

Gaza War Deals Blows to Schools

Karin Laub, Associated Press | Friday, February 6, 2009

BEIT LAHIYA - The jewel of Gaza's bare-bones education system - a US-style school on lush grounds overlooking the Mediterranean - is now a mound of broken concrete. The territory's only laboratory for genetic testing, at a Gaza university, lies in ruins. With 37 primary and secondary schools destroyed or damaged by Israeli air strikes, and 18 others still serving as refugee shelters, learning in Gaza has become even more of a struggle.



Shredded books stuck out from rubble. A copy of the 2006-07 yearbook lay amid broken concrete, dusty but intact. "Our leaders of tomorrow," read the caption under the school photo, showing students sitting on bleachers, dressed in white shirts and navy pants.

Israel alleges the attacks on schools struck fighters and a weapons lab during its three-week war against the strip. Gaza educators say Israel hasn't provided proof to back up its claims, adding the strikes on some of its best educational institutions set back efforts to develop the impoverished territory. Even before the offensive, overcrowding had forced most of Gaza's 380 primary and secondary schools to run morning and afternoon shifts of no more than four hours each to accommodate 450,000 students.

The American International School of Gaza, near the northern town of Beit Lahiya, stood apart from the rest. Sitting on an 8-acre plot, it was an oasis in dusty and crowded Gaza, with its lawns, palm trees and roses. Founded by Gaza academics in 1999, the school taught in English, followed a US curriculum and offered field hockey and American football along with academics, to children from kindergarten through 12th grade. "This was a great school," said Shareefa Helou, 17, who now crams for SATs in math and biology at an uncle's home because her family's apartment was damaged in the fighting. "We used to do fun days, sports days, bake sales." Since 2004, suspected Islamic extremists repeatedly targeted the school, presumably over its Western outlook and coed system. Assailants burned five of the six school buses and mortar attacks destroyed the administration offices, art room and cafeteria. Still, the school kept going. This year it had 220 students, who were on Christmas break when the offensive began December 27.

Israel's military says Gaza fighters used the campus to launch rockets, turning it into a legitimate target. The military said Monday it was looking into a request for evidence, such as video from unmanned spy planes showing fighters in the area. In another strike, Israeli warplanes hit the science and engineering labs of the Islamic University in Gaza City, the territory's oldest and biggest college-level institution, with more than 20,000 students. Mkhaimar Abusad, who teaches political science at the school's main rival, the Fateh-linked Al Azhar University, said the destruction of the labs amounts to collective punishment. "Basically, by destroying one building, it [Israel] is not punishing Hamas, but an entire community," he said.

1. In appropriate paragraph form, analyze and evaluate the rather unfortunate circumstances presently encountered by the occupants of Beit Lahiya. What is symbolic about the statement regarding "the yearbook (caption) which lies amid broken concrete, dusty but intact?" Explain your response and providing supporting details in your defense. **(GPS – Grades 6 – 8: MRC a, d; Grade 8: ELAR1gii)**
2. One acre equates to precisely 43,560 square feet. Convert the plot of land occupied by the American International School of Gaza into the following customary measurements: square yards, and inches by using proportional relationships. **(GPS - Grade 6: M6P1 a – d; M6P3 d; M6P4 a - c; M6M1; M6M2 b)**
3. Assume for a moment that the schools affected are all configured in the shape of a square and therefore, possess similar measurements on each side. Suppose a duplicate square is translated directly above the plane in which it lies to form a second square. The two squares are then connected with four line segments. Illustrate and determine three-dimensional figure formed? **(GPS Grade 7: M7P1 c; M7G4 a)**
4. In an ongoing intensive preparation for his math and biology SATs, 17 year-old Beit Lahiya native, Shareefa Helou, is required to graph equations of the form $ax + by = c$. Fortunately, he recalls how to determine the meaning of slope and y-intercept in a given equation which serves as a necessary prerequisite to accomplish this task. Shareefa employs the strategy of simply writing an equation in slope intercept form ($y = mx + b$) and using this format to graph the solution. The original equation is $5x + 4y = 9$. Provide a brief tutorial to assist and model the equation on a graph for Shareefa. Given Gaza's unpleasant circumstances, it is essential that you use the language of mathematics and communicate your mathematical thinking clearly and coherently. Finally, analyze and evaluate the mathematical thinking and strategies of at least one peer also tasked with solving question four. **(GPS Grade 8: M8P1 a - c; M8P3 a - d; M8A4 b; M8A4 c; M8A4 d)**
5. Upon completion of this assignment, how far have we progressed through the 2008-09 series of *The Daughtry Times*®? Express your answer interchangeably as a fraction, decimal, percentage, and circle graph. **(GPS – Grade 6: M6N1 f, g; M6D1c; Grade 7: M7D1 f)**
6. Using contextual clues only, define the following italicized words: *legitimate*, *extremists*, *presumably*, *refugees*, *impoverished*, and *alleges* obtained from the passage above. Additionally, use each word in a complete sentence to demonstrate further comprehension. **(GPS – Grades 6 –8: MRC a, c, d)**

Georgia Performance Standards (GPS) adapted from georgiastandards.org. Standards specifically addressed in this edition are strategically aligned with the curriculum map and annotated adjacent to the respective grade level inquiry.

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