## Sabbatical 2013 Home Schooling Notes

**Dashboard “Overview”**

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| Course Progress: | On track to finish "core" courses by the end of the ONLINESCHOOL school year. |
| Work Samples: | All submitted except Science work sample. |
| Attendance: | Caught up & courses are adjusted to reflect present course schedules. Kids are likely ahead in number of hours. |
| Study Island: | 3RDGRADER has completed the Feb paths. I focused on course progress in lieu of study island until March |
| ONLINESCHOOL Mail | Kids are expected to keep their own inbox's up-to-date, too. |

**Key Events:**

March 7th: End of trimester. ILP’s will be coming soon.

March 14th: ONLINESCHOOL Virtual Spelling Bee (5THGRADER)

April ?: STATETESTING testing is coming…

ASAP: Send box tops in:

**School Day Schedule**

7AM – Kids get up, eat breakfast.

7:45 – Go for a walk around the block

8AM (by 8:30AM at latest). – School starts.

Start with prayer

Start with Bible reading (we’ve been doing 1x Proverbs / day)

10AM - snacks and 15 min break

12PM - lunch and 1 hour break

2PM - snack & 15 break.

3PM - Day is complete - never had an issue getting all course work completed in 1 day. 8-3 works.

Note: 1/2 day Friday's if they work 8-3PM M-TH. This pace should easily allow you to keep progress in upper range, allowing them to finish school on time for core courses.

**Balancing/sharing time.**

Usually I try to work with 5THGRADER in the AM on M, W and 3RDGRADER in the AM on T, TH. While I am working with one, the other is doing "independent" courses.

I do allow kids the choice to work in another room if they are working on something independent (while I work with the other one).

Courses I do with 5THGRADER:

History / Composition / Math / Science / GUM / Lit (if there is significant reading) - These are usually 45min - 60min courses.

Courses I allow 5THGRADER to do independently (These are usually ~20 min max courses)

Art, Health, Spelling, Vocabulary, Test Readiness, strategies for success.

Courses I do with 3RDGRADER:

Math / Lit (if there is significant reading) / Composition / GUM / Science

Courses I let 3RDGRADER do independently (These are usually ~20 min max courses)

Test Readiness / Vocabulary / Spelling / History / Art / Health / Strategies for success

For \*ALL\* courses, I enter in the assessment & overlook them, checking for understanding. Must periodically check for comprehension; be careful not to get overly concerned with check boxes.

Generally, courses I stress excellent effort: Math, Lit (reading), GUM or any course requiring writing. I consider these core/essential courses.

Courses I provide the most flexibility are: Art, Health, Science, History.

For the core courses, the kids' progress is "on track" for 100% completion by the end of school year.

When choosing what courses to do in "spare" time, the kids should use the Progress screen to identify what courses need work, vs. choosing easier or favorite courses.

**Discipline:**

First, name goes on paper. That is the only warning.

Second, check mark goes next to name, student loses next 15 min break. (gets a snack but must do chores instead of independent free time).

Third, two check marks student loses independent free time after eating lunch.. must do age appropriate chores instead.

I have only needed to use discipline for interruptions. I've used the single check mark once. Never needed to use two check marks. Ever.

This allows me to not lose control of myself & establishes a fair baseline for consequences.

**Course notes:**

Math: With StateTesting testing coming up, kids need to be exercising skills learned earlier. Therefore, I have been spending 15-20mins on the ONLINESCHOOL lesson and then 15-20mins on the StudyIsland worksheets (1 worksheet a day).

Composition: 5THGRADER had two writing exercises due: an editorial in composition and an essay in history. Instead of stress him out, I decided to focus on the history essay and checked-off the editorial. We can come back & do this later if we want. But for now, this seemed like the fair thing to do.

History: 3RDGRADER is behind in History so she typically does 1 history lesson a day, self-directed.

Science: Go easy on the kids. ONLINESCHOOL's curriculum is a bordering ridiculously advanced in introducing high school concepts at 3rd/5th grade. Try to incorporate God's hand in everything.

Art: I have been very lenient on what the kids do with Art. I do, however, limit their art time to 20 mins.

**Class Connects**:

Both C & H know how to start/open a class connect & run audio setup tool.

Monday: Attend in class. One computer is muted. Kids like to chat to each other.

Wednesday: Allow kids to choose when/which class connect to attend (I try to work w/ one of them while the other is doing a Connect, vice versa).

Kids are expected to practice taking notes during class connects (to develop listening skills). Notes are stored in school binders.

Both 5THGRADER & 3RDGRADER have been participating in class connects - and enjoying it.

**Misc. Notes:**

Using Chrome for OLS - 100% supported by ONLINESCHOOL. Faster. Kids have bookmarks to Study Island, ORVA Community, etc.

Upgrading RAM on kids' computer has made a big difference. Using a mouse vs. touchpad helps navigation significantly.

Math journals are to be used for math.

Try to keep relaxing music playing (classical, jazz or Christian). I sometimes allow kids to choose.

3RDGRADER doesn't like to sit on the bench, I let her use my chair.

Organization of school work and books is required. Sloppiness produces wasted time and effort (ask 5THGRADER about losing one of his rough draft assignments... that he had to re-write)

If you plan to skip an optional lesson, mark it \*completed\*. Questions about this, ask Mr. Martin. I have \*not\* being doing optional lessons (working to get all subjects caught up).

I do not allow kids to have media time until after school (they should be playing instead of sitting.)

**Teaching notes:**

-Walk around the block makes a difference in the AM - really helps.

-Kids get 100% attention. I only check news/email during breaks. If they see me distracted, they get distracted and school gets off course.

-Maintain self-control through taking breaks:

-ok to take care of yourself.

-ok to say "i'm on break".

-When grading work, write notes to them every day.

- be fair, but show them you are on their side

- encourage them to God's calling in their life; point out God given talents or gifts.

- Use stickers when they genuinely do a good job. “Sparkly” stickers are for extra, extra good work.

-When introducing new topics or starting a new assignment:

"I do it (do one example for them, they watch).

We do it (I write, they give me the instructions).

You do it (they do it, I watch).”

I use this when introducing new topics or getting ready to allow them to do work independently - it is extremely frustrating for everyone involved if they run off & do something wrong, and then have to do it over.

-Be silly 1x awhile;

**Specific concepts to exercise periodically:**

5THGRADER:

practice identifying parts of speech.

exercising in proof reading (looking for grammar, spelling, indentation).

practice writing / composition.

identify place value (tenths, hundredths).

3RDGRADER:

Math facts, specifically subtraction

review subtraction w/ re-group

basic geometry.

rounding.

Both:

looking up words in dictionary

alphabetize

practice handwriting.

Develop life skills:

memorization techniques.

note taking.

References:

“Confident Parenting”, Jim Burns

“The Way They Learn”, Cynthia Ulrich Tobias

“How to Read A Book”, Mortimer J. Adler & Charles Van Doren

“Father, Son, 3-Mile Run”, Keith J. Leenhouts

“There are No Shortcuts”, Rafe Esquith

“Smart but Scattered”, Peg Dawson & Richard Guare