

Expeditions at Greenfield: 3rd-6th Grade

Goals: In the long term, the goal of 3-6 grade expeditions program is to be 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 delve into a real-world issue or challenge, generate creative solutions, and share their work 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 selecting topics they would like to explore and completing projects that interest them.
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 3 hours each day, and students continue with core academic classes for the other half of the day.
- **Course Offerings** - Specific offerings will be published each year in the Expeditions Course Catalog. Some of the previous offering include:
 - **Building & Architecture** - Students worked in teams to create detailed proposals for a real-life school expansion project in New Haven. Proposals included space plans (to scale), construction budgets and calendars, and materials/design choices. Highlights included visiting a glass factory and the construction site for a new Yale dormitory, and simulated experiences with building and fire inspectors!
 - **Changemakers** - Students partnered with elders at a local convalescent home to take action on a local social change issue: neighborhood gentrification and fair housing. Identifying locuses of power and privilege, students were empowered to have their voices heard by organizing a protest march and facilitating a community discussion.
 - **3D Design: Happy Birds** - Students became bird nerds, able to identify local bird species, their biological features and feeding patterns. They then used computer-design programs and 3D printers to model bird feeders to help local birds survive the winter months.
- **Field Lessons** - During the two weeks, students go on at least two field lessons where they interview experts, complete field research, and visit sites to have new experiences and deepen their learning.
- **Showcase** - At the end of the expedition, students present their final products and performances for the the school community, families and professionals.

Key Principles

- **Driving Challenge or Issue:** An immediate challenge or real-world issue pushes students to apply prior knowledge and skills in new contexts and inspires students to strive, stretch and grow.
- **Critique & Revision:** To drive a high quality product 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, field research, collaboration, and expert visits.

- **Reflections, Rubrics & Portfolios:** Students and teachers reflect on student work based on rubrics. Students also write a self-reflection that they present during Dream Team meetings.