

Hello everyone,

Here's something we teachers are learning this week. Creating what we do at school in an online environment is not possible, but we can find ways to bring the same elements of enrichment and love that come with the experience to your children in new ways. Thank you for your patience and pardon the mess and dust as we work to rebuild things. I cannot tell you how much I've enjoyed seeing their faces and their pent up behavior on our Zoom meetings! It has been good medicine. My first task has been to start rebuilding the social and emotional bonds that have been at the heart of this remarkable group. It has begun!

Another thing we teachers are discovering is that the preparations, research, and Zoom meetings have all been exhausting. This is a good reminder for us all to be thoughtful and sensitive in our expectations for what kids should be able to do. At first I began an outline of what my weekly tasks for them would be. Then I drafted out what that would look like in actual hours and found that I was asking for five to six hours of work per day. I'm not going to do that!

The state had suggested that three hours of work per day is reasonable for grades 6-8. Other sources recommend closer to two. I recommend that you measure this according to your child. Many kids have reported that you already have schedules set up, and my hope is to offer ideas for how to fit educational suggestions into that. Here is how I plan to start.. Things in **bold** are firmly scheduled, things with asterisk* are suggestions.

Daily Activities (Mon. - Friday)	Throughout the week
Visit Google Classroom .5 hour 9 - 9:30* - Check assignments, comment on ongoing conversations.	Science Fair - This ongoing activity will be assigned on April 6. Plan, implement and report on experiments. 1-2 hours per week*
Team Zoom meeting .5 hr 9:30 -10:00 - Touch base with each other, check in with teacher - Occasional direct and/or interactive instruction	Weekly recipe challenge - kids will research a recipe and hopefully cook and eat! The first week (4-6) will be to look for a recipe for pancakes from scratch. Photo-document and report! Math lessons will be based on results!
Google Class assignments .5 hr 10-10:30* - Includes daily and ongoing assignments. - Often the goal will be active, offline activities with an online report back.	Tour of the week - A virtual tour will be assigned. Hopefully this will take half an hour or so with a similar time for journal responses.
Kahn Academy, 6th grade math .5 hr 10:30 -11*	I will track Kahn Academy progress daily. I do not mind if kids take occasional days off.
Breaks - As needed!	We are not built to maintain focus for long!
Creative Activity/play 1 hour*	I will ask kids to share creative products,

	activities and ideas each week
Get outside/exercise 1 hour*	I will have kids keep a chart of healthy activity and ideas. These data can then be used for math lessons.
Read a book .5 or more!*	
Emotional check in with loved ones - Daily! This is a lot to take in. We need each other!	

Certainly this schedule is designed to allow for you to integrate things into your own family life. Please allow for plenty of flexibility in regard to time. Some days things may take a bit longer, some shorter. An average of two to three hours of academic time in total per day is very appropriate. Of equal importance is time for creativity, physical activity, and emotional connection. You will notice that I did not add time for computer games. See how I am?

I'm sure you have plenty of questions, concerns, and great suggestions. Please feel free to email me your thoughts at mcantrell@aldocs.org. At some point I will schedule a parent meeting online, and the more questions I get from you now, the better prepared I can be to answer them for you all.

It's clear we all are experiencing an event that few living people have ever endured. This will mark the lives of our children in ways we may never know. As today's events become tomorrow's history one can hope that we all come out something more than what we were at the start. This is my hope I share with kids each school year. I wish to help bring a strong end and closure to this remarkable group's year together. I do love these kids!

I read this today, "HONOR that grief process! Don't expect to jump into a perfect program and learn, learn, learn. Expect them to act out. Expect them to not want to get out of bed. Expect them to not have words to express their inner turmoil." It is an honor to share this experience with you through your children! Thank you. Take care of each other.

Love, Mark Cantrell