



Toki Middle School Expeditionary Learning School Funding Request

“It takes a community to raise a school. It takes a school to build a community.”

Why Toki Middle School?

In October 2009, Madison Mayor, Dave Cieslewicz, was “Principal for a Day” at Toki Middle School. The following day on his blog he wrote, **“What I witnessed was dedicated teachers and engaged students in a friendly and orderly atmosphere. And the diversity that is there is a big advantage, setting those kids up for success in a world that is, if anything, even more diverse than the student body at Toki.”**

While there is good work happening at Toki, we recognize that more needs to be done to become the best middle school in our community. Currently, we have four active School Improvement Teams that meet monthly to monitor and further develop our annual goals. Behavior data is improving with a coordinated Positive Behavior Program. Reading and writing scores continue to show progress increasing by 10% in the past two years.

The School Improvement Teams have determined that Toki needs a common thread to connect our efforts. It is important that we encourage open communication, incorporate community building activities in our everyday work, and increase community and parent/guardian involvement. We have identified Expeditionary Learning Schools, a national education reform model, to partner with us in our journey toward excellence.

Why Expeditionary Learning?

Expeditionary Learning (EL) has a record of establishing high-achieving schools, most often in urban areas. Expeditionary Learning is a vigorous, rigorous way to learn.

EL schools:

1. Achieve results including improved teacher practice, higher student achievement through engagement and a positive, productive school culture.
2. Promote engaging curriculum; active, inquiry-based pedagogy; student-centered assessment; and a school culture that teaches and supports compassion, responsibility, and community service.

As a result, students become critical thinkers through learning expeditions that focus on community concerns. This allows schools to draw on professional expertise of family members, and other community members in the creation of high quality student work. By sharing work beyond school, students connect with an authentic audience of community members. Woven into the fabric of EL schools is a commitment to nature, arts, fitness, craftsmanship and citizenship.

Intensive professional development drives the EL School Improvement Program. The professional development is active and demanding, preparing teachers through workshops, collaborative planning sessions, observation and feedback and instructional coaching by school designers.

Why now?

Our community has a good middle school with Toki, but we believe Madison deserves a great middle school. Toki has eager, goal-driven staff, teachers and administrators, who welcome the challenge and opportunity to improve standards-based curriculum, instruction and assessment. By adopting the EL model, we will increase student motivation to learn, engage teachers and students at higher levels, and transform

our school into a place where students and adults become leaders of their own learning. EL schools have shown that students outperform their peers on state and local tests, and develop the skills critical to college readiness and long-term academic success.

Toki’s academic data show that there is a significant achievement gap between students of color and white students; students who are economically disadvantaged and those who are not; as well as special education students and regular education students. Our current state-wide assessment scores show that on average, 70% of Toki students are performing at proficient or advanced levels. Also, Toki behavior data indicate that our expulsion and suspension rates are higher than other middle schools in the district. It is evident that some students are spending too much time out of class and missing instructional minutes.

Research has shown that Expeditionary Learning drives improvement. On a national scale, EL has been implemented at 165 schools in 29 states, including Washington, D.C. This movement reaches over 47,000 students and 4,300 teachers. EL schools with similar demographics to Toki show an annual improvement rate of 14.7% in reading and 12.1% in math on standardized test scores per year (www.elschools.org), and eventually reach an 80% or higher proficiency level.

The first school visited by President Barack Obama after his inauguration was an EL school, Capital City Public Charter School, one of the highest achieving schools in Washington, D.C. Before leaving the school, President Obama said, “This kind of innovative school is an example of how all our schools should be. We want to be sure that we are duplicating this success all over the country.”

“Duplicating this success” is precisely our goal. Toki Middle School seeks funding for the implementation of Expeditionary Learning over the next four years.

The Expeditionary Learning goals set by our School Improvement Teams are:

- Increase the amount of community service learning by 1,000 hours in a year
- Increase student achievement school-wide to at least 85% in reading and math as measured by WKCE and other standardized assessments
- Close the achievement gap in all sub-groups
- Decrease the suspensions and expulsions each year of implementation

<i>Year: 2010-11 Exploration Year</i>	<i>Year 1: 2011-12 Implementation</i>	<i>Year 2: 2012-13 Implementation</i>	<i>Year 3: 2013-14 Implementation</i>
\$10,000	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$100,000

In order to meet these objectives, we need your support. Would you consider a gift of \$500 or whatever your budget allows in support of this innovative project?

Your gift will make a difference for students, faculty, families and the Madison community as we support student learning in new and creative ways to achieve a greater impact.

When you support Expeditionary Learning at Toki, you will:

- Receive opportunities for complimentary advertising in Toki’s school newsletter and other publications.
- Be acknowledged during school-wide functions
- Be listed as a donor in the Toki yearbook
- Have your logo displayed in the Toki Community Room and in other appropriate community spaces

With \$10,000, we will begin implementing Expeditionary Learning at Toki Middle School.

Your help is needed to create another great middle school in the Madison Metropolitan School District. Please join the Toki staff, parents, students and community leaders in creating a vibrant, academically rich learning community for tomorrow's leaders, the middle school students of today.