

Expeditions at Greenfield: Kindergarten - 2nd Grade

Goals: In the long term, the goal of the kindergarten - 2nd grade expeditions program is to offer a series of signature experiences that transform students' life trajectories by exposing them to new ideas, interests, colleges, and careers. In the short term, expeditions seek to spark students' curiosity by challenging them to take a deep dive on a topic connected to the grade's curriculum, develop rich vocabulary and content knowledge related to the subject, and share their learnings with the community. The program's two goals are:

1. Inspiration - Students are inspired and motivated by their expeditions
2. Excellence - Students create and present top quality products and performances.

To do this, students in expeditions:

1. Build world knowledge and deepen their sense of place by learning in authentic new contexts, both inside and outside of the school building.
2. Exercise choice in the way they execute their final presentation or product.
3. Practice the Life Habits in real-world situations; they can fail, try again, reflect, and grow.
4. Publicly present and celebrate their work with their families and school community.

Program Structure:

- **Timing** - Expedition are two weeks long, and Greenfield schools typically have 3 Expedition cycles each year (fall, winter, spring). Expeditions run for 2 hours each day, and students continue with core academic classes for the other half of the day.
- **Field Lessons** - During the two weeks, students go on at least two field lessons where they interact with living things and authentic technology, hear from and question experts, and practice the multimodal skills that will be featured in the showcase.
- **Showcase** - At the end of the expedition, students present their final products and performances for the the school community, families and professionals.
- **Expeditions Topics** - Specific topics are published each year in the Expeditions Course Catalog. Some of the previous offerings include:
 - **Chinese Traditions** - First grade students work with a Tai Chi master to learn six forms of Tai Chi. Students also learn how to do Chinese calligraphy, creating meaning with bamboo paint brushes and rice paper. Printmakers teach students how to make styrofoam stamps out of their characters, another Chinese tradition. At the showcase, classes perform the Tai Chi forms for their families and teach them how to do the forms themselves. Then, scholars present their artwork and show their family members how to make their own Chinese artistic creations.
 - **Clothing of Native Americans and Colonial Townspeople** - Kindergarteners investigate fabrics and garments from local Native Americans and colonial townspeople. Guest educators from the Pequot Museum introduce students to fabrics common in Native American clothing, like fur, animal skin, and wampum beads, and the types of garments, like moccasins and cloaks, for which those materials are used. Visiting the Windham Textile Mill Museum, students study colonial era fabrics such as cotton, wool, and linen, and explore looms and learn how to spin thread and weave a basket. For the showcase, students create mini textile sculptures, and explain the origins and uses of the fabrics and garments.

Key Principles

- **Curriculum Connection:** Each topic for K-2 expeditions builds off a subject students had been studying in science (K-2), TRD (K-1), or humanities (2).
- **Critique & Revision:** To drive high quality products and personal growth, students engage in a process of iteration with the aid of teacher, peer, and self-critique.
- **Multimodal Learning:** Experiential learning and questioning are at the heart of Expeditions. In addition to traditional modes of learning (reading, writing), Expeditions include experimentation, observation, construction, play, practice, collaboration, and expert visits.

- **Portfolios and Reflection:** Examples of students' expeditions work are stored in an electronic or physical portfolio. Students, along with goal team coaches, reference portfolio work to reflect on progress over the student's year and academic career.