Dear GEMS Families,

Over the past two weeks, the GEMS crew has worked hard to prepare for learning together this year, and cannot wait to get started on Tuesday, September 8th! Classes will look and feel a little different online and we are still committed to the characteristics of teaching and learning that make GEMS, GEMS. Some of these characteristics include:

- **Expeditions** - Prioritizing learning experiences that connect students to real-world issues and challenges that are relevant, urgent, and meaningful to them and our community.

- **Depth over Breadth** - We spent time digging into research and identifying the power standards across subject areas that are most critical to students’ success. To identify these power standards we evaluated all standards using three key research-based criteria: readiness, leverage, and endurance. Power standards are not the only ones students will uncover this year, but they will be our guide as we prioritize depth of learning rather than breadth.

- **Active Learning** - We know that active learning and participation are critical factors for deep learning. We are using technology platforms and have designed protocols that provide opportunities for students to interact and participate. Students will not be passive listeners, but active participants and leaders in their own learning.

- **Crew** - “We are all Crew, not passengers.” Crew is an essential component of our school community. During Crew, we focus on building relationships, foster habits of character, emotional awareness, and having fun with one another.

If you elected to enroll your student in the GEMS Virtual Academy, please note that because the entire school is participating in virtual learning to start the year, there is not a separate Virtual Academy at this time. If it becomes safe enough for us to shift to a hybrid learning model, where students spend 2-3 days a week learning in the school building, families will have the option to participate in hybrid learning or continue with all virtual, at-home learning.

**Distance Learning Schedules**

Linked below are K-4 and 5-8 student daily schedules that include both synchronous (log in together with classmates) and asynchronous work time (log in on your own to accomplish specific work). Students will access Zoom links and class assignments through Schoology, our learning management system. Families will receive Schoology login information during technology and supply pick-up and in the mail.

- **K-4 Daily Schedule** - bit.ly/gemsK4schedule
- **5-8 Daily Schedule** - bit.ly/gems58schedule

**Attendance**

We will take attendance daily for students. They will be required to attend synchronous sessions, so it will not be as lenient as it was in the Spring. We will send out the new attendance policy for our online school format to all of our GEMS families next week.

**Communication**

Communication with you during our online school format is paramount to a successful fall. We have already started to reach out to every family to answer questions, share information about the new school year, and update our database of your contact information.

Graham Elementary and Middle School
140 E. 16th Ave. Columbus, Ohio 43201    P: (614) 253-4000    F: (614) 643-5146    www.GEMSSchool.org
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information. Our three primary forms of communication are email, robocalls, and Remind (a texting service). You can also find out more about what is going on at GEMS on Instagram (@gemscolumbus) and our Facebook page (Graham Elementary and Middle School).

- If you recently moved, changed your phone number, or email address please call the GEMS office or email office@gemsschool.org to provide us with your most up to date information.
- Teachers and grade levels use Remind (a texting service) to communicate with families. Please visit the following link to sign up for your students’ class or grade to stay informed and communicate with your student’s teaching team. Remind: bit.ly/gemsmind

Technology distribution status

- We will send out the technology distribution plan next week to families who have completed the Fall Survey. Families who have filled out the Fall Survey will be notified of their day and time to pick up the technology. If you have not yet filled out the Fall Survey, please do so as soon as possible using the following link or by calling the front office and they can complete the survey with you over the phone: bit.ly/GEMSFallSurvey
- In preparation for possible remote learning, GEMS placed orders this summer for new devices to ensure that every student would have access to one. However, due to the COVID-19 impact on schools across the world, not all of our new computers will be ready for distribution until mid-September. If your family has a device your student can use in the first few weeks of school, we ask that they utilize that device until all of our new technology arrives. Once all of our technology arrives we will be one-to-one, meaning we will have a device available for each student at GEMS to use during distance and/or in-person learning.

Technology sign-on and content protections

- The school will have a web filter installed on all devices and we will be able to control it remotely. Our IT team, Jeff and Zach, receive alerts when blocked contact is attempted to be accessed. Parents will not be able to install their own web filter programs onto the computer.
- We will be utilizing a program called Clever to help with logging in to technology. Every student will be provided a QR-Code that will log into every program automatically when this code is simply held up to the device’s camera.

Breakfast and Lunches

- If you are interested in receiving meals from GEMS and have not signed up, please complete our August 2020 Questionnaire at bit.ly/GEMSFreeRedLunch.
- Our first meal pick up will be Tuesday, September 8. This is the only Tuesday that there will be meal pick up due to Labor Day. The following week we will begin our regular Monday and Wednesday meal pickups. Families will schedule a time for food pickup between 8:30am-5pm.
- Please make sure you have completed the free and reduced lunch form (bit.ly/GEMSFreeRedLunch). Families without the form or who do not qualify for free and reduced lunch will pay $3.09 per meal. You can check your status by reaching out to Dodie Thebeault in the front office at office@gemsschool.org or by calling 614-253-4000.
- If you have any questions regarding breakfast/lunch pick up, please email Montana Fout at mfout.1@gemsschool.org.

Sincerely,

GEMS Administration and Staff

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