



Collaboration & Competition

Some of the best work is done in groups. Some of the hardest work is also done in groups. At GEMS, we believe that there is value in collaboration & competition, one of Expeditionary Learning’s 10 design principles. An example of this took place as students worked hard on their roller coaster project in order to meet the learning targets in science class. The belief that we can learn in collaboration with others *and* in competition with ourselves (not other students or other groups) provides an atmosphere that encourages a focused and strong work ethic as well as the necessity of overcoming unforeseen obstacles. Through this specific project, students were able to meet these challenges and bring together what they learned in math and science regarding energy and slope.



Graham Expeditionary Middle School

www.GEMSschool.org

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A Member of The Graham Family of Schools
In Partnership with Expeditionary Learning Schools



Ohio Achievement Assessments

On April 27-29, GEMS students will be taking the OAAs. Please see the tips below to help your student to do their best:

1. Get a good night's sleep

Help your student to be alert by assisting in helping them get at least 8 hours of sleep. Don't let them stay up late this week!

2. Eat breakfast

A hungry stomach often is a distraction and even keeps us from thinking clearly at times. Feed your student before they leave for school!

3. Come prepared

Pack a good pencil (sharpened with an eraser) or two! Students who are prepared have less to worry about and can feel confident in doing their best.

4. Take it seriously

Although GEMS tries not to "teach to the test", the scores do matter. Along with MAP scores, we use them to help us determine grade level indicators. We also use them, if necessary, to contribute to conversations regarding final student grades for those in danger of passing or failing. Help your students realize that these are important tests!

3rd Trimester: Our Carbon Footprint

The focus of our final trimester for the 2011-2012 school year is on our impact on the environment. Early in the term we were able to visit the Grange Insurance Audubon Center in south Columbus. The site is a great place to watch birds and go on hikes, but we went to tour the building because it is a Certified Green Building. Students learned about their rooftop garden, drainage system, rain garden, impervious surfaces, recycled building materials, window treatments, sundial, toilet choice, composting and other aspects that contribute to the intentional methods for making the building an environmentally friendly one. Later this term, students will go on fieldwork experiences that will provide them with the chance to visit multiple alternative energy resources, the process for living off the land and a comparison of the environmental impacts of life in the mid-19th century and today.



Top right: The Grange Insurance Audubon Center; middle right: GEMS students posing by a sculpture made from used plastic grocery bags; bottom right: Kyra Tubbs, GEMS 7th Grader, looking through a microscope.

Focus on Crew: Bullying

A strong emphasis of the past couple of months has engaged the issue of bullying. With the cooperation of two OSU professors, we created a series of Crew curriculum plans to engage students in the perception and negative roles that bullying has in schools in general. We watched a documentary of middle school student perspectives on bullying and eventually had students create a school-wide plan for dealing with bullying. Although we will continue to have issues needing addressed, we feel as if we have made significant strides in the education and student responsibility level in issues of bullying. This is an important topic that we will continue to raise with our students as we make efforts to make GEMS a culture of quality and a safe school for each child.



<p>Upcoming Dates</p> <p>Information Enrollment Sessions</p> <p>Spread the news! We have just three more Enrollment nights before summer! Tell your friends about us! We are going to grow in size over the next two years and the best recommendation comes from current students and families.</p> <p>May 4th - 6pm @ GEMS May 18th - 6pm @ GEMS June 1st - 6pm @ GEMS</p>	<p>April</p>	<p>16 - 24 Spring Break</p>	<p>26 School resumes on Tuesday and ends Spring Break</p>
	<p>27 Progress reports are mailed home</p>	<p>27-29 Ohio Achievement Assessments</p>	<p>29 Fieldwork & Community Service</p>
	<p>May</p>	<p>3 Fieldwork - Slate Run MetroPark</p>	<p>5 Fieldwork - O'Shaughnessy Dam, Evening Street Elementary School, Byers Auto</p>
	<p>7 No school - Professional Development</p>	<p>25 Fieldwork - Swaco Recycling Plant</p>	<p>30 No School - Memorial Day</p>

My Favorite Teacher

Congratulations to Hailee Walker (GEMS 7th grade student) and Ms. Hessler. Hailee wrote an inspiring poem and submitted it to Barnes & Noble for their 2010-2011 My Favorite Teacher poem/essay competition. Hailee's poem was chosen for the Easton Barnes & Noble store. As a result, Hailee was given a certificate and Ms. Hessler received a certificate and a set of books from Barnes & Noble. The judges picked a winner based on the following criteria: compelling nature of teacher's inspiring qualities, sincerity of student's appreciation, and the quality of expression and writing. On Wednesday, April 12th, Judy Folten, Community Relations Manager of the Easton Barnes & Noble presented Hailee and Ms. Hessler with their awards. The poem will be automatically submitted to the regional competition with potential for the national winner.



Mrs. Molnar reads the winning poem to the GEMS community



Ms. Hessler and Hailee Walker listen to Mrs. Molnar

\$15

\$15

Yearbooks for sale!

Order your copy of the 2010-2011 GEMS yearbook now! Each book is \$15. Cash or checks made payable to GEMS can be brought into the office for a receipt and to reserve your yearbook. They will be completed and ready for pick up by the end of May! Keep a lasting memory of this school year! Each yearbook is in full color with pictures from the first 2 trimesters!!!



Amy Heath, OSU Doctoral Student

GEMS is pleased to inform you of our participation in an OSU pilot study by Mrs. Amy Heath, under the supervision of Dr. Caroline Clark, during April and May 2011. The research is an investigation of Adolescent Literacies in an Expeditionary Learning Middle School. Amy will be observing our normal school day in classes, crews, meetings, and field work during this time. The goal of the research is to learn more about youth and their uses of reading and writing at GEMS. A

letter explaining this study in more detail has been sent along with this newsletter for your reference.

Amy also has previous work experience as a student advisor for The Graham School and as a teacher at an EL middle school in Bend, Oregon. We are excited how her experiences and research will enhance our efforts at GEMS.

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