

Dear KSDS MS Parents and Students,

You are amazing. It's as simple as that. We are so appreciative of the KSDS Middle School students and parents for their willingness to jump into the home learning with us this week. It has been a week of new experiences and challenging changes, and the community has unbelievably risen to the occasion. And through it all, excellence in education at KSDS has continued all week. **We know, from the many wonderful emails we have received from parents, that you join us in expressing particular gratitude and awe for the unbelievably fantastic Middle School teachers who have done all, and more, for our students' continued learning.**

Thank you for the feedback you have provided as we navigate the beginning of home learning, particularly about workload and complexity of schedule. Since home learning will be our long-term reality for the next many weeks, we have created a **NEW MIDDLE SCHOOL BLOCK CLASS SCHEDULE FOR HOME LEARNING**. We will begin this new schedule on Monday 3/23 (see next page for links to each grade-level's schedule).

This new schedule takes into account feedback from parents, students and teachers for:

- **streamlining schedules/work, structuring the day, spreading out workload**
  - clear division of which subjects have new assignments/class meeting periods on which days
  - more time to complete most assignments
  - suggestion from school of what classwork/homework to work on at what times each day (not required, but suggested)
    - if teachers notify students that a live Zoom class is scheduled for their class period that day, participating in the live Zoom class is required.
    - if there is no live Zoom class scheduled for a period, students can still choose to pace their work each day the way they want, but we have provided a suggested classwork schedule to give structure to the day.
    - if a student cannot attend a scheduled live Zoom class (sick, tech issue, etc.), student or parents should email teacher in advance to explain absence
    - Classes may still assign “homework” between days that the class meets on the schedule (e.g. reading chapters/taking notes, practicing what was taught in math or Hebrew during live class, working on writing assignment, etc.). Teachers are being mindful of the workload overall, and there should be time in the daily schedule for some “homework” to be completed as well.
- **greater consistency of schedule**
  - Same class schedule Mon and Wed; same class schedule Tue and Thur. Friday classes meet at same time as rest of week. Math meets at same time M-F, including office hours for extra help on Wednesdays.

- all assignments for a particular day posted to Google Classroom by 8am that day
- all assignments due completed by 8am the next day the class meets (unless a teacher indicates a later due date)
- **greater ease of live Zoom call scheduling**
  - teachers will still post on Google Classroom the class assignment PRIOR to a scheduled live Zoom class so students can note on their schedules
- **additional experiences to continue to educate the “whole child”**
  - **Recess with Shannon/Dan (optional, but highly encouraged!)**
    - 7th/8th grade on Mon/Wed 12:30-12:55 (see Zoom link on schedule)
    - 5th/6th grade on Tue/Thu 12:30-12:55 (see Zoom link on schedule)
  - **Tefillah (required) - keeping our spiritual connection with each other & God**
    - Wednesday mornings, by grade-level (see Zoom links on schedule)
    - Friday afternoons for Ta’am Shabbat (see Zoom link on schedule)

### Suggestions for parents:

- **Please keep your middle schooler’s new MS Block Class Schedule in an easy-to-access place. Print and post on the fridge or keep a link in your computer to refer to regularly.**
  - 5th Grade MS Block Schedule for Home Learning Weeks
  - 6th Grade MS Block Schedule for Home Learning Weeks
  - 7th Grade MS Block Schedule for Home Learning Weeks
  - 8th Grade MS Block Schedule for Home Learning Weeks
- Whenever your middle schooler is notified by the teacher of a live Zoom class being scheduled during a class period, note it on your schedule so he/she remembers to attend! Because of curricular demands, live Zoom sessions might not be the same day from week to week, but they will always take place during that subject’s assigned day/time on the new schedule.
- Parents and students: since more Zoom live classes will be occurring, please review these [KSDS Zoom Behavior Guidelines](#) that we want middle schoolers to follow
- If your middle schooler is overwhelmed by receiving every Google Classroom notification in his/her email inbox, [click here for instructions to turn off some notifications](#) (optional!).
- Please remind your middle school student about patience in communication:
  - There are times when teachers are teaching other classes or engaged with other students and might not be able to respond to email right away.
  - Please be patient and know faculty are responding as quickly as possible.
  - If students are waiting for answers from a teacher about a particular assignment, we encourage them to ask a classmate or to move on to other material until they hear back from the teacher.
  - If more than 12 hours have passed without a response, please then email again.
  - Please note that we ask families not to email teachers on Shabbat (Friday sundown through 1 hour after Saturday sundown). School staff will send responses within 24 hours after Shabbat ends.

Thank you. We look forward to next week feeling a bit less frenetic, with some added structure and streamlining to help all of us in this new phase of learning. We are very privileged to be part of this wonderful KSDS community.

**By the way - if you want to have a copy or two of Siddur Sim Shalom in your home for middle schoolers to use during our Zoom tefillah sessions, please stop by Chizuk Amuno today, while following social distancing guidelines. Friday, March 20, from 10:30am-1:00pm there will be copies available under the awning of our main entrance.**

Shabbat Shalom,

Dr. Robyn Blum

Ms. Karen Booth

Rabbi Moshe Schwartz