

Today marks the end of the seventh week since the school closures have been in effect. My family at home has adjusted to all of the changes pretty well, most of the time. My children do their school work, talk with friends on the phone or online, and any rules I used to have about screen time limits have gone out the window. We go on bike rides, walks with the dogs, and have family game night several times a week. My family is healthy, and for that, I am grateful.

But I miss school. I miss our kids learning and playing, our teachers finding new ways to make learning fun and connecting with students in whatever ways work, our staff who work so hard to keep our school clean, safe, and running smoothly, and our parents who see the value in collaborating to raise their kids, OUR kids, together.

This week was hard. At one of the bus stops for meal deliveries, I saw a little guy who, upon seeing me, screamed my name, and ran toward me, full speed, arms outstretched. I had to choke back the lump in my throat and remind him that I can't give him a hug right now, that it's not safe. We decided on an "air hug" instead. And my heart broke, right there.

School is about so much more than reading, math, and writing. It's about connecting with children, about helping our kids learn who they are, how they learn, and what they love in the world. Students can get information anywhere, really. But that is not what school is for, it's only the smallest tip of the iceberg. We are all learning together, every day. We thrive off of the side conversations, that show that a child trusts us enough to share a bit of themselves. And we share a bit of ourselves- and all are changed, for the better.

Realizing how much I missed our kids, I asked a few of our teachers if I could join their classroom Zoom meetings, to see some sweet faces, to listen to them talk about their cat (or sister, or cupcake), to read them some silly poetry. And it was fantastic! Not as great as seeing hundreds of our kids every day, but in this new normal, being able to visit class meetings helps to remind me why I love school, and how much I can't wait to get back to seeing our kids again.

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