

GEMS-Net PD Options

In addition to the initial and advanced course workshops that teachers are scheduled into, and occasional optional sessions, GEMS-Net is happy to provide a variety of other PD options to meet your district and building needs. Below are several effective options that we've used in the past, but we are always open to thinking creatively and customizing support on a case by case basis. To discuss or schedule any of the options below, contact Stephanie at stephanie_good@uri.edu or 401-874-6008.

Classroom Coaching

We are happy to come into buildings to provide support at the classroom level. This can include observing a teacher teaching and providing constructive feedback, co-teaching, or modeling a lesson. We often focus on a specific aspect of the science program such as effective use of questioning, active investigation, writing, research, etc. These are often initiated by teachers themselves seeking support, or by principals advocating for extra support in their buildings. An important part of this model is for all teachers at the grade level to be released for the coaching session and a debrief session of about 30 minutes afterward. This enables collaboration, reflection and the development of actionable next steps. We are also happy to facilitate multiple grade level sessions during a full day as the schedule allows.

Grade Level/Department/Faculty Meetings

We are happy to attend grade level/department or faculty meetings before, during, or after school. We can design concise PD sessions to address specific needs such as use of the embedded assessment tool, reflecting on notebooks, use of and interpretation of the online assessment system, further support with a particular area of the program, planning, etc. If this is scheduled during the school day, we can rotate through multiple meetings.

Building Level PD

We can arrange for building level support by rotating through smaller, grade level, groups as described above. We can also use whole day or half day sessions to work with grade spans or entire faculties to support deeper development of program elements such as reading, writing, outdoor learning, integrated instructional technology or any area of need.

Community Science Visit

We can work with your district to organize a community visit. There are two purposes of the visit. First, is to celebrate and support the diligent and rigorous STEM education going on in your schools. We know from our work on the state and national levels that what is happening in GEMS-Net schools is innovative and leading the way in NGSS implementation. It is worthy and necessary to share this work among and across our districts and communities. Second, by observing the work that is systemic in your schools we can identify the strengths of implementation and develop next steps for our professional development. Central office and building administrators work with your teacher leaders and our staff to put together the visit. Once a school is identified, we will select a date and time for the visit. The visit requires a 2

hour block of time. A 25-minute briefing of what the team will be observing is followed by a 50-minute block where the team breaks into small groups and visits 4-5 classrooms during a science lesson. Then a 45-minute debrief session allows participants to share and reflect on our observations. The team is usually 12-16 people. Members are made up a variety of stakeholders invited by the district, school, or GEMS-Net staff. Members can include central office and building administrators, administrators from other buildings or districts, teachers within or cross building, MS or HS admin/teachers/dept. chairs, PTO members, school committee members, state level administration, URI Education faculty, local/state government representatives, URI research scientists and engineers and anyone else with a vested interest in STEM education. The visit requires a space for the team to meet and debrief. It also requires some shifts to the schedule so that all (or close to all) teachers are able to teach science during the 50-minute classroom visit timeframe. It is important that we are able to observe most classrooms so that we can see the power of what happens systemically. It is not about showcasing only those highly invested in science, but the strength in what all teachers are doing. Observing what is systemic and typical is also the only way we can develop next steps for our PD. The teachers should be teaching whatever type of science lesson naturally comes next in their sequence of lessons; it should not be anything out of the ordinary plan. These visits have been an exciting and powerful PD tool.

Principal Support

We can meet with one or more principals in your district to address their needs in supporting teachers. In the past, meeting to review notebooks from a variety of grade levels and a variety of students, has been very effective. We have helped principals develop protocols for reflecting on notebooks as a regular practice to assess program implementation, student development, and support for teachers as they develop their practice.

District Level PD

We are happy to help you make effective and efficient use of your PD days. We can run course-specific workshops, or customize sessions to meet the needs of teachers by focusing on grade span work or particular program needs such as reading/research, writing, assessment, outdoor learning, etc.