



Superintendent's Report
Board of Education Meeting – January 21, 2014 – 7:00 p.m.

Ambitious Instruction – *Classes are academically demanding and engage students by emphasizing the application of knowledge.*

- Our MOY (Middle of Year) NWEA/MAP testing in Reading and Math has started for students in grades K-8 and mid-year growth data is expected to be shared at the February 18th Board meeting
- Students in grades 3, 4, 7 and 8 will have an opportunity to apply their knowledge on the Spring PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) Field Test ([Appendix A](#))
- We are revisiting the current structure of our Report Cards at GM with a goal of providing more useful feedback for students and parents. Access to online report cards at both schools is an additional target
- Investments in web-based instructional software continue to provide students with more opportunities to engage in learning beyond the traditional classroom setting and support the increased use of technology

Supportive Environment – *The school environment is safe, clean and conducive to student learning. Teachers have high expectations for students. Students have the support of their teachers as well as their peers.*

- Year to Date attendance rate is 96.0% for the 873 students enrolled in the District and 96.3% for the 136 staff employed by the District. Student Attendance Goal = 96%+; District Staff Goal = 97%+
- Each school campus will administer staff and student surveys at the beginning of the 3rd qtr. to collect data on the implementation and overall effectiveness of the Capturing Kids' Hearts program in Gower
- The Illinois 5 Essentials Parent Survey will be used this year to collect feedback about our schools. The Illinois State Board of Education has not released the dates for survey administration yet.
- Facilities Update: A full summary of the 2012 Referendum Project is being developed for the Board of Education. Additionally, students, parents, and staff will continue to notice upgrades to campus security

Involved Families and Community – *Strong relationships are built across the community to support learning.*

- The PTO-sponsored Science Fair is scheduled to take place at Gower Middle on Feb. 11th. Students will also have an opportunity to participate in the Brookfield Zoo Regional Science Fair on Feb 7th.
- The PTO-sponsored Multicultural Fair is scheduled for Feb 28th from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at GM and will celebrate the cultural diversity we have in the Gower Community. Mark your calendar today.
- Updates to our emergency notification systems proved timely in keeping parents well informed about the Emergency Days used on Jan. 6th and 7th. The last day of school this year is scheduled for Weds. June 11, 2014. The caller ID for our automated calling system has been changed to 630-286-4800 ☺

Collaborative Teachers and Staff – *The staff is committed to the school, receives strong professional development, and works together to improve the school.*

- The Gower staff was applauded for their work to ensure all students arrived and departed safely and orderly from our schools as we opened on Jan. 8th, in unprecedented fashion, without bus transportation
- Staff development on 1/17 provided time for our teachers (K-8) to continue to collaborate on lesson and unit design through Atlas Rubicon and align to the Common Core and 21st Century Learning Skills.
- Our Innovate 62 Committee continues to participate in off-campus site visits and our "Take-the-Tech-Home" initiative to develop an effective technology plan for the district ([Appendix B](#))
- Teachers will have the opportunity to provide anonymous feedback for our principals to use as part of an annual performance evaluation survey designed to promote ongoing reflection and improvement

Effective Leaders – *School leaders work with staff to implement a clear and strategic vision for school success.*

- At mid-year, our school leaders have conducted hundreds of classroom observations with the typical classroom teacher receiving formal or informal feedback from more than six classroom visits
- Work has been initiated to develop the 2014-2015 & 2015-2016 school year calendars for review in Feb.
- Changes to our existing bus routes have resulted in a more efficient and cost-effective design for transportation services. Consolidating from 21 to 18 bus routes per day allows for a reduced bus fleet.

**Gower District #62
Superintendent's Report
Appendix A**

Date: January 21, 2014

Title: PARCC Field Test (5 min.)

Initial

Contact: Rebecca Laratta – rlaratta@gower62.com

Background

Illinois is a member state of Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). Currently, PARCC is building new assessments for the 2014-2015 school year in the areas of Math and English Language Arts. The Illinois State Board of Education plans to have school districts administer the PARCC assessments in place of ISAT in the 2014-2015 school year.

District administrators shared with the Board of Education that Gower Middle School was selected to pilot one of the PARCC assessments in 7th and 8th grade Math and possibly additional grade levels.

Current State

The Gower staff is preparing for the PARCC Field Test in March. This PARCC Field Test will be administered to over one million students across PARCC states. It is a critical milestone in PARCC's work toward full implementation of the new assessments in 2014-2015. The primary purposes of the PARCC Field Test are to:

- Give students, teachers, and District officials the opportunity to experience the administration of PARCC assessments and better prepare curriculum and instruction;
- Examine the quality of items so that PARCC can build assessment forms for the 2014-2015 school year;
- Pilot assessment administration procedures.

While the field test assessments are designed to mirror those that will be used in the first PARCC administration in 2014-2015, most students participating in the field test will only take a part of the assessment in one content area in order to minimize the testing burden on individual students and schools. In addition to the 7th and 8th grade Math PARCC Field Test, Gower was selected to participate in 3rd and 4th grade ELA PARCC Field Test. The PARCC Field Test involves the Performance-Based Assessment (PBA) and End-of-Year Assessment (EOY).

PARCC has assigned the following field tests to Gower:

School Name	Grade/Course	Subject Area	Number of Classes	Mode of Administration	Assessment Component
Gower Middle	7	Math	2	Online	PBA & EOY
Gower Middle	8	Math	2	Online	PBA
Gower West	3	ELA	2	Online	PBA & EOY
Gower West	3	ELA	2	Paper	PBA & EOY
Gower West	4	ELA	2	Online	PBA & EOY

The sample of students in the selected schools will represent the demographics of each state and PARCC as a whole. Classes are chosen randomly by the PARCC Field Test administrator, Pearson Access.

Future State

Gower staff will be involved in PARCC Field Test Administration webinars between January and March to learn additional details and requirements regarding the testing. The administration windows for the PARCC Field Test are as follows:

Assessment Component	2014 Administration Dates
Performance-Based Assessment (PBA)	March 24 to April 11
End-of-Year Assessment (EOY)	May 5 to June 6

Additional information can be found at <http://www.parcconline.org>

**Gower District #62
Superintendent's Report
Appendix B**

Date: January 21, 2014

Title: District Technology Plan Update (5 min.)

Initial

Contact: Rebecca Laratta – rlaratta@gower62.com

Background

Continuous improvement and looking for innovative ways to engage students and increase student learning are important goals of the administrative team and the teachers. INNOVATE 62 and the administrative team are working together to research different devices and how a 1:1 initiative can change teaching and learning for students in Gower.

Current State

District leaders continue to develop and complete the District Technology Plan, which is due on February 28, 2014. Two initiatives are in process to inform the Technology Plan.

“Take-The-Tech Home”:

Kevin Neubert, Engaged Learning Specialist has led a “Take-the-Tech-Home” pilot at Gower Middle School. Before break, two 8th grade students were randomly selected to try out a Chromebook for a week and a MacBook Air for a week to evaluate the features of both devices and share their feedback on a Google Doc. Currently, two 7th grade students have the devices and are using them at school and at home. Parents were contacted and given a permission slip to sign. Here are some of the quotes from the students regarding their experiences:

- “Overall, I was very happy with this computer and it would work well for students in every aspect. However, I was disappointed in the lack of opportunities for use during class. I feel that if students were to have their own laptops, teachers would have to present more opportunities for computer use.” - 8th grade student
- “I really enjoyed my time with the Chromebook, and I will miss it very much. I liked how all the Google apps are connected to one Google account which make it easier to access them. The whole time I felt connected through the uses of Drive and was able to change settings easily and work the Chromebook to my liking. It is a very good computer that has kept me VERY organized this past week.” -7th grade student
- “I think that this laptop would be useful in Gower because it’s so much like the usual laptops, except smaller and the letters, numbers, and stuff on the keyboard glow-anyway, it would be easy to use because of the familiarity. I can do everything I usually do at home, or on a school laptop. There are no known difficulties so far.” -7th grade student
- “All in all, I was happy with the computer and it was a valuable tool throughout this week. I would give it an 8 out of 10 because it had a few problems, but it was durable,

fast, and lightweight. I think this was a good experience to use something other than an Apple, and I think the Chromebook was a very good student laptop.” –8th grade student

INNOVATE 62 Site Visits:

INNOVATE 62 members visited other school districts to learn how their 1:1 pilot or implementation is impacting teaching and learning. The site visits were selected based on their current state of implementing a 1:1 initiative and recognition of districts for their process. For example, Leyden High School District was named in “35 High Schools Worth Visiting.” *Education Week* 13 Nov. 2013, specifically as a 1:1 leader and National Teachers Academy in Chicago has hosted hundreds of educators on technology based site visits and viewed as a strong innovator in the field. Small groups of teachers and administrators participated in site visits to:

- McClure Junior High, Western Springs
- El Sierra Elementary School, Downers Grove
- National Teachers Academy, Chicago
- Leyden East High School, Franklin Park

On January 29, 2014, INNOVATE 62 members will visit schools within South Berwyn, also recognized for their use of technology to support teaching and learning. Ray Harth, our District’s Technology Consultant has been a part of several visits to determine the infrastructure needs and assess Gower’s bandwidth and access points. These visits have been helpful to reaffirm and sharpen our approach and implementation plan to increase technology use across the District in support of teaching and learning.

Future State

The committee plans to meet on February 10, 2014, to share what they have learned on the visits and discuss future recommendations for Gower. Ray Harth, in collaboration with District leaders will also prepare recommendations needed for the completion of the District Technology Plan. A follow-up report will be presented to the Board in March.