

GREENFIELD EXPEDITIONS

Greenfield Expeditions engage 5th through 8th grade students in hands-on, real-world learning experiences that allow them to deeply explore careers and passions while building their self-awareness, community engagement, sense of pride, and personal why.

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OVERVIEW

Greenfield Expeditions have the power to transform students' life trajectories by exposing them to career pathways and passions that influence their future choices. These immersive, project-based mini-courses guide students to choose pathways in high school and college that align to genuine interests grounded in lived experience, and they equip students to enter college with deep self-knowledge and purpose, ultimately boosting their confidence and persistence. During Expeditions, students conduct research, participate in field visits, and collaborate with experts to learn deeply about a specific discipline such as marine biology, neuroscience, architecture, or

engineering. Each Expedition culminates in a school-wide, interactive showcase where students present or perform what they have learned to their families and school community.

Greenfield Expeditions are implemented across several Achievement First schools. An extensive toolkit is available to support schools who wish to adopt the practice.



What Makes This Model Innovative?



Relevance

Greenfield Expeditions expose students to real-world learning within authentic contexts, helping them develop an understanding of their personal interests and goals.



Affirmation of Self & Others

Expeditions promote self-discovery by allowing students to “try on” different careers and passions, helping them build a sense of purpose grounded in lived experience. Culminating showcases provide students opportunities to learn from and celebrate one another.



Connection & Community

Expeditions foster hands-on collaboration among peers and teachers and provide opportunities for community connection through visits to professional workplaces and consultation with experts. Showcases also invite community members to celebrate students’ learning.

DESIGN

Goals

Greenfield Expeditions are designed to provide students with the chance to deeply explore their passions, identity, and personal why, which helps them realize their best selves in school and in life. [📖 Why Expeditions?](#)

Academic Independence

Students develop a growth mindset and a narrative of self-efficacy by experiencing rapid growth during Expeditions. They make choices about their learning and presentations while navigating challenges, collaborating in groups, and managing complex tasks. Students also learn self-advocacy and help-seeking from both familiar and unfamiliar adults.

Academic Preparation

Students draw on lessons from Expeditions to help them in academic classes, particularly those related to goal setting and presenting in front of diverse audiences.

Personal Why

Students deepen their understanding of their passions and life direction by “trying on” different selves and engaging in self-reflection.

Social-Emotional Strength

Students develop greater self-awareness about how to approach learning and respond to challenging and novel contexts. They also develop a better sense of who they are as individuals and as part of a group and learn how to navigate group dynamics.

Experience

Three times per year, students spend two weeks immersed in project-based learning experiences that align to a professional career. These mini-courses follow a predictable sequence of student experiences beginning with the Greenfield Expedition launch, followed by visits to professionals in the field and visits from guest educators to the classroom, and culminating with a showcase of learning and personal reflection [Unit Plan: Neuroscience](#) See below for more details about each of these experiences.



Launch & Learn

Students participate in hands-on learning about a new topic by exploring and beginning to apply the skills required for the profession, learning key terminology, and studying examples of the work in practice. For example, after discussing examples of strong graphic design products, they spend time designing their own logos. [Launch Lesson: Graphic Design](#)

Field Visits

Students travel into their community to learn from experts within authentic professional contexts. For example, students studying astronauts might visit a science center to learn how to program a Mars rover, build replicas, and learn what is required for life to help them plan a mission to outer space.



Guest Educators

Professionals visit the classroom to share expert advice with students as they prepare for their culminating showcase. For example, students studying neuroscience might be visited by a university professor who helps them dissect sheep brains to study their parts.



Showcase

Following their deep dive into a career, students prepare a performance or presentation to help them share with their peers and families what they have learned during the expedition. [📄 Showcase: Architecture](#) Students also think through effective ways to present for their given audience and engage in dress rehearsals and feedback sessions with their peers.



Reflection

To conclude an Expedition, students engage in personal reflection on what they learned about themselves and others. [📄 Student Self-Reflection Exemplar](#)

Supporting Structures

Despite being one of several key elements of the Achievement First Greenfield School Design model, Expeditions can be implemented as a standalone practice. Schools interested in implementing Expeditions may wish to pilot them with one classroom or grade level before scaling the practice to include the entire school.

Schools must condense or cut curriculums to carve out space for lessons and activities related to Expeditions.

Expeditions provide students with the opportunity to focus on content that extends beyond core academics. As a result, schools must think ahead to plan what academic or enrichment content may be cut or condensed to make space for them.

To support the planning of Expeditions, schools can take advantage of an open-source catalog of offerings for 5th through 7th grades and a resource outlining the fundamentals of instruction for expeditions. [Offerings List](#) [Fundamentals of Instruction](#)



**CURRICULUM,
INSTRUCTION, &
ASSESSMENT**

Students are assessed on their *pride* and *insight*, both of which drive toward their personal why and social-emotional strength. [Goals and Assessment Overview](#)



Expeditions rely on a strong school or classroom culture to support the schedule changes and immersive experiences present in the model.

For Expeditions to run well, it is important that the school culture is strong enough to support changes to the typical schedule as well as other key model components such as field visits, hosting guests in the classroom, etc.

SCHOOL COMMUNITY & CULTURE

Expeditions should feel special and should celebrate student growth and positive risk-taking during every stage of the experience.

A strong Operations Leader is required to run point on logistics, as well as dedicated teachers to lead Expeditions.

Expeditions require a school-wide effort with careful coordination among the people in the following roles:



ADULT ROLES, HIRING, & LEARNING

- **Owner:** This person serves as the Expedition point person and project manager to ensure that the team remains on track. See the launch planning guidance. [📄 Quick Start Guide](#)
- **Greenfield Expedition Teachers:** School-based teachers lead these Expeditions. In the model, Expeditions replace science, social studies, and enrichment and are taught by those teachers.
- **Academic Leadership:** This role may be held by a single school leader or divided among several individuals. It involves ensuring that teachers are prepared to lead their Expeditions and providing ongoing coaching and support.
- **Operations:** This is a crucial job in executing Expeditions because they are run very differently from typical school days.

Teachers—especially those with less experience—may require professional development on top of individualized coaching to execute Expeditions at a high level. [📄 Teacher Training Scope & Sequence](#)

Expeditions require schools to allocate ~2.5 hours in the daily schedule for two full weeks, three times per year, in addition to time for planning.



SCHEDULE & USE OF TIME

Expeditions happen three times a year, although schools could choose to run them once or twice instead. Because they require ample planning time, the first usually does not occur until 6–7 weeks into the school year.

During Expeditions, core academics are shifted so they take place in the morning and full afternoons are dedicated to the Expedition project for the full two weeks. At Achievement First schools, the teachers leading career Expeditions are generally given the morning of Expedition days to prepare.

Showcases, which are held on the final day of the two-week mini-course, can be held during the school day or during the evening in order to allow more parents and family members to attend.

Family and community partnerships are critical to strong execution of Expeditions.

The purpose of Expeditions is to immerse students in authentic, real-world experiences that connect them to the professional world and to their greater school community. As such, family and community partnerships are foundational to strong execution of this practice in the following ways:



FAMILY & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

- **Field Visits:** These allow students to visit and interact with community partners working in specialized fields.
- **Expert Speakers:** Field experts visit classrooms to teach lessons and provide advice to students as they consolidate their learning and prepare showcase presentations.
- **Trip Chaperones:** Families can chaperone field lessons, connecting them both to the school community and to the broader community of professionals with whom their children are engaging.
- **Showcases:** Classrooms can invite guest speakers and the professionals they visited in the field to attend showcases, which deepens trust between the school and community partners. Additionally, showcases bring families into the school to witness what their students have been exploring.

Each Expedition requires a dedicated space for the duration of the experience.

Expeditions often require space to store projects that are in progress, which should be taken into consideration when assigning groups to the spaces they will use for the duration of the two-week experience. [📄 Space Selection Guidance](#)



SPACE & FACILITIES

Additionally, Expeditions require space for culminating showcases, which may be structured in various ways, including the following:

- **Whole-School Showcase:** This structure is a 2-hour event with showcases occurring at staggered times, to allow families and students to sample a variety of Expeditions.
- **Individual Expedition Showcase:** In this structure, students and families remain in the room where their student is presenting. This is less of an operational lift and can be completed in 30–60 minutes.
- **Student-Only Showcase:** Some schools hold a dress rehearsal of the showcase during school hours for students only.



TECHNOLOGY & INFRASTRUCTURE

Most Expeditions require 1:1 computers and classrooms with stable Wi-Fi.

Students often spend time on the Internet accessing materials and videos related to their learning Expedition, especially when they are exploring fields like graphic design. Schools should plan to conduct a technology needs assessment when planning for each Expedition in order to allocate the necessary resources properly.



BUDGET & OPERATIONS

Expeditions have many moving pieces that require strong project management, preferably owned by a single person.

Project Planning: Given the many elements of Expeditions, the person running operations must be a strong project manager. We recommend that they design and maintain a shared project plan with all relevant stakeholders.

Student Selection: At Greenfield, students are able to apply for their Expedition of choice from a set of five options. If schools choose to take this approach, they must clarify the application and selection process. One option is to select students for each Expedition based on the persuasiveness of their application letter.

Budget: At Greenfield, schools budget \$1,600 for each Expedition. This cost can be reduced by forging relationships with community partners who can serve as guest speakers or host field visits.

Materials: Expeditions all have consumable and reusable materials. The first round of Expeditions tends to cost more because schools must purchase new materials, but subsequent Expeditions tend to cost less because reusable materials have already been purchased. Schools typically create a centralized materials list and a set of materials ordering guidance to handle supply reorder requests. [Ops Planning Tracker](#) [Material Ordering Guidance](#)

Transportation & Permission: Field visits require the coordination of permission slips, health forms, student rosters, and transportation to multiple places during Expedition weeks.



COMMUNICATIONS

Expeditions benefit from having clear, regular communication systems with families to keep them up to speed on what's coming and how things have been going.

Schools should consider methods for communicating with parents about upcoming Expedition requirements, chaperoning opportunities, showcase dates, and even student and family shoutouts for excellent work.

To support strong Expeditions, schools should observe facilitation of Expeditions and provide ongoing coaching and support.



**CONTINUOUS
IMPROVEMENT**

Teachers receive the following types of support and development:

- Before and during each round of Expeditions, schools should provide professional development to support teachers through each stage based on the experience level and specific needs of the group.
- School leaders should plan to conduct walkthroughs to assess the strengths and needs of Expedition facilitators and provide ongoing coaching and support. At Greenfield, teachers are observed twice per week during Expeditions. [📄 Coaching Guide](#)
- Teachers might be encouraged to rehearse certain Expedition lessons to ensure that they are executed at top quality.

| IMPLEMENTATION

Supports Offered

[Transcend](#) supported the design of Greenfield Expeditions and created a toolkit where users can access various resources to pilot, adopt, and adapt the model.

Greenfield Resource Toolkit

Free



This toolkit contains a comprehensive set of resources to support the rollout and implementation of Greenfield Expeditions, including: planning materials and templates, curricular and instructional materials, rubrics, sample schedules, teacher training tools, observation tools, family communication guidance, and so much more.

You can also find information on other parts of the comprehensive Greenfield School Design, including Dream Teams and Goal Teams.

[**Access Now**](#)

Reach

41

Schools

15,000

Students

75%

Free or Reduced
Lunch

97%

Black &
Latinx

Impact

Greenfield Expeditions are used across many schools in the Achievement First Network alongside a suite of other practices that together lead to dramatic impact on student achievement. Below are just a few examples of the excellence achieved by students in Achievement First schools.

- Since Connecticut began Common Core-aligned assessments in 2015, Achievement First students have improved their proficiency by 21% points in math and by 15% points in ELA.
- Achievement First high schools are among the best in the state of Connecticut. U.S. News & World Report ranked Achievement First Hartford High #3 and Achievement First Amistad High #12.
- Achievement First Bushwick in Brooklyn, New York, was named a 2019 National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education. It is a prestigious award granted to schools showing overall academic excellence or excellent progress in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups.
- Achievement First students in Rhode Island far outperformed their in-state peers and scored 5% higher in ELA and math than students in Massachusetts, which is widely considered to have the best schools in the United States.

Contact

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RESOURCES

WHY EXPEDITIONS | Positive Student Outcomes

Personal Why

- How can lessons from expeditions help me in my academic classes?
- What connections can I make between what I am learning in expeditions and other things I've learned in school?

Academic Independence

- Think of a challenge, success or aha moment during the expedition. What did that teach me about myself as a learner?
- What am I passionate about?

Why Expeditions?

This image describes the positive student outcomes of implementing Greenfield Expeditions.

Expedition Name: Neuroscience: Brain Power Grade(s): 6

Part 0: Overview
Part 1: The Big Picture
Part 2: Expeditions Outcomes
Part 3: High Level Map
*Important Notes
Part 4: Outcomes

Focus Center	Related Content	College Ready
Neuroscience	Neurology, Neurosurgery	1. Neuroscience 2. Biology 3. Psychology

Unit Plan Example

This document walks through the plan for an Expedition exposing students to the field of neuroscience.



Launch Lesson Example

These slides introduce the field of graphic design to students as part of the Expedition's launch.

Architecture: Building Community - Showcase Lesson

Name	Date

DO NOW:
Review your job for your presentation in yesterday's packet.
What's one question your visitors might ask you about your design?

Showcase Example

This is a student-facing worksheet that supports students in an architecture Expedition to plan for their final showcase.

Expedition Name: Neuroscience: Brain Power Grade(s): 6th

Comprehensive Reflection - Exemplar Responses

Instructions: Based on this round of Expeditions, respond to the below prompts. Write at least 6 complete sentences.

5. What are your most proud of from the work you did during this Expedition? Explain why and share specific examples.

Student Comprehensive Self-Reflection Exemplar

This document serves as an exemplar for the reflections students might complete at the end of a neuroscience Expedition.

5th grade Expeditions

Grade	Center	Title	Description
5th	Business	Money, Money, Money, Starting a Small Business	How can we create a profitable business that attracts student customers? This Expedition will give you the opportunity to do just that! You and your classmates will work together in small groups to create your own retail store where you will be responsible for choosing merchandise, marketing your products, and selling your goods at a pop-up shop during the showcase.
5th	Marine Biology	Save the Whales	How do human choices impact the survival of big and small marine organisms? Ever wonder what a beluga whale eats for dinner? Or how YOUR dinner can endanger the beluga whale? In this Expedition you will use microscopes, online research tools, and in-person observations to investigate the ways aquatic creatures such as pollyfish, sea turtles, and whales are subjected to threats in the open ocean, and how humans put them at risk. At the showcase you will present your findings in the form of an Environmental Impact Statement, making clear for our

Detailed Offerings List

This document outlines sample Greenfield Expeditions that students at Achievement First might have completed in the 5th through 8th grades.

EXPEDITIONS FUNDAMENTALS OF INSTRUCTION (FOI)

Expeditions: Fundamentals of Instruction (160 min / day, 9 days)

Purpose	Develop a clearer sense Noble Purpose / Personal Why. Produce, present, and perform work that creates a sense of pride.
INVESTMENT: 1 effectively builds 5 motivation / curiosity around the Expedition's Guiding Question and effectively connects it to the career field.	
RIGOR OF CONTENT / TASK: Content and materials reflect authentic work of professionals in a career field. A rare provided with hands-on real world learning opportunities that provide an authentic glimpse into a career field. The use of the 3C - created process engage students both learn by doing (engage / explore).	

Greenfield Expeditions Fundamentals of Instruction

This document outlines the must-haves for lessons that are part of Greenfield Expeditions.

Expeditions Goals and Assessment 19-20 1 of 3

Introduction

Expeditions are two week mini-courses that aim to give students new and exciting learning experiences - a hands-on, real-world taste of career and college options. Expeditions aim to spark student passions, give students a chance to collaborate, and strengthen their relationships with both peers and teachers. Students also get the chance to practice the compass habits, and learn more about themselves. The end of Expeditions showcase is a chance for students to cultivate presentation skills and build an awesomely powerful community as families come to school and celebrate their learning.

Goals & Assessment Overview

This document outlines how the student outcomes of Greenfield Expeditions can be measured, including student reflection and quality of showcase.

Achievement First GREENFIELD

EXPEDITIONS QUICK START: LAUNCH PLANNING GUIDANCE

Goals:

- School LT has a clear division of labor for expeditions and has named a clear project owner to create and manage the project plan, distributing concrete performance tasks with deadlines to other LT members.
- Families and Scholars are involved in expeditions.
- Families are clear on the details of the expedition showcase and can plan for enough in advance to attend.
- Students are excited about and invested in expeditions and have a clear vision for why expeditions are held and how they can

Quick-Start Guide

This quick-start guide contains high-level milestones and provides quick access to aligned resources to support schools to launch Greenfield Expeditions.

Expeditions Training & IPP

Session	Date	Time	Objectives	Key Activities
Expeditions Launch	8/8	90 min	Teachers will be able to explain key information about 19-20 Expeditions. Teachers will be prepared to build enthusiasm among staff, students, and families for 19-20 Expeditions.	Expeditions Goals & Outcomes Introduce Topics - get teachers excited / inspired Share key logistics Outline upcoming deliverables and PDs Share gear & links to start building passions (field lesson)
Expeditions Unpacking	9/7	4 hours	Teachers will deeply understand the Expeditions	Prework - Read & annotate key parts of plan Deeply Understand Expedition Outcomes (30 - unpack Showcase exemplar)

Teacher Training Scope & Sequence

This scope and sequence

Expeditions Space Selection Guidance

Based on lessons learned from past experiences here are some general guidelines for selecting which Expeditions should be in which spaces.

- Expedition Needs:** Think about the needs of each Expedition- does the Expedition need to be near the bathroom or need access to water? Does the Expedition need to ideally leave up posters on the walls for two weeks? Does their need to be a window?
- Maintaining Consistency:** If teachers can use their existing HRs for their Expeditions it will make their lives easier for supply management. Enrichment teachers should of course be in their normal Enrichment rooms unless there are shared space challenges.
- Transition Considerations:** Consider how you want to transition students into and out of Expeditions. It may be more complicated to use certain rooms for Expeditions depending

Space Selection Guidance

This document can support leaders in selecting the spaces

Expedition Operations Planning Re...

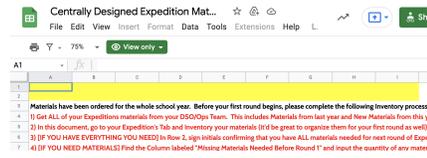
AT FT																			
1	NY																		
2	Materials	\$900.00	Materials	\$500.00															
3	Guest Educators	\$900.00	Guest Educators	\$500.00															
4	Field Lesson Expenses	\$200.00	Field Lesson Expenses	\$200.00															
5	Field Lesson Transport	\$400.00	Field Lesson Transport	\$10.00															

Operations Planning: Centralized Materials List & Tracker

outlines objectives and key activities to ensure that staff understand how to facilitate Greenfield Expeditions at a high level.

that will be reserved for all phases of the Expedition process.

This spreadsheet contains information to support Expedition operations.



Centrally Designed Material Order and Reordering Guidance

This spreadsheet can help schools centrally manage supply reorder requests.

Expeditions Coaching Guide (aligned to Expeditions FOI)

Teacher	Class	Total # of Students	Number of Students Off-Task (for 5-10 seconds at the minute mark)			Overall Culture
			Minute 1	Minute 2	Minute 3	
						1. Preparation, organization, and order 2. Engagement and participation 3. Focus/Concentration 4. Quantity or Quality 5. Collaboration
Room Setup: Visual Anchors			Y/N	Room Setup: Materials		Y/N
Visual Anchors: Visual anchors - CFS for showcase product.				Materials: student notetakers, & necessary materials.		

Expeditions Coaching Guide

This document can support school leaders in thinking through how to coach and support teachers as they facilitate Expeditions.