when it is due.
2. Please resist the temptation to do the homework for your students!! This is not really helping them since they will not learn the material and you can't take the upcoming test for them. (You might be shocked to see the number of homework assignments I receive with parental handwriting!!).

One other thing before I leave the area of homework: For most classes copies of all the homework assignments are on my website (kanesworld.org) and can be downloaded at any time.

TESTS

Many students have a great fear of tests and they incorrectly assume that their success in class hinges on their test scores. In fact, in my classes, attendance, homework and tests each account for about 33% of the final grade. Therefore, even if they “bomb” the tests, your student can receive a reasonable final grade if they have done well in attendance and homework.

I do not expect you to become an expert on the subjects that I teach (that's my job) and whatever remediation your child might need to succeed I am fully prepared to offer. However, you can offer substantial assistance to your child.

First, you can become aware of when tests are approaching and encourage your student to set aside adequate time for study and review.

Second, many high school students have not learned how to organize an effective study and review session. Three or four chapters of material can seem overwhelming to them. You can be a great help by helping them structure the study time into smaller, more manageable sections.

Third, you could take the time to review the textbook material yourself and discuss the concepts and principles with your student. Most of my subject matter deals with information that you come into contact with on a regular basis and so it might not be as hard as you think to acquaint yourself with the material. In addition, on my website for many of my subjects I have included links to educational websites that discuss the curriculum material. They can be a great resource for your child.

Fourth, you can encourage your student to re-listen to my test review on my website. I record all my test reviews and upload them so that students can listen to them as often as needed. Many students have told me they are very helpful.

Finally, you can encourage your child to come in and ask for help. I know that many students are very reluctant to request help. In class I suggest it on a regular basis. Upcoming tests are always discussed for at least a week and almost all tests have the preceding class period devoted to a test review. Students, therefore, are well aware of when the tests will be. Help them to consider the test ahead of time and seek help if they have questions or concerns.

In summary, if you and I can help your student attend my class more regularly, turn in complete, accurate and timely homework and more fully prepare for the tests I know they will find greater success.

As your partner in helping your student succeed I want you to know that I am available to you. You can reach me through email at bkane@alpine.k12.ut.us (in the subject heading put Parents of). You can also call me at (801) 768-7000 ext 203 (best time to call is from 2:15pm to 2:45pm). If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions don't hesitate to contact me.

I know that as we work together your child can experience the kind of success that will allow them to see both the world and themselves differently. They will start to enjoy school more and realize that success in school provides the foundation of "real-world" success later in life. They will find it easier to be a "Big Picture" thinker (something I talk a lot about) and they will more fully believe that they can achieve their dreams.

Thank you for your support.