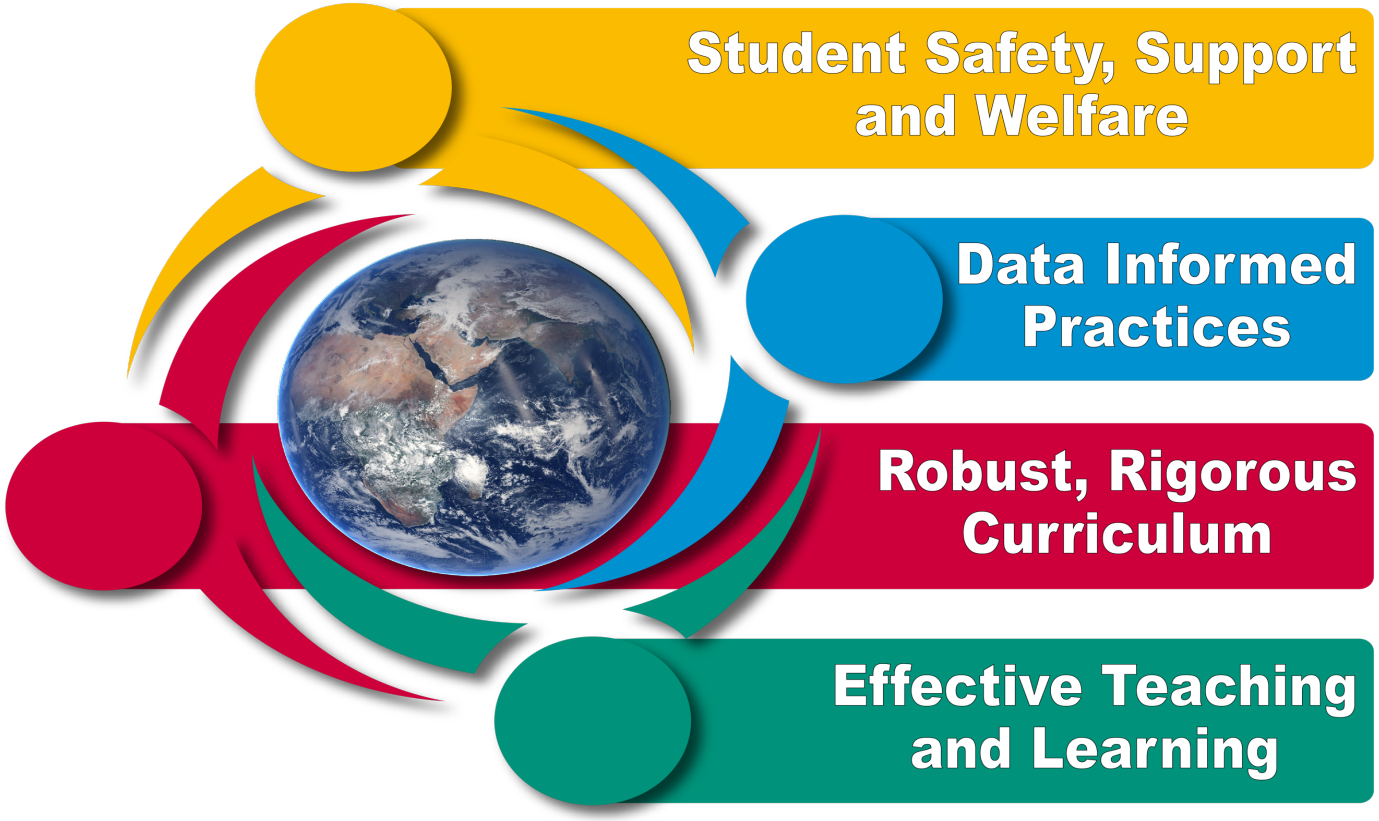

Internationally-Minded Learners: Caring, Inquiring, and Reflective

GEMS World Academy – Dubai
Strategic Action Plan
Revised January 2017

Mission Statement

GEMS World Academy-Dubai develops inquiring, reflective and caring learners who, through the rigour of the IB programs, have the knowledge, skills and character to take action and create a better, more peaceful world. Supported by highly qualified staff in world-class facilities, our diverse international community is encouraged to develop intercultural understanding and respect.

Vision Statement

Our aim is to be a world-class IB school that maximizes every student's learning and character to enable them to choose their own successful path and positively contribute to the local and global society.

Four Cornerstones

Based on an extensive needs assessment, GWA has identified Four Cornerstones of our Strategic Plan.

Effective Teaching & Learning

Research shows that the strongest indicator of success in student achievement is the quality of teaching and learning within the school. Teaching and learning is the most important function of our organization.

Student Safety, Support and Welfare

The safety, support, and welfare of our students is another key function of our organization. Only when students feel safe and only when systems are in place to support students to ensure their success, can they achieve.

Robust, Rigorous Curriculum

A strong program is based on the foundation of a solid, rigorous curriculum that allows for a natural progression of conceptual, knowledge and skill development.

Data Informed Practices

Effective decision-making requires us to base decisions on data. Data should inform our practice at all levels of the organization.

Cornerstone: Effective Teaching & Learning

Indicators of Success

- GWA will become an Apple Distinguished School
- GWA teachers will effectively integrate technology into lessons consistently as measured by observation tools.
- GWA will receive ratings of VERY GOOD and OUTSTANDING in the area of innovation as measured by KHDA.
- All formal and informal observations will have an overall rating of GOOD, VERY GOOD or OUTSTANDING as measured by observations conducted by administrators.
- GWA will achieve at least GOOD ratings in all content areas for progress and attainment.
- GWA will receive a VERY GOOD or OUTSTANDING rating for "Quality of Teaching" as measured by KHDA inspections across all phases.
- GWA students will meet all National Agenda targets. (NA)

Strategies & Action Steps

(I)Focus Strategy: Improve technology integration and support innovative practices at all levels of the organization.

Actions	Start Date; End Date	Update	Percent Complete
(I)Build ICT sessions into induction/orientation program. Provide teachers with ongoing ICT training and support so that all teachers see themselves as teachers of ICT	Ongoing	Hosted Apple training for all teachers; moved to TIF model in both divisions	60%
(I)Refine and document GWA's professional learning plan including supporting documents and evidence	Ongoing	Significant changes made; VLE; communication; still refining	70%
(I)Revise current model of ICT teaching to improve integration, classroom-based approach to ensure technology	Ongoing	3.5 dedicated TIFs supporting technology integration; working on quality of integration	50%

Key: Innovation – I; National Agenda – NA; Arabic – A; Islamic Studies – IS

supports learning in all curriculum areas in authentic situations.			
(I)Implement 1:1 iPad model for Grades 4-9.	January 2017/September 2017	Grade 4 up and running; communication to parents completed; need to host parent sessions	60%
(I)Attend Apple specific trainings to help us towards becoming an Apple Distinguished School	January 2016/September 2018	Members of team have attended two different Apple sessions; continue to work with local Apple reps	60%
(I)Identify an Innovation Committee	August 2016/September 2017	Innovation committee up and running; need to continue to define the direction of the group	50%
(I)Implement Innovative Teaching Grant	November 2016/February 2017	Innovative teaching grant description and application process out; received applications; need to communicate decision	60%

(NA)Focus Strategy: Embed critical thinking and inquiry pedagogical practices consistently.

Actions	Start Date; End Date	Update	Status
Develop a school-wide agreement/definition of inquiry with examples to help guide teachers in lesson development.	September 2016/September 2017	In process	25%
Create inquiry based pedagogy resources and best practices sharing opportunities for faculty across the subjects.	February 2017/December 2017	In process	25%
(NA)Develop assessments in all content areas that include course objectives/standards and assessment criteria that relate to critical thinking.	September 2016/ongoing	Training on 6 frames of critical thinking; now part of summative development in collaborative meetings	50%

Key: Innovation – I; National Agenda – NA; Arabic – A; Islamic Studies – IS

(NA)Capitalize on strategies from Theory of Knowledge in the Diploma Programme that support critical thinking across all subject areas.	March 2017		0%
(NA) Provide training and feedback on higher level questioning for teachers and monitor implementation during classroom observations. Specific examples of critical thinking are below (examples pulled from PISA, PIRLS, and TIMSS data): • When reading literary texts, students should: integrate ideas and evidence across a text to appreciate overall themes; and interpret story events and character actions to provide reasons, motivations, feelings, and character traits with full text-based support • When reading information texts, students should: distinguish and interpret complex information from different parts of text, and provide full text-based support; integrate information across a text to provide explanations, interpret significance, and sequence activities; and evaluate visual and textual features to explain their function. • Locate and organize several pieces of deeply embedded information • Complete reflective tasks requiring critical evaluation, drawing on specialized knowledge • Interpreting the meaning of nuances of language in a section of text taking into account the text as a whole • Demonstrate an accurate understanding of long or complex texts whose content or form may be unfamiliar • Use formal or public knowledge to hypothesize about or critically evaluate a text	September 2016/ongoing	Several training sessions have occurred and observation data on questioning being collected	50%
Ensure that lessons contain regular opportunities for student inquiry through observation and feedback.	September 2016/ongoing	Lesson data being collected	50%

Focus Strategy: Implement differentiation strategies for all students with a focus on Response to Intervention (RTI) policy and procedure.

Objectives	Start Date; End Date	Update	Status
(NA)Develop GWA's RTI model and introduce to staff members	January 2017/June 2017	Model nearly developed; sharing with staff in February	40%
Add specific strategies, resources, and tools in MYP unit plans for differentiation to aid in quality of teaching in MYP	January 2017/June 2017	In process	25%

Key: Innovation – I; National Agenda – NA; Arabic – A; Islamic Studies – IS

Implement effective identification of High End Learners for classroom intervention and support and creation of Exceptional Learner Program.	September 2016/March 2017	Policy revised; parent meeting in secondary scheduled end of January	80%
Start a committee focused on mother tongue development	September 2016/June 2017	Mother tongue parent groups meeting; need to form teacher/staff committee to help drive direction after input received	40%

Focus Strategy: Engage students and teachers in consistent reflective practices with quality feedback.

Objectives	Start Date; End Date	Update	Status
Implement a system of peer observation to improve collaboration and reflection processes making peer observations a more systematic and regular component of staff learning and growth.	September 2016/June 2017	The process has been completed and identified; next steps include communicating and implementing with teachers. Note: Peer observations already happen on an informal basis.	60%
(A)Coordinate site visits to other schools designated as good or outstanding in Arabic to solicit feedback on how to improve GWA Arabic program.	September 2016/ongoing	The Arabic team has already visited another school; hope to visit other schools in coming months	50%
Create a series of informal, formal, and peer observations to provide quality feedback on the proximity to good and outstanding as defined on the EOL rubric. Establish collaborative planning opportunities built into the timetable for planning and preparation for learning.	September 2016/June 2017	The process has been completed and identified; next steps include communicating and implementing with teachers. Note: Peer observations already happen on an informal basis. As of today, we have documented 120 formal observations by administrators and TLs.	70%

Key: Innovation – I; National Agenda – NA; Arabic – A; Islamic Studies – IS

Focus Strategy: Develop and implement an agreement upon standardized best practices to support approaches to teaching.

Objectives	Start Date; End Date	Update	Status
Provide examples of "outstanding" features of lessons based on the Evidence of Learning rubric to ensure clarity for instructional staff.	January 2017/ongoing	EOL rubric updated to represent KHDA framework; indicators in process	60%
Revisit written Essential Agreements for learning centers in early childhood classrooms to include 2-year-olds; collaboratively written and shared with all staff published for center-based learning available to all staff.	September 2016	Completed and documented in EC handbook.	100%
Develop lesson plan template that incorporates all elements of effective teaching and ensure consistent implementation.	September 2016/January	Completed. Look different in each division.	100%

Key: Innovation – I; National Agenda – NA; Arabic – A; Islamic Studies – IS

Cornerstone: Student Safety, Support, and Welfare

Indicators of Success

- Improvement in student perception of school culture as measured by student climate surveys.
- To show a significant decrease in the number of behaviour points allocated in each grade and consistency across grades.
- To reduce the number of external suspensions by 50% over a three-year period.
- PASS assessment data?

Strategies & Action Steps

Focus Strategy: Encourage students to develop strengths and have a positive mindset.

Objectives	Start Date; End Date	Update	Status
Develop and implement a Positive Education curriculum into Advisory Program.	June 2016/January 2017	Will complete a review of the curriculum in June 2017; program implemented in Secondary School	100%

Focus Strategy: Encourage cross-age mentoring and support.

Objectives	Start Date; End Date	Update	Status
Implement a peer mentoring program.	September 2016/June 2017	Program planned with expected implementation in April 2017	60%
Develop, promote and implement enhanced student leadership opportunities to heighten the character education	February 2016/September 2016	Fully implemented with a review in March 2017	100%

Key: Innovation – I; National Agenda – NA; Arabic – A; Islamic Studies – IS

program and to lead to greater self-regulation among the student community.			

Focus Strategy: Support behavioral, social, and emotional needs through the implementation of an RTI model

Objectives	Start Date; End Date	Update	Status
Introduce and implement a whole school K-12 House competition points system assessed quarterly.	February 2016/September 2016	Fully implemented with a review in June 2017	100%
Introduce and implement a whole school K-12 House Community Achievement Points System to recognize outstanding contribution to the wider community.	February 2016/September 2016	Fully implemented with a review in June 2017	100%
Introduce Learning Achievement Points focused on the IB Learner Profile attributes and IB Approaches to Learning which can be accessed in every lesson.	February 2016/September 2016	Fully implemented with a review in June 2017	100%
Reconfigure the behavior guidelines process for K-12 to adopt a behavior for learning process and to communicate this consistently with all stakeholders.	February 2016/September 2016	Fully implemented with a review in June 2017	100%
Align K-12 behavior agreements to support students with specific needs.	February 2016/September 2016	Fully implemented with a review in June 2017	100%
Refine the student support programme in the secondary section to ensure every student has a direct adult support mentor through the Grade Advisory Programme.	February 2016/September 2016	Fully implemented with a review in June 2017	100%
Continue to train staff towards the GWA BASS student behavior planning model (Build relationships, Apply appropriate sanctions, ask for Support, See it through) in order to maintain a consistency of application from K-12.	February 2016/September 2016	Fully implemented with a review in June 2017	100%

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Develop and implement a student achievement process to underpin the Behavioral Activation System in order to promote student rewards and incentives to help encourage strong behavioral traits.	February 2016/September 2016	Fully implemented with a review in June 2017	100%

Focus Strategy: Utilize the Learner Profile and ATL skills framework to encourage learning skills development.

Objectives	Start Date; End Date	Update	Status
(IS) Successfully integrate IB Learner Profile Islamic Studies lessons.	September 2017/June 2017	Embedded in evidence of learning rubric; need to increase awareness with teachers	40%
(A)Successfully integrate IB Learner Profile in Arabic lessons	September 2017/June 2017	Embedded in evidence of learning rubric; need to increase awareness with teachers	40%
Implement ATL survey, reflection and goal setting opportunities as part of advisory.	September 2016/October 2016	Students completed survey in Grades 6-12; another survey to be completed in February/March 2017	100%
Develop an ATL continuum of skills in the Secondary School.	September 2016/January 2017	Continuum of ATL skills completed in MYP and DP; this needs further development for PYP	75%

Focus Strategy: Engage parents and the community to support students.

Objectives	Start Date; End Date	Update	Status
Create an advisory board to engage parents in discussions related to mission, vision, strategic plan to help guide the direction of the school.	September 2017/January 2017	Board has met already this year and will meet three times annually	100%

Key: Innovation – I; National Agenda – NA; Arabic – A; Islamic Studies – IS

Identify monthly focus themes (important topics to parents) for parent engagement activities	September 2016/ongoing	Parent engagement sessions have been running on an almost monthly basis to support understanding and implementation of IB programme. Would like to create more alignment between three programmes.	80%
Implement a system of communication to get information out quickly and easily to parents that is connected to our student information system.	September 2016/ongoing	iSAMS up and running; need to wait for Managebac to be integrated with iSAMS to improve communication	80%
Improve the information included on our website to support parent understanding of the IB and curriculum.	September 2016/ongoing	Completed	100%
Utilize social media (Facebook and Twitter) as a means of engaging families and keeping them informed of events within the school.	September 2016/ongoing	Completed	100%

Key: Innovation – I; National Agenda – NA; Arabic – A; Islamic Studies – IS

Cornerstone: Robust, Rigorous Curriculum

Indicators of Success

- Curriculum documents with clear standards and success criteria will be developed and implemented for all content areas demonstrating clear vertical and horizontal alignment.
- GWA will receive OUTSTANDING ratings across all phases in Curriculum Design & Implementation and Curriculum Adaptation.

Strategies & Action Steps

Focus Strategy: Collaboratively develop and refine curriculum documents to ensure high standards so students can be internationally competitive.

Objectives	Start Date; End Date	Update	Status
Annual review/policy of subjects/POI is built into school calendar (is in ES)	September 2016/June 2017	Completed	100%
Use of Curriculum Review Policy to develop a process to include all teachers' feedback from teachers about process, involve TL/Teams	September 2016/June 2017	Curriculum Advisory Council developed and meeting; Curriculum Review Cycle policy revised and implemented	100%
(NA)Curriculum Committees continue to develop continua, learning outcomes and success criterion for key subject areas	April 2016/January 2017	Curriculum continua in key subjects completed	90%
Embed system for annual review of curricular alignment across phases	January 2017/June 2017	Need to embed into annual calendar; committee in place to help drive the work	50%
Create PL cycle that includes opportunities for transdisciplinary integration and vertical teaming	January 2017/June 2017	PL cycle is a new initiative; still working out these opportunities	50%

Key: Innovation – I; National Agenda – NA; Arabic – A; Islamic Studies – IS

Review and approve the Language Policy for whole school, paying close attention to transition in Language Acquisition	April 2016/June 2016	Completed	100%
Build transition year documentation from Grade 5-6; and Grade 10-11	January 2017/June 2017	Discussions have begun.	50%
Develop Interdisciplinary Units of instruction; one unit per grade per year of the MYP; connect with Unit of Inquiry in the PYP (Transdisciplinary Units)	September 2016/February 2017	Most units developed.	80%
Review and approve policy of ELL/ELA and Language Acquisition across the phases	April 2016	Completed	100%
Ensure that Service as Action is embedded in unit planners	January 2017/June 2017	Quality assurance of this has been embedded for May 2017	60%
(A)Develop a Arabic B learning continuum based on MFL framework	September 2016/October 2016	Completed	100%
Develop assessments based on phases of Arabic B continuum	September 2016/June 2017	This is completed for up to Phase 5; need to complete other phases as students progress and gain high levels of attainment	80%
Review PYP Programme of Inquiry to ensure a balance of local and global perspectives	Ongoing/June 2017	PYP teams meet weekly to address this; will have quality assurance in June 2017	80%
Create a staff role of Deputy Head of School with a focus on Teaching and Learning	September 2016	Person hired and in role.	100%
Develop an Islamic Studies learning continuum based on Ministry curriculum	September 2016/June 2017	In process	50%
Send in MYP units of student as part of BQC process to solidify feedback on unit content	September 2016/June 2017	Units to send have been identified; units to be sent in spring	50%

Focus Strategy: Develop multiple pathways for students so all students can achieve success.

Key: Innovation – I; National Agenda – NA; Arabic – A; Islamic Studies – IS

Objectives	Start Date; End Date	Update	Status
Apply for membership of and accreditation by NEASC	September 2017/June 2017	NEASC has been contacted for information to apply for accreditation	20%
Explore the opportunity for implementation of the IBCP through BTEC	September 2016/June 2017	Application completed; admin and relevant staff signed up for training	80%

Key: Innovation – I; National Agenda – NA; Arabic – A; Islamic Studies – IS

Cornerstone: Data-Informed Practices

Indicators of Success

- Effective use of data evidenced in teacher planning as measured by observation data.
- Students and teachers creating data-informed goals.
- Full implementation of RTI system to ensure timely behavioral and academic intervention.

Strategies & Action Steps

Focus Strategy: Implement systems for effective data review and analysis to ensure decisions at all levels are informed by data.

Objectives	Start Date; End Date	Update	Status
(NA)Adopt a student information management system that allows for effective analysis and monitoring of progress and attainment data	September 2016/June 2017	iSAMS implemented; creating reports for monitoring	90%
(NA)Assessment/Data Dashboard used to regularly record, track, and analyze student progress/achievement, and inform instruction	September 2016/ongoing	iSAMS implemented; creating reports for monitoring	90%
(NA)Develop a process for tracking student progress	September 2016/ongoing	creating reports for monitoring	90%
(NA)Implement a department audit process that includes various samples of evidence and data to guide department development	September 2016/June 2017	Implemented and completed in Secondary	100%
ILT review of elementary school report card and reporting system to ensure alignment with philosophy of assessment	September 2016/ongoing	Progress reports and report cards revised; exemplar and moderatio processes in discussion	80%

Key: Innovation – I; National Agenda – NA; Arabic – A; Islamic Studies – IS

and addresses leadership and team concerns (balance, rigor, clarity etc.). Revisit and reflect on document after each quarter (embed reflective process). Ensure clarity in Subject Criterion and use within assessment, moderation and exemplar discussions.			
Strengthen assessment data collection methods: use of assessment calendar, monitor assessment calendar by ILT/TLs and anaylsis of assessment data across all subject areas in order to improve teaching and learning	September 2016/June 2017	Assessment calendar in place; Assessment policy revised to reflect assessment practices; data analysis protocol in place and utilized	80%
Implement data collection tools for use specifically by single subject teachers	September 2016/June 2017	Discussions have begun	25%
Integrated and stand-alone PYP Planners used to ensure assessment is clearly defined (backwards design)	September 2016/June 2017	In process; discussions and planning occur weekly	75%
Revisit and refine process for pacing formative and summative assessments	September 2016/June 2017	Some departments have this mapped out; others still refining protocol	60%
Training for standards-based assessment practices and concept-based teaching and learning	September 2016/June 2017	A team of 15 teachers attending training in January; will come back and do whole school/small group training on Thursdays	60%
Create a staff role of data coach to support school use of data to inform instruction	September 2016/June 2017	Assistant Principal for Student Support with JD created; individual hired	90%
Create a data protocol for teams to effectively analyze data and create action plan.	September 2016/October 2016	Completed and being utilized	100%

Focus Strategy: Design goal setting systems that support student and staff member direction and development.

Objectives	Start Date; End Date	Update	Status

Key: Innovation – I; National Agenda – NA; Arabic – A; Islamic Studies – IS

Creation of yearly team goals	September 2016/June 2017	Goals all developed; teams need additional time to refine action plans	80%
Create an assessment and target setting procedure for each phase. Peer and self-evaluation strategies are included in each unit of study.	September 2016	Students self-assessment against ATLs in place; goal setting using data in place; target setting needs further clarity	70%
Managebac reflections and assessments included in unit plans and departmental procedures are saved in Google Drive / MB	September 2016/June 2017	Reflections for units completed should be completed by end January; maintaining reflections for rest of year; departmental procedures and curricular documents all on Google folder	40%
Development of identification process for High-End Learners	September 2016/February 2017	In place in ES; 90% in place in secondary school	90%
Effective utilization of IEPs across content areas	September 2016/June 2017	IEPs in iSAMS and accessible by all; hiring of AP for SSS	60%
Pastoral Care – Target setting/tracking/iSAMS/Risk Management (Academic Probation – Counsellor)	September 2016	All data and tracking now in iSAMS; continuing to refine process	75%

Focus Strategy: Utilize all available assessment data to develop and deliver a differentiated, professional learning program.

Objectives	Start Date; End Date	Update	Status
Utilize weekly Professional Learning times to highlight best practices and engage all teachers in professional learning across the school.	September 2015/ongoing	Model has been now implemented in the secondary school; still refining the best approach to ensure consistency with teacher autonomy and driving school development plan	60%
Review teaching and learning related policies to ensure compliance with IB requirements	September 2016/May 2017	Most policeis have been updated; policy review occurring this spring	70%

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Analyze observation data in multiple ways to plan differentiated opportunities	September 2016/ongoing	Secondary school has completed department audits using observation data; goal for observation data to be reviewed monthly by SLT	70%
Create a Google Form and Sheet to collect observation data and provide immediate feedback to teachers	September 2016	Completed	100%

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