

## **A Day in the Life of a Performance-Based Elementary Student**

Peyton McCubbin – 5<sup>th</sup> Grader  
Taylor County Elementary School



### **Overview**

Peyton McCubbin is currently a 5<sup>th</sup> grade student at Taylor County Elementary School. She is accelerated in math, reading, science, and social studies. She starts her day at the elementary school, but then is bused to the middle school for the rest of the day to take her sixth and seventh grade classes.

### **Morning**

I wake up about 20 minutes earlier than usual this morning. I have to be at school early today because I have Junior Beta practice at 7:30am. I am a member of the Songfest team with the club and am practicing for the state the competition coming up very soon. I grab breakfast and my backpack and head out the door with my mother and brother.

When I get to school, all of the Beta members are coming in for practice. I take my spot in the front as one of the lead singers in the performance and we begin practicing our song. After about an hour of working on our competition piece, the sponsors release us to our homeroom classes. My homeroom is also my first block of the day, but we had to skip our activity rotation class today due to Beta practice. We are, however, on track to start our core classes of the day.

My first class is advanced 5<sup>th</sup> grade writing. It is a deeper level of instruction than the other 5<sup>th</sup> grade writing classes. We are discussing prepositions today. The teacher emphasizes the importance of grammar skills to us as we look ahead to when we will take the ACT in the near future. She often talks to us about going to college and what it takes to get there.

Around 9:45am, my fellow bump-ups and I gather our belongings and head to the pickup area where the performance-based education bus picks us up to take us to the middle school for our sixth and seventh grade classes. We sing songs and chat along the way. I love being able to go to the middle school each day!

My first class at the middle school is a virtual social studies class with our gifted and talented teacher. There are students ranging from 5<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> grade in the class, and they are taking a variety of classes offered through our online platform, Odysseyware. I just recently finished the advanced 5<sup>th</sup> grade course, and I am on the fourth unit of the 6<sup>th</sup> grade course. I like this class because I can work with my friends at my own pace. Through this class, we are also offered special field trips to enhance our learning.

## **Lunch**

The bell rings and I head down to my locker to exchange my books for my fourth and fifth periods of the day. I then head to my self-paced, sixth grade reading class, where we go to lunch first thing. After lunch, I head to the gym with the rest of my class for ten minutes of walking time.

Back in class, I open my binder and pull out the assignments for the novel that I am currently reading. My teacher just recently moved me on to seventh grade novels, and I am excited to get started! Other students are getting on the Reading Plus online program or working on the class novel. My teacher let me decide which novel I wanted to work on, but that doesn't mean that everyone is reading the same thing. Today, I am working on my pre-reading assignments for my chosen book, *The Outsiders*. I need to research information about the author and the setting on my iPad. My teacher is walking around helping students as they need assistance. I like that I can ask her questions without having to stop her teaching from the front of the classroom.

## **Afternoon**

I am finishing up my thoughts as the bell rings, so I put my things away and stop on my way out the door to clarify one last thing with my teacher. I am then off to my sixth grade science class. We have a variety of online programs that go along with what we are learning. Some days we work on the Study Island program, which reviews us over science topics we are studying. Other days, we use Achieve 3000, which tests us over informational reading related to science material. Today, however, we are working on the IQWST program, in which my teacher is preparing to do a demonstration to our class over chemistry. She is explaining the states of matter by heating and cooling menthol crystals on a hot plate. After watching and listening to the demonstration, we pull out our iPads and record lab information within the IQWST program. When finished, we submit our work electronically.

When the bell rings, I head back to my locker for my final, and favorite, class of the day, math! We have block scheduling for math at the middle school, so I get to have my math class for the next two class periods. And it is self-paced, so I get to move ahead with the material if I understand it.

Upon entering my math class, I notice the bell ringer on the smart board up front. It is a problem from Unit 7, and I remember how to do it, even though I finished Unit 7 right after Christmas break. I work the problem on my iPad using the Educreations app, and then listen as she goes over it. After bell ringer, my teacher gives us the go-ahead to start on our units. Kids break off into small groups around the room, and some even go out into the hall to work. I am currently working on the first unit of 7<sup>th</sup> grade math, but I was the only one finished in my class, so I decided to stay in my same 6<sup>th</sup> grade class, but work on the 7<sup>th</sup> grade material. My teacher used to teach 7<sup>th</sup> grade math, so I know I can get help from her if I get stuck. I watch the instructional video over ratios, proportions, and rates, and take notes on my guided notes page. I then refer to my unit checklist to see which activity I need to do to practice what I have learned. It says to do the attached activity on comparing equivalent ratios, so I find that in my unit material and complete it. I get the answer key when finished and check my work, making note of any that I missed so I can rework those and ask for help

if I need it. After checking my work, I move on to the next lesson on the checklist and follow those directions. As I am working, my teacher asks me if I could stop for a minute and help a small group having trouble with 6<sup>th</sup> grade geometry. I am happy to help, and it helps me review the things I have already studied. I love this type of classroom because I feel like I can move on when I understand the material, and I don't have to wait on the whole class. However, I am still offered a lot of one-on-one help if I need it. I am also given the opportunity to help others, which I really like to do.



As the end-of-the-day bell rings, I gather my things and put my calculator away. I have to travel back down to the elementary school because I have academic team and play practice this afternoon.

### **After School and Evening**

When I get back to the elementary, I head up to the top floor where the academic team meets. I eat a quick snack and then jump into a quick recall match. They asked one question that I knew in particular because I had studied it in my 6<sup>th</sup> grade science class. I feel good about being on our academic team because I feel like we have an advantage over other teams because a lot of us bump up to higher classes.

After a few rounds of quick recall, I am pulled away to practice on the future problem solving team, of which I am one of the captains. We discuss the topic of propaganda and then go over the six-step problem solving process used in competition. Before I know it, it is 4:15; time for play practice!

I go down one flight of stairs to get to the music room where the rest of the cast have already gathered and started rehearsing. My part is coming up, so I sing my solo and the director helps me with my choreography. I really enjoy singing and the part that I am playing is a perfect fit for my voice!

At 5:00 play practice is over and I head to the front entrance to wait for my ride. On the way out of the music room, the teacher reminds us that we have choir practice tomorrow morning at 7:30am. As I am walking to the front entrance, I meet the Student Lighthouse Team sponsor, and she wants to schedule a time to meet with me to go over the next meeting's agenda. Since I am the president of the of the Student Lighthouse Team, it is my responsibility to run the meetings, and we have one coming up at the end of this week. I make a mental note to tell my mom about this, and I look for her vehicle out of the window. I see her pull up, and I go out to meet her.

On the way home, I remember to tell my mom about both choir and scheduling a meeting with the Lighthouse Team sponsor, as well as how my day went. When I get home, I am glad that I do not have any homework to work on, as I have had a long day. That is another benefit of having several self-paced classes. I know that I can always work ahead at home because I have access to their material online. However, I think I will unwind with a good book today instead. After all, I think I have earned it!