

PRESCHOOL-GRADE 12

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# Learning Locally, Thinking Globally

Welcome to GEMS World Academy Chicago



# Welcome bienvenue 歡迎 bienvenido

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**A**t GEMS World Academy Chicago, we leverage the International Baccalaureate framework to inspire students to learn locally and think globally, using the entire city of Chicago as an extension of the classroom. Our outstanding, experienced core faculty all hold graduate degrees, and our program is housed in some of the city's most inspired, cutting-edge learning facilities. As part of a network of schools around the world focusing on developing the culturally competent leaders of tomorrow, we offer exchange and collaboration to inspire new perspectives, challenge convention, and develop the resilience to embrace a future of unknowns.

We invite you to explore our program, meet our community, and discover the unique opportunities a GEMS World Academy Chicago education provides.

## Quick Facts

- GEMS World Academy Chicago was established in 2014 as the first school from GEMS Education in the United States. GEMS is the largest school operator in the world with over 250 campuses globally.
- Our Chicago school community is comprised of students, families, and faculty from over 40 countries.
- We offer the International Baccalaureate (IB) program and are the only private IB-continuum school in the state of Illinois.
- Robust field studies program leverages Chicago as an extension of the classroom.
- We offer a holistic learning experience with a growing variety of extracurricular and athletic opportunities.

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# Curriculum

International Baccalaureate through a local lens



The International Baccalaureate (IB) continuum of education, recognized worldwide for rigorous instruction, critical thinking, an emphasis on active, global citizenship, and inquiry-based learning, is offered at GEMS in a highly localized context. Colleges and universities consider the IB to be one of the best curricula in developing academic and personal skills needed to be successful learners, leaders, and engaged citizens.

Subjects offered and content covered vary by grade, but we consistently teach the core disciplines of math, literacy, science, and social studies, as well as physical education, the arts, technology & design, and a choice of a daily world language (French, Mandarin, or Spanish). In addition to our commitment to academic preparedness, we emphasize the development of the whole person in accordance with the IB learner profile and offer students opportunities to discover themselves and their place in the world. At GEMS, we value active student engagement and agency across grade levels, which supports deeper questioning and yields a higher level of achievement. Students have choices in both what they study as well as how they demonstrate their understanding or mastery of a concept. They also have a choice in how they approach service learning and have a voice in policies throughout the school. Our Field Studies programs provide full access to the city of Chicago and enable students and teachers to extend learning well beyond the walls of their classrooms.

For more in-depth information on the IB framework and how it is implemented at GEMS, visit [gemschicago.org/curriculum](https://gemschicago.org/curriculum).

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# Local & Global Engagement

Global citizenship and exchange have been core to the GEMS mission from our very beginning



In 1959, K.S. Varkey and his wife, Mariamma, left India in search of better opportunities for their family. Settling as teachers in Dubai, they quickly discovered the power of education in building intercultural understanding and creating bright futures for students arriving from all over the world to the burgeoning metropolis. Their local vision soon became a global one, and GEMS Education was created.

Today, at GEMS World Academy Chicago, the concept of both local and global citizenship remains ever-present in our program and in our culture. Students must be knowledgeable about world history and current issues while being respectful and appreciative of global cultures. But we also know that being good global citizens starts with being good local citizens; living and learning in Chicago is critical to our students' worldview, which is regularly broadened through our plentiful opportunities for exchange and travel.

### Local & Global Engagement Through the Grades

In our younger grades, students collaborate remotely with peers around the world. As students progress through our program, they travel and immerse in cultures and communities both near and far: in middle school, they participate in an Explore the U.S. series, and high school students can participate in a GEMS World Academy exchange program with peers living and learning in different countries.

Recent trips, exchanges, and service projects haven taken students (and in some cases, their families) to: Costa Rica, Nepal, Singapore, Spain, Switzerland, Dubai, Silicon Valley, St. Louis, Washington DC, and Indianapolis.

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# Field Studies

A remarkable opportunity for the authentic application of learning



Our location in the heart of downtown Chicago allows full access to the city and enables students and teachers to extend learning well beyond the walls of their classrooms. GEMS is proud to have built relationships with museums, local businesses, universities, and hospitals, and see students reap the benefits of proximity to public parks, historical monuments, and public art, which they meaningfully explore through our robust Field Studies program.

Field Studies are a core component of our student-centered, inquiry-based academic program across all grades. Students leverage the rigorous academic content they have learned in the classroom to observe and experiment in a real-world setting, which in turn impacts further discussion and inquiry in the classroom. Field Studies help create an environment in which student curiosity and agency generate pathways to a deeper understanding of their local and global communities.

At GEMS World Academy Chicago, we believe that student understanding becomes truly authentic with enduring impact when students are able to both direct their own learning and apply it to real world problems and situations, starting in their own backyard.

#### Health Career Field Study

Grade 9

As part of their unit on anatomy and physiology, students spent the day with 3rd- and 4th-year medical students and Ph.D. students in anatomical sciences at the Midwest College of Medicine. They attended a cadaver lab as well as labs in forensic dentistry, ophthalmology, and pharmacology. Student work included learning how to take health intakes, exploring modern techniques in today's operating rooms, and identifying systems in human cadavers. Students discussed their findings and completed individual summaries to reinforce their learning.

#### Trout Release/ROV Field Study

Grades 1 and 5

As part of their Fresh Water unit, first graders raised trout at school and researched the proper wild habitat for the fish. They released the trout into Lake Michigan at 12th Street Beach, an event that was documented by a camera-equipped remote-operated vehicle (ROV) that our fifth graders had designed and built as part of their Scientific Exploration and Innovation unit.

#### Communities and Art Field Study

Kindergarten

In a Field Study that combined an inquiry into Communities and the value of visual art, our junior kindergarten students walked to the Chicago Cultural Center via the underground pedway, stopping to take notice of the shapes and colors in the artwork they encountered during the journey. They also identified community helpers (police officers, construction workers) they saw on the walk, and considered what it means to share public space.

For more field studies, visit [gemschicago.org/fieldstudies](https://gemschicago.org/fieldstudies).



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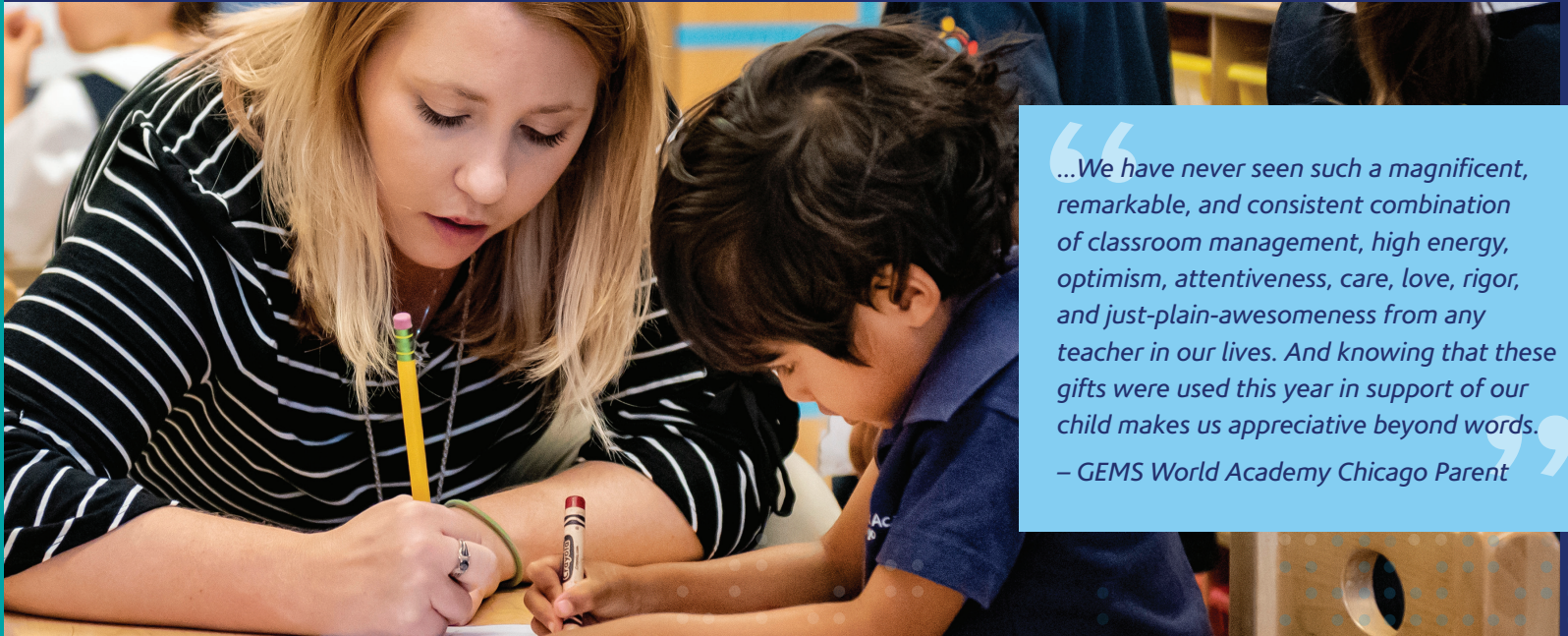
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# Faculty & Staff

Passionate, caring experts who make a lasting impact



“...We have never seen such a magnificent, remarkable, and consistent combination of classroom management, high energy, optimism, attentiveness, care, love, rigor, and just-plain-awesomeness from any teacher in our lives. And knowing that these gifts were used this year in support of our child makes us appreciative beyond words.”

– GEMS World Academy Chicago Parent



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Faculty are the heart and soul of every great school. At GEMS World Academy Chicago, not only do our faculty bring a breadth of knowledge and experience to their classrooms each day, they are passionate about teaching the IB programs and developing creative lessons that promote global awareness and a deep understanding of the local context of Chicago. The faculty and staff, themselves, are engaged in causes and initiatives that they believe in and are passionate about, regularly modeling this positive community participation to our students. Our teachers understand that key to unlocking the potential of all students is developing a collaborative partnership with them. Our teachers know their students deeply, not just as learners but as the active citizens they are growing into.

**7:1**

Student to  
Teacher Ratio

**650**

Collective Years  
Experience Teaching

**13**  
years\*

Average Teaching  
Experience

**99%**

% Masters Degrees  
or Higher

\* for classroom and subject teachers

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# Lower School

Unlocking limitless potential through a learning environment that nurtures creativity, risk taking, and independent thinking



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In preschool through grade 5, the International Baccalaureate (IB) program harnesses the innate curiosity of learners during these formative years. The IB Primary Years Program (PYP) provides a framework for teaching and learning that is student-centered, inquiry-driven, and transdisciplinary, while offering students opportunities to explore topics, ideas, and passions. Students are challenged to think independently and take responsibility for their learning, exploring local and global issues in real-life contexts.

Learning is highly personalized; a low student-to-teacher ratio and an emphasis on student agency enable every student to be actively engaged and challenged. Through our robust Field Studies program, students authentically apply their learning in a variety of settings. As part of our mission to educate global citizens, all students have world language instruction daily in addition to other core disciplines. Our integration of technology in the classroom inspires creativity and prepares students for success in a rapidly changing world.

We emphasize the impact all students have when taking action to make their community or the world a better place. Our outstanding teachers have built a culture that genuinely deepens student learning while increasing confidence and self-motivation. We prepare students not only to be successful in the continuation of their studies, but to grow into leaders and changemakers.

### **Core Content Areas**

#### *Preschool–Grade 5:*

*Library*

*Literacy*

*Mathematics*

*Music*

*Personal, Social, and Physical Education*

*Science*

*Social Studies*

*Technology*

*Visual Arts*

*World Languages*

*(French, Mandarin, or Spanish)*

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# Middle School

Developing independence and confidence in a supportive yet rigorous learning environment



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**G**rades 6 through 8 are a time of rapid growth and change as students solidify their sense of self, hone their passions, and think critically about their place in the world. GEMS middle school teachers take the role of advisor, mentor, leader, and active listener as seriously as they take the job of guiding, facilitating, and inspiring thinking, questioning, and self-reflection. They take care to understand each student's talents, interests, and how they form community with one another. This emphasis creates positive connections between peers and a supportive environment for all, which is critical for embracing social and academic challenges.

Middle school covers the first three years of the IB Middle Years Program (MYP), which is designed to provide a challenging framework for making connections between studies and the real world. Through our robust Field Studies program, students authentically apply their learning in a variety of settings. In middle school, world language is considered a core discipline, and our integration of technology in the classroom ensures that students develop 21st-century skills.

Middle school lays a strong foundation for success as students complete the last two years of the MYP and continue on to the Diploma Program.

## **Core Content Areas**

### **Grades 6–8:**

*Advisory Program*

*Arts: Performing Arts (music, chorus, orchestra, theater, dance) and Visual Arts*

*Design*

*Health & Physical Education*

*Individuals & Societies*

*Language & Literature*

*Mathematics*

*Science*

*Social/Emotional Learning Curriculum*

*World Languages*

*(French, Mandarin, or Spanish)*



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# Upper School

Preparing students to thrive in college and beyond



Upper School students tackle challenging problems and grapple with complex, real-life issues throughout their studies in the Middle Years Program (9–10) and the Diploma Program (11–12). Our goal is to prepare students with the knowledge and skills for academic and personal success.

We tailor our programs to our students, giving them ways to highlight their strengths and interests and providing more than typical high school offerings. Students explore courses like epidemiology, global politics, and environmental systems and societies. Student impact doesn't stop with academics; beyond the expected sports and clubs found in high school, student interest has led to the development of sailing, our squash team, and local and global service projects.

Field Studies opportunities for Upper School students extend far beyond the reaches of Chicago. Students meet and host GEMS Dubai and GEMS Singapore students. They travel to French- and Spanish-speaking countries, where they practice communicating across cultures. They study water issues and local issues in Costa Rica.

We have a dedicated college counselor that meets with every student regularly to support and guide them in the college planning and selection process. By the time our students reach their final years of high school, they are confident, independent, and have maximized all opportunities to distinguish themselves. GEMS graduates are empowered to take charge of their learning and their futures. They are capable and prepared for the academic, social, and extracurricular challenges of university.

Learn more about the outstanding college placements of GEMS Education graduates and life after GEMS at [gemschicago.org/after](https://gemschicago.org/after).

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Core Content Areas 9th/10th (MYP)	Core Content Areas 11th/12th (DP)
Language & Literature: Survey of Literature	Language & Literature SL
World Languages (French, Mandarin, or Spanish)	Spanish B SL, HL French B SL, HL
Individuals & Societies	Individuals & Societies: Global Politics SL, HL
Physics (9th) Chemistry (10th) Biology (10th)	Physics SL, HL Environmental Systems & Societies SL Biology SL, HL
Mathematics • Geometry & Statistics • Algebra II & Trigonometry	Mathematics: • Applications & Interpretation SL, HL • Analysis & Approaches SL, HL
Health & Physical Education	Visual Arts SL, HL Music SL, HL
Personal Project (10)	Theory of Knowledge
Choices: • Arts: Performing Arts (music, chorus, orchestra, theater, dance) • Visual Arts Elective Courses: • Latin • Forensics Science • Introduction to Epidemiology • Public Speaking	Extended Essay

Creativity, Activity, Service

Advisory Program

312.809.8910 | 350 East South Water Street, Chicago, IL 60601

# Culture & Student Life

Inspiring action and good citizenship

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GEMS World Academy Chicago students hail not just from all corners of the city, but from Canada to China, Nigeria to North Carolina, and everywhere in between.

While our students and staff come from all walks of life, our school community is united by a shared culture of action and the impetus to actively participate in the school community and beyond. Our students and teachers recognize the power of one in making positive change. This sense of ownership to leave a lasting, positive impact on the local and global community permeates our culture from every angle, from students to teachers, parents to administration.

At GEMS World Academy Chicago, our students are not afraid to either stand up for what's right, or to inspire and support one another to take action, and to embody our core values every day:



### **Growing by Learning**

*Strive to develop and fulfill our potential*



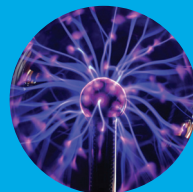
### **Pursuing Excellence**

*Work to continually exceed expectations*



### **Global Citizenship**

*Making an active contribution to the local and global community*



### **Leading through Innovation**

*Find the courage to challenge convention*

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Upper School students on a teambuilding trip at Lake Tecumseh

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# Student & Campus Life

A state-of-the art, purpose-built campus that fuels discovery and the uncovering of passions





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Our new Upper School building reflects the same sense of design, purpose, and innovation as our existing, award-winning Lower School. Our campus provides students with a networked hub of learning that combines 21st-century innovation with an adherence to the best in traditional education practice. In its design, we carefully considered the balance between instructional time and space to create a building optimized for high-level learning, and one that provides many opportunities for students to uncover their passions through our many extracurricular activities and sports. The new building includes fully equipped science labs, maker spaces, a collegiate-level library/media center, student collaboration spaces, and a 500-seat auditorium/ multimedia theater, all enhanced by the unlimited learning opportunities Chicago offers.

GEMS World Academy Chicago students are curious and passionate, and we encourage them to pursue outside interests through our comprehensive, ever-growing after-school program (preschool–grade 5) and our extracurricular and athletic program (grades 6 and above). For our youngest learners, our after-school program provides various enrichment activities, helping them discover and hone their interests. From acting in a stage play to perfecting fencing skills, learning new chess strategies or going deeper with world language studies, our extracurricular program offers something for each student. Students are encouraged to propose and lead new activities or clubs, which provides them the opportunity to work closely with GEMS faculty, develop leadership skills, and leave a lasting contribution to the school community. A strong athletic program builds physical wellness in our students, teaches valuable life lessons, and provides a key source of spirit and togetherness for the entire GEMS community. We field competitive teams in both the fall and spring and provide opportunities for individual athletic pursuits. As our school grows, athletic prospects will continue to expand.



The breadth and depth of extracurricular activities offered supports the development of global citizens who approach their world with purpose and courage. We also offer a comprehensive after-school program for our younger students to sample various activities.

For more information on sports and extracurricular activities offered, please visit [gemschicago.org/extracurriculars](https://gemschicago.org/extracurriculars)

# Admissions

Join an exceptional learning community  
in downtown Chicago



Our thoughtfully designed admissions process helps you get to know what GEMS World Academy Chicago has to offer and helps us learn more about your child's academic and social development.

Our dedicated and professional admissions team is ready to answer your questions about the school and the application process.

Please do not hesitate to contact us at **312-809-8910**  
or **[admissions@gemschicago.org](mailto:admissions@gemschicago.org)**.

# Applying to GEMS World Academy Chicago

## 1 VISIT

Attend a personal tour or an admissions event. Explore dates and register online at [gemschicago.org/visit](https://gemschicago.org/visit).

## 2 APPLY

After you apply, we will guide you through the process to complete the applicant profile. Apply online at [gemschicago.org/apply](https://gemschicago.org/apply).

## 3 DECISION

Decisions are issued according to the timeline of your admissions track.

## 4 ENROLL

If your child is admitted, you will be provided with a link to pay the enrollment deposit and sign the enrollment agreement.

## Timeline & Key Dates

We offer two key admissions tracks for the 2020–2021 school year. After Regular Admissions, we will continue to accept applications on a rolling basis based on grade-level availability.

### Priority Admissions

Priority Admissions is a great choice for siblings of current students or students for whom GEMS World Academy Chicago is a first choice. Students will have the best chance at admission during our Priority Admissions track.

Application Submission Deadline: **October 28, 2019**

Application Profile Completion Deadline: **December 1, 2019**

Admissions Decision Notification: **Week of December 9, 2019**

Admissions Response Due by: **January 5, 2020**

### Regular Admissions

Regular admissions is aligned with the timeline of many other schools in Chicago.

Application Submission Deadline: **January 6, 2020**

Application Profile Completion Deadline: **February 16, 2020**

Admissions Decision Notification: **Week of February 24, 2020**

Admissions Response Due by: **March 16, 2020**