



## Graham Expeditionary Middle School 2013-2014 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.

### Governing Authority

Graham Expeditionary Middle School (GEMS) is chartered in the state of Ohio and as such, is overseen by the Ohio Department of Education. Our sponsor is the Educational Service Center of Central Ohio (ESCCO). 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 2013-14 included: Sara Neikirk, President; Angela Stoller-Zervas, Vice President and Treasurer; Mari Sunami, Secretary; Lisa Chambers, and Kitty King. GEMS partners with Expeditionary Learning (EL), a national network of schools and educators, that provides support and innovative curriculum with a vision of student success that combines academic achievement, character, and high-quality work.

### Experiential Education Curriculum

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. What'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 explore foreign cultures, world religions and histories in this journey beyond Columbus, OH. 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 different cultures than ours for most of their life. 1908 – Students studied the era when our historic building was erected focusing on issues of the day including the work environment, labor unions, and inventors. Vernal Pools – In partnership with Glacier Ridge MetroPark, students studied the impact of vernal pools on our ecosystem. Students traveled four times to the park to work with a naturalist in collecting and cataloging data on salamander eggs, tree frogs and a variety of invertebrates. Is There Anybody Out There? – An exploration into space, space travel and the connection to our future and the galaxy beyond. Students visited the John Glenn Archive Library and presented their final products in the public lecture hall at the OSU John Glenn School of Public Policy. The Evolution of the Revolution - Students read

and learned about the American Revolution. Literature focused on individual experiences and the struggles of a developing country. The culmination of student work was a three act play in which all 8th grade students took part in performing a revolution story. 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 presented 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.





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## Assessments

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 assessments 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 to evaluate student progress as well as set teaching and learning goals.

GEMS administers the Ohio Achievement Assessments (OAA) each spring. In the 2013-2014 state report card GEMS received a C for its performance index and saw two of a possible seven standards met on the OAA. There is much praise to be given to the hard work of the GEMS staff as it is a tough task to get our student body to the 80% proficiency in each of the Ohio Achievement Assessments, but that is the benchmark to which we are held and strive for each year. However, we see a good amount of movement of our students in another rating that is titled, Value-Added.

According to the Ohio Department of Education, Value-Added is a statistical method that helps educators measure the impact schools and teachers have on student academic progress rates from year to year. In other words, it is the measurement of how students make progress while they are a GEMS student. In our four years, students who have attended GEMS two and especially three years have made incredible growth and are at nearly 100% proficiency on the state assessments.

Only one other community/charter school in Franklin County received this same triple A rating for progress and GEMS was the only one with at least some proficiency levels met on the OAA.



## 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 of 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.

## Parent Group and Athletics

Many parent volunteers assisted with a fall clean-up day, two middle school dances, and the annual TGFS event Have a Heart, a fund raiser for all of the TGFS entities.

Students participated in a boy's and girl's basketball team in partnership with the Central Ohio Community Involvement Foundation.

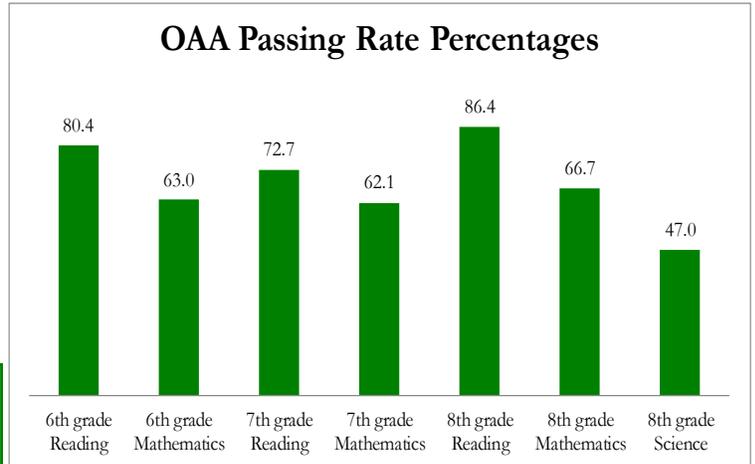
## Financial Status

In fiscal year 2013-14 the school received \$1,380,969 in state funds. The school also received \$197,028 in federal funds and \$12,264 in development funds, among other separated categories. Sources of income totaled \$1,701,627. In fiscal year 2013-14 the school paid for employee salaries and benefits including payroll taxes and retirement through The Graham School, GEMS's financial manager: and paid \$84,950 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 \$1,666,823 in expenses. When the current cash in bank was added to the sources, the year-end adjusted cash balance was \$50,373 to be carried over to 2014-15. 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.

## OAA Results

This year's report card rating for GEMS included an A in Overall Value-Added, an A in Students with Disabilities, and an A in Lowest 20% in Achievement. What does this mean? These three A's are one aspect that helps demonstrate that the philosophy of GEMS and its work with Expeditionary Learning works. Our inclusion classrooms and differentiation for all types of learners have helped to give GEMS an overall triple A rating for progress. Further, the Value-Added scores received in 7th grade were either at or above the standard growth rate and in all areas for 8th grade were well above the standard growth rate!

GEMS completed its 4th year as a Race To The Top School receiving funds and guidance from Ohio Department of Education. GEMS reached all of its RTTT goals.



## Staff for the 2013-14 school year

Debbie Addison	Director of Advancement
Hadley Bachman	Language Arts
Jocelyn Bestic	Long-term Sub
Greg Brown	Executive Dean of Academics and Administration, Principal
Cathy Carrico	Business Administrative Assistant
Paige Chapman-Layland	Lunch Program
Brittani Davis	Intervention Specialist
Doug Desiderio-Finley	Intervention Specialist
Cassie Farrell	Reading Specialist
Jeff Grunewald	IT Manager
Jisuka Hessler	Social Studies
Sean Joseph	Social Studies, Language Arts
James Kutnow	Dean and Director
Katie Logan	Business Administration Assistant
Cheryl Long	Business Administrator
A'Leah Martin	Front Desk
Scott McMullen	Educational Data Analyst
Eileen Meers	Superintendent, Executive Dean of Students

Myra Molnar	Dean, Instructional Guide
Kathryn-Jean Mowery	Science
Dawn Ramsey	Science, Math
Lauren Schell	School Counselor
Rachelle Smith	Art
Andrew Sweigard	Social Studies
Cynthia Tishue	Science
Jennifer Waddell	Development Coordinator
Stephanie Waldeck	Math
Dakia Washington	Intervention Specialist
Jeff Wiseman	Network Engineer





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## Outstanding Students

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.

## 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. We strive to see our students advance, well-prepared, to high school. 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 150 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). A new initiative included partnering with The Office of Student Wellness who helped to collaborate in the Action for Healthy Kids celebration of Every Kid Healthy Week. In the last week of May, GEMS was the recipient of the Play it Forward initiative in which the OSU Football Team dedicated an entire day to installing over \$20,000 in equipment and improvements to the GEMS indoor and outdoor recreation facilities.

## Donors

We gratefully acknowledge the following donors:

Margaret H. Ackley  
Mrs. Shirley Brown  
Kellie Gedert  
Kent and Sally Johnson  
Daniel Lally

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