

Homework Over the Holidays?

- Alex Kerai

Students anxiously await the three week-long vacations that are spread throughout the school year. They anticipate sleeping in, watching TV, hanging out with friend, playing sports and doing things that they love to do – they do not anticipate the vacation workload of homework that is thrust upon them by their teachers. It has become frequent practice for many teachers to assign review work over vacation or to have students study for upcoming tests or quizzes. But isn't vacation supposed to be a time to forget about school? Isn't that the meaning of vacation?

Homework over break has become common in schools and universities across the country. However, Cornell University has taken a big step: Banning homework over break! This ban would exclude long term projects but include all “surprise assignments” that would have been assigned on the Thursday or Friday before break. What's even more surprising about the proposed ban is the support that it's getting from faculty. According to the *Cornell Daily Sun* Bruce A. Levitt, theater professor and Faculty Senate education-policies committee chair, said it was time to send the “message that breaks are meant to be used as breaks.” Physics professor Carl Franck echoed Levitt's statement saying, “We should not be assigning work over breaks.”

Other schools across the country are putting their two-cents in as well. In an article from the Harding High School newspaper (St. Paul, Minnesota) one student asked what the point of winter break was if work is still going to be assigned. He said: “Having piles of homework to do stresses me out and interferes with my holiday plans. What's the point of a break, if we don't actually get a break!?” In another article from North Point High School (Waldorf, Maryland) the author, Lauren Bodamer, argues that there are pros and cons to homework, one of the pros being that it helps students retain the information that they learned before vacation and it makes it easier on the teachers when they have to review when students return to break. But one teacher argued that the work would not be completed to the student's best ability because the student is more focused on spending time with family. One student agreed saying that winter break “is meant for celebration and spending time with family and friends.”

But is it really worth it to assigning homework over break? The students will come back tired and still stressed, having skipped sleeping in and relaxing in favor of finishing their homework in a timely manner. Luckily, here at MHS most teachers tend to abstain from assigning homework over break. They understand that many students will be traveling or with family and that it is not fair for them to have to worry about and concentrate on homework. Many teachers may also make their students aware that they will have review problems or a project to work on over break and give the students the opportunity to start the work early if they want to. Hopefully teachers at MHS will continue their policy of no homework over break and assure their students that will still receive the week-long break from school and work as promised.