



Graham Expeditionary Middle School 2014-2015 Annual Report

Our Mission

As a member of The Graham Family of Schools, GEMS prepares students for academic success, self-direction, lifelong learning, and commitment to community by providing intentional learning experiences that foster imagination, discovery, problem solving skills, and growing independence. With a particular mission to serve urban students, GEMS is a supportive community where students learn to care for themselves, each other and the natural world. As a school that values generosity, stewardship, and service, GEMS nurtures not only students' academic growth and confidence but also their development as compassionate citizens of a global world.

Habits of Learning, that thread through all that we do are: Responsibility, Perseverance, Quality, Teamwork, and Thoughtfulness.

Governing Authority

GEMS is chartered in the state of Ohio and is overseen by the Ohio Department of Education. Our sponsor, the Educational Service Center of Central Ohio (ESCCO), provides additional oversight. The GEMS Board of Directors provides governance, meeting a minimum of six times per year. A schedule of meeting dates and times, as well as a record of actions taken, are kept in the school's office and are available for review by the public. Board members in 2014-15 included: **Sara Neikirk**, President; **Angela Stoller-Zervas**, Vice President and Treasurer; **Mari Sunami**, Secretary; **Lisa Chambers**, **Kitty King**, and **Kara Penniman**. GEMS partners with Expeditionary Learning, a national network of schools and educators, with a vision of student success that combines academic achievement, character education, and high-quality work.

Experiential Education Curriculum

Expeditionary Learning (EL) provides school leaders and teachers with professional development, curriculum planning resources, and new school structures to boost student engagement, character, and achievement. EL exists in over 152 schools in over 39 states nationwide. The EL model is a proven success in supporting schools in developing a positive school culture and higher achievement scores when compared to the school districts in which they exist.

Expeditions 2014-2015

Adventure and Survival – Guiding questions include the following: How can you survive an adventure? What makes a person a survivor? An adventurer? Students looked at literature, events in history and science projects that sought to answer these questions. Watt's My Impact? – A look into the environmental impact we have on the world and an examination of energy sources. Around the World in 60 Days – Students explored foreign cultures, world religions and histories in this journey beyond Columbus. When Cultures Collide – Students studied the Cape Verde Islands in West Africa, worked with the Columbus Global Academy and published a book of narratives on the stories of peers who have experienced a different culture than ours for most of their life. 1908 – Students looked at the era when our historic building was erected and studied issues of the day including the work environment, labor unions, and inventors of the time. Vernal Pools – In partnership with Glacier Ridge Met-

ro Park, students studied the impact of vernal pools on our ecosystem. GEMS students traveled four times to the metro park to work with a naturalist to collect and catalogue data on salamander eggs, tree frogs and a variety of invertebrates. Vote with Your Fork: Using The Omnivore's Dilemma as the expedition's anchor text, students examined the history of food and the process of where our food comes from in getting to our tables. Fieldwork included visiting local grocers and farms. At the end of the term students presented a Ted Talk where they argued why a chosen food chain is the best to feed this ever-growing world population. The Evolution of the Revolution. Students read and learned about the American Revolution. Literature focused on individual experiences during this time period and the struggles in a developing country. The culmination of student work came in a three act play in which all 8th grade students took a part in performing. How We Roll. Students kicked off the trimester with a mini conference in which representatives from 5 local bike-related non-profit organizations and bike stores came to present to students in workshop style. Students learned about simple machines throughout the term and spent fieldwork at BikeSource to learn the basics of bike repair as well as fueling a bike-powered generator. The culminating project included a bike expo in which students presented their research to a large audience in our gym.



Celebrating our Work

Students exhibited work from expeditions during our Celebrations of Learning each Trimester. These included an end-of-the-year 6th grade celebration for their work throughout the year at the Grange Insurance Audubon Center, a 7th grade presentation of their pen-pal narratives to students at The Global Academy and, an 8th grade bicycle safety exposition.

At the end of each term, an awards ceremony is planned. Students are recognized from each grade level for their contribution to the GEMS community as leaders. Awards include the Exemplary Citizen Award, the Expedition Leader Award and The Golden Ruler Award. GEMS also recognizes students who show more than 10 points of growth on their MAP assessments from Fall to Winter and from Winter to Spring.

Parent Volunteers

Many parent volunteers assisted with a fall clean-up day, two middle school dances, fieldwork, and the annual TGFS event Have a Heart, a fund raiser for all of the TGFS entities. GEMS partnered with GPS to have a combined FTO meetings and events – together they hosted the Food Truckathon, as a fundraiser and a way to celebrate Every Kid Healthy Week.



Financial Status

In fiscal year 2014-15 the school received \$1,165,080 in state funds. The school also received \$235,898 in federal funds and \$25,267 in development funds, among other separated categories. Sources of income totaled \$1,575,895. In fiscal year 2014-15 the school paid for employee salaries and benefits including payroll taxes and retirement through The Graham School, GEMS's financial manager and paid \$85,273 in lease payments to Columbus City Schools for the use of the 16th Avenue building. Uses, including the aforementioned items along with classroom support expenses, utilities, insurance and assorted services to and purchases for the school, totaled \$1,522,093 in expenses. When

the current cash in bank was added to the sources, the year-end adjusted cash balance was \$53,802 to be carried over to 2015-16. The school conducts its own on-going internal financial audit under the direction of its Board Audit Committee and treasurer Brian Adams, MBA, CMA, CFM, CGFM. Finances also were audited by the school's sponsor, The Educational Service Center of Central Ohio. And, the school is audited annually under the auspices of the State of Ohio Auditor's Office. All found the finances to be accurately and appropriately accounted for. The school also received the Auditor of State Award for filing timely financial reports and having a "clean" audit.



Graham Expeditionary Middle School

Performance Standards

GEMS uses the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Assessments at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year to correctly place, evaluate and support student work. MAP also captures an additional objective data set to evaluate academic growth in relation to the state mandated value added measure. A variety of assessments are given in the classroom throughout the year to measure Learning Targets met. At the end of each trimester students make presentations demonstrating their learning. GEMS also started an internal assessment calendar for teachers to administer interims halfway through and at the end of each trimester to help inform their teaching and assess student learning. The GEMS staff meets in data teams throughout the year evaluate student progress as well as set teaching and learning goals.

Assessment Results

- Students in the state of Ohio were required to take the new PARCC and AIR tests. GEMS administered PARCC assessments for ELA and Math for 6th, 7th, and 8th graders, and the AIR assessment in Science for 8th graders and Social Studies assessment for 6th graders.
- GEMS administered AIR Science to 62 8th graders and 50% scored proficient or higher. 41 6th graders took AIR Social Studies and 20% scored proficient or higher.
- 43 6th grade students took PARCC ELA and 33% scored proficient or higher; 42 6th grade students took PARCC Math and 43% scored proficient or higher.
- 47 7th grade students took PARCC ELA and 62% scored proficient or higher; 47 7th grade students took PARCC Math and 49% scored proficient or higher.
- 62 8th grade students took PARCC ELA and 61% scored proficient or higher; and 62 8th grade students took PARCC Math and 66% scored proficient or higher.

Staff for the 2014-15 school year

Debbie Addison	Director of Advancement
Hadley Bachman	Language Arts
Greg Brown	Co-Superintendent, CEO
Cathy Carrico	Business Administrative Assistant
Tracy Carson	Social Studies
Brittani Davis	Intervention Specialist
Cassie Farrell	Reading and Math
Olivia Farrell	Aide
Jeff Grunewald	IT Manager
Jisuka Hessler	Social Studies
Alicia Koester	Language Arts and Science
James Kutnow	Dean and Director
Jamie Lenzo	Director of Special Education
Katie Logan	Business Administration Assistant
Cheryl Long	Business Administrator
A'Leah Martin	Front Desk
Eileen Meers	Co-Superintendent, CEO
Myra Molnar	Dean, Instructional Guide
Wesley Owens	Adventure Education
Adam Philpott	Science
Dawn Ramsey	Science, Math
Cynthia Tishue	Science and Social Studies
Jennifer Waddell	Development Coordinator
Stephanie Waldeck	Math
Dakia Washington	Intervention Specialist
Leah Wegesin	Counselor
Jeff Wiseman	Network Engineer

GEMS is a member of an OAPCS Consortium that received a 5 year Straight A grant to fund the use of Illuminate, an IIS system enabling teachers to collect and use classroom data efficiently and effectively.

GEMS completed its 5th and final year as a Race To The Top School reaching its RTTT goals.





Academic Curriculum Requirements

Our focus is on preparing students for high school by helping all of our students achieve or supersede grade level expectations in math, reading and writing. Academic and Expeditionary curriculum are aligned to OhioCore and Common Core standards.



Special Accomplishments/Achievements

GEMS is a member of The Graham Family of Schools and in partnership with Expeditionary Learning (EL). GEMS successfully delivers curriculum and expeditions for each of its three trimesters complete with fieldwork, partnerships with professionals and professional organizations, Celebration of Learning events and student-led conferences.

GEMS continues to enjoy its home near The Ohio State University, partnering with multiple OSU programs including: OSU Honors & Scholars' (Adopt a School provides over 100 undergraduate students as volunteer tutors); The Office of Student Life ("Stories for Students" providing each GEMS student with a new book); and Art Education 252 (holds class at GEMS in collaboration with GEMS students). GEMS also partnered with The Office of Student Wellness who helped to collaborate in the Action for Healthy Kids Every Kid Healthy celebration. A new partnership between GEMS, Columbus City Schools and The Ohio State University Department of Teaching and Learning is bringing the OSU Reading Clinic as well as OSU courses and student interns to the GEMS site. The Center for Teaching Learning (CTL) will be housed at GEMS, the hub for the partnership, while planning proceeds for satellite hubs in additional Columbus neighborhoods.

Thank you!

We gratefully acknowledge the following generous individuals who help make our work possible:

Shirley Brown
Kent and Sally Johnson
Barbara Lehman
Craig Morris
Corinna Owens
Negla Ross
Angela Stoller-Zervas

Cindy Tishue
Sonya Yencer

All of the generous individuals who supported Have a Heart through volunteering, donating, purchasing auction items, attending, and sponsoring the event.