A Day In the Life of a Future Trailblazer Student

Gabriel is an eight year old learner at Trailblazer Elementary in the year 2018.

EARLY MORNING

It’s 6:00 in the morning and my parents are up getting ready for work. I get up with them so I can catch the 6:45 bus to be at school by 7:00. Not everyone gets there this early, but it works best for me and my family. There are many families like mine that enjoy the flexible school schedule and love knowing that I can be at school longer and get to learn all day in a variety of ways. Plus, now I can have breakfast with my friends and spend some time in the collaboration lounge to work on my personalized learning pathways. I’ve always been a morning person and do my best work earlier in the day, so I’m lucky I can start school sooner.

As I’m getting ready for the school day, I get on my tablet and check out the pathway notes from my pack teachers who work with me through the day. In my literacy pathway, Mrs. Vasquez emailed that she would like to spend some time with me focusing on inferences and applying my vowel teams. She also sent a link to a video that would help me with this. For math, Ms. Pevoteaux emailed feedback about my math exemplars! Yesterday in my pathways I was having a challenging time focusing on reading every detail so Mrs. Vasquez and I have set up a time this morning to work on it together. My pack teachers take turns in the mornings and evenings being available for questions. I love to start my day knowing what skills I need to work on before I even get to school!

PATHWAYS

I access online learning pathways that are based on Colorado Academic Standards. My basic literacy and math standards are met through a blended curriculum. I use my e-portfolio as evidence of mastery. When I have enough evidence, I can move onto the next level in a standard. I don't have to wait for my peers, and they don't have to wait on me. My learning is personalized!
Morning Hours

The rest of my friends arrive at school just in time for Learning Lab. One of our learning labs feels like a coffee shop for kids! We all love the variety of spaces because we are all different. I use my tablet to work on my online learning pathways that move as fast as I learn! One of my literacy teachers has already posted a daily discussion prompt on our Padlet wall, so I post my ideas and spend some time reading others’ answers. I love to see how my friends answer the prompts. We can chat about the problems as we try to solve them! My friend Alex and I like to work in the same learning space because we can help each other see ideas in different ways. I love that my teachers add themes in my pathway that interest me, yet make me read different things that I wouldn’t normally choose. One of my books this week is *The Wright Brothers* because my Genius Hour project is all about airplanes. I love airplanes! Mrs. Ottmer also shared a journal written by Charles Lindbergh about his different flights. She helps keep an eye on our pathways with the pack teacher team to make sure we are all getting the resources that we need to be successful. We’re working on all the vowel sounds right now. Phonics has been a struggle for me so I’m glad Mrs. Ottmer has been adding support lessons to my pathway. The extra practice, along with the opportunity to work in a small group, gives me more confidence with the skill!

After my small group work, I see that I have a new math mission in Khan Academy on fractions. If I get stuck, the program helps me with hints and teaching videos and then if I’m still struggling, my math pack teacher will be notified. We can meet later to work through it together. I finish with my fractions and head to meet Ms. Pevoteaux to work on my math exemplar about time and travel to different places in the world. She knows that one of my my passions is airplanes and has designed a real world problem about flight that gets me excited about learning. She is also there to support me and push me whenever I get stuck. To end our Learning Lab time, we work on independent math and literacy skills. To do this, we choose from a menu of options and learning environments that work best for us. I access the learning platform and make my choice. This allows the teachers to see where every student is and what they are working on. I decide to use the ACTIVtable for a math game to help me better understand the fractions work in a fun way! There are four of us working together on different problems; some are really easy for me and some I watch my friend Jordan work on because she can answer all the hard problems that I don’t understand yet. We help each other out if someone gets stuck; just because we’re learners doesn’t mean we can’t be teachers, too. I save a screen shot of my work, sending one copy to my teacher and one to myself for my e-portfolio. This shows my teachers that I am working on my personal and professional competencies of time management and meeting deadlines. My independent choice work also lets them know how I like to learn. Its easy to work hard when you love to learn through choices!
Learning

After I work in my pathways for basic literacy and math skills, I get to research whatever my personal interests may be. I have chosen to learn about airplanes, because when I grow up I want to be a fighter jet pilot! Because I’ve learned my basic literacy skills, I can access online resources to learn more about becoming a fighter pilot on my own. I record my learning in a notebook or in my digital portfolio so that my teachers can see how I’m doing. I’m trying to figure out why I need to learn math and science to become a pilot, so I’m using my research to create when he has time. My goal is to meet him and see a fighter jet in person. I would love to be able to ride in one, but I sometimes think that maybe it’s a job that scares me too much and I’d rather be the guy in the tower that tells the jets where to go. I need to get outside my classroom to do that learning! My afternoons are for exploring outside the school and going more in depth into my interest areas. In the afternoon I meet with my mentor teacher. Sometimes my learning happens outside of school. I’m excited because next week I get to go meet the pilot that’s been answering my questions.

"I can learn at school with the help of my teachers and at home with the help of my teachers!"

questions for a real fighter pilot that my teachers helped me get in touch with at the Air Force Academy. He is very busy, so to use his time wisely, I’m creating a list of questions for him. He’ll respond through email or video conference activity. We can play outside on the playground, enjoy additional gym, art, or musical opportunities. Some of these are the teachers sharing their passions with us and some are voted on by the students in our classes. My teachers know where I am based on my QR code scan in with a teacher. I’m happy that we get these choices because I like that I can choose my activity based on my current interests. Some of my friends play games with Ms. Gallup, some go back to the learning lab to read. We can create our own brain break.

After lunch, we go to our “specials” of art, music, and gym. We can work on an art project that shows what we are passionate about so I’m in the outdoor classroom so I can see the jets and airplanes from the academy flying overhead. I’m kind of obsessed with them. We can eat wherever we would like as long as there is an adult in sight to make sure we are safe. After we eat, we get to choose our recess

LUNCH

We go to lunch with our friends. I like to eat outside in the outdoor classroom so I can see the jets and airplanes from the academy flying overhead. I’m kind of obsessed with them. We can eat wherever we would like as long as there is an adult in sight to make sure we are safe. After we eat, we get to choose our recess

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our thinking beyond what we imagine.

In music, I’m using a composition program to compose music that goes with fighter jets like in the movies! I’m getting better at listening to tunes and instruments that go together.

Our physical education and wellness class go together. We get a Fitbit that keeps track of our footsteps during the day and we get to use those steps to chart on maps how far up mountains we’ve hiked. Coach keeps the chart in gym and we all celebrate each other’s progress up different fourteeners. Coach teaches us all sorts of games! Jordan and Alex are in a different class because they chose to do

We can choose our area of focus for P.E. Sports or survival is this quarter and that’s only if we are on the steps outside of class plan. I’m trying to apply my reading and writing skills to create a persuasive argument for my own Genius Hour work to take an off campus P.E. elective that helps me experience skydiving and just being in the air. As I get stronger, I hope to learn what zero gravity means and feels like.

AFTERNOON

In my research, I’ve learned something about G force. I need to learn more about that as well. I choose to learn about the fighter jets and airplanes during my genius hour time; while my friends choose different ideas to learn more about.

My friend Alex is working on an organic farming project in our school’s community garden project. He loves to go out to his part of the garden at lunch a pick his many colored carrots to eat. Another girl in my class, Jordan, wants to

create a learning lab at our local fire station because she wants all the kids in our school and neighborhood to have a warm place to learn in the evenings and weekends when we aren’t at school. We all have our own projects that we are interested in and want to bring to life. Our pack teachers are there to ask questions and support us in our projects. This is my favorite time of day because I get to learn about whatever I want. All of the skills I work on during the day are reflect in my Genius Hour work!

"Working my body hard in different ways, makes my brain smarter!"
LATE AFTERNOON
Holy Cow-It's already 3:30 in the afternoon! It's a good thing that I set a reminder alarm on my phone so that I don't miss the bus again (made that mistake once and my mom wasn't happy with that choice, but she was thrilled that I was so into my learning!) The late bus leaves in 20 minutes. I still have to clean up and update my online journal so my pack teachers can check my progress for tomorrow’s learning.

EVENING
As I think back over the day, I realize that I still wanted to learn more about G-Force. I decide to get into Discovery Education and create a learning path for myself that will help me organize all my thoughts and ideas. I find a G-Force video before my mom calls me for dinner. I can watch it after dinner or tomorrow on my way to school.

My learning is at my pace and not limited to the classroom. It's motivating to see that other kids are interested in the same things that I am so we can work outside of school through field experiences. I can access videos that relate to what I love, and my teachers can teach me the basic skills of what I have to have. It's up to me to reach beyond their expectations. I'm responsible for my learning and I'm only 8! WOW!

A Day In the Life of Gabriel

Morning
6:00 a.m.
Youth Vacations
From Yes, Yassass

Blended

Personalized Learning

Lunch

Specials

Home or extended day

Genius Hour

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