

After-school study hall helps students shrink homework

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

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Principal: Grades improving

Ashton Grund likes to play outside after school.

The Dudley Elementary fifth grader figures that if he finishes his homework during an after-school study hall offered at the school, he'll have more time to enjoy the outdoors when he gets home.

For five years, Dudley has offered an after-school study hall .

In the beginning, it was to help students who were falling behind with homework.

“We were battling things not getting done,” said elementary principal Jim Widdifield. “It was less of a discipline problem.”

Widdifield said the time after school is more individualized for students. They receive extra help with homework, much like access time for junior and senior highers who go in before school to see teachers.

Grades have improved, he said, because students are completing their assignments.

Monday through Thursday, kids gather for half an hour in two classrooms after the dismissal bell rings.

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One group consists of fourth and fifth graders and the other is sixth graders.



On average, he said 15-20 kids attend the after-school study hall, the bulk are referrals from teachers although numbers are growing from students who just want to get their homework done.

Grund, who was working on contractions one day after school, is an example.

He said his parents told him to go to the after-school class.

“I get more help with my work,” he said. “And then I have more time to play when I get home.”

Allyson Atteberry likes the study hall because it helps her get her homework done on time.

She usually needs help with grammar and sometimes social studies but not math.

“That’s my favorite subject,” Atteberry said with a smile.

Fifth-grade teacher Barb Hicken said the study hall offers another way to help kids.

“If a child is late getting homework in, this gives them a head start and jump into the next day,”

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Hicken said.

Emily Johnson, a fourth grader, said the study hall is especially helpful when she has a lot of homework.

“It lowers the whole big job of stuff down to little stuff,” Johnson said. “It makes it more manageable.”

Johnson said she usually attends every day on her own although she sometimes goes in because of a teacher referral because “it’s difficult at times to pay attention in class.”

After school, she said she gets personalized attention mostly in math but sometimes in reading and spelling.

Her favorite subject?

“Recess.”

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