



## Gower School District 62

7700 Clarendon Hills Rd.

Willowbrook, IL 60527

(P) 630-986-5383

[www.gower62.com](http://www.gower62.com)



### Superintendent's Report

#### Board of Education Meeting – August 20, 2013 – 7:00 p.m.

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

- Virtual Summer Enrichment classes were held (6/17 – 8/16), serving 77 students and using a pilot program – Stride Academy – which is being reviewed for possible expansion to the general curriculum
- Gower West's Step-Up Summer School Program began on Aug. 5<sup>th</sup> and will continue through Aug. 23<sup>rd</sup> and has served 26 students or 57% of the students invited to the program
- Common Core State Standard (CCSS) implementation at both campuses continues for the 2013-2014 school year and will be assessed through classroom observations and student performance on the MAP assessment as well as the realigned state exam, ISAT
- Recommendation from May 7, 2013 Board Meeting: 3<sup>rd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> grade students will pilot the use of *Math Expressions Common Core* to align more closely with the 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade *Big Ideas* math curriculum

**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.*

- Annual Review of District Emergency & Crisis Plan is complete (Aug 20<sup>th</sup>)
- The Building Planning Commission will conduct a walkthrough of Gower Middle at 6 p.m. on Aug. 20<sup>th</sup>
- Construction Project Updates; Final inspection is scheduled for August 28, 2013 for areas of planned occupancy for the start of the 2013-2014 school year (See [Appendix A](#))

**Involved Families** – *The entire school staff builds strong relationships with families and communities to support learning.*

- District Registration Day was held on August 8, 2013 from 3-8 p.m. (see [Appendix B](#))
- The 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Borse Park "Back to School Bash" was attended by more than 250 Gower families, neighbors, teachers, and staff and provides may be linked to our 2014-2015 school year calendar
- The Annual Parent and Community Breakfast is scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on Sept. 9<sup>th</sup> in the Board Room

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

- Gower Teachers are continuing Summer Curriculum Projects including, but not limited to, District Technology, Common Core State Standards, and Curriculum Mapping Software (*Atlas Rubicon*)
- The Admin. Team has developed a plan to accommodate teachers' expectation to access classrooms within our construction timeline
- Capturing Kids' Hearts training is scheduled for Aug 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> for Teachers and Teacher Aides

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

- As reported previously, our 2012-2013 8<sup>th</sup> grade EXPLORE data indicates a higher and growing level of student performance compared to local and national norms (See [Appendix C](#) for an update on strategy)
- The University of Chicago has agreed to work with Gower 62 to administer a pilot "5-Essentials" survey for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students during the 2013-2014 school year
- The Admin. Team Retreat was used to clarify the expectation of previously articulated District Goals (continuation of Common Core and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning goals is expected in the context of adopting the Capturing Kids' Hearts framework district-wide)
- The monthly Superintendent Report has been added to the District website with active hyperlinks to related appendices (a plan for website design is in development)
- The Five Essentials Surveys across districts have been recalled by ISBE for rescoring (see [Appendix D](#) for 2012-2013 initial survey data for Gower School District)

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

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**Date:** August 20, 2013

**Title:** Construction Updates

**Initial**

**Contact:** Victor Simon

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**Background:** Construction Project beginning FY 13 and scheduled for completion in FY 14 continues at both Gower West and Gower Middle School campuses. Coordination meetings are held weekly and include members of Gower Administration, Frederick Quinn Corporation (FQC) Construction Management and Green Associates Architectural Construction Services to ensure progress and overall project management effectiveness.

**Current State:**

At Gower West, the final phase is underway in the Early Childhood Classrooms (flooring) with all other work being prepared for the first “punch-list” walkthrough to be conducted by Green Associates. Final occupancy for August 29<sup>th</sup> remains a firm date for an official hand-over of Gower West.

At Gower Middle, the new classrooms and expanded classroom areas are having finished floor products installed. All other rooms and office/common areas are in the “final-trim” stages (hanging doors, baseboard, reinstalling devices, etc.” which is still considerable given the entire scope of the project. Final occupancy of areas not including the “new gym and accompanying areas/offices and the new hallway” is entirely expected on August 29<sup>th</sup>

Previous items to address included networking infrastructure (coordinated at district level with external vendor) and the new exercise facility (ongoing).

The Facilities Design Committee scheduled a walkthrough of Gower Middle for 6:00 p.m. on August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2013 with Dr. Simon and FQC.

**Future State:**

At Gower West (and Gower Middle), district staff is coordinating efforts with contractors to prepare classrooms for “limited and district-supervised access”

At Gower Middle, Green Associates is exploring the final design of the new gym (painting stripes) and parking lot (striping for traffic control)

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

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**Date:** August 20, 2013

**Title:** Registration Summary

**Initial**

**Contact:** Victor Simon III

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**Background**

Registration Day was held on Thursday, August 8, 2013 from 3:00 – 8:00 p.m. This is the first year that the hours were extended to accommodate parents. Previous years' schedules were held from 12-3 p.m. and 4-6 p.m. Parents verified residency, paid fees, turned in physicals, received class assignments, schedules, and other important information for the new school year in the same manner as they have in previous years.

The wait time varied throughout the event, with an occasional "rush" at 3:00 p.m. and another from 5-6 p.m. The informal feedback collected by a variety of staff members was certainly mixed. Parents verifying residency appeared to be familiar with the process and the specific documents required. Roughly 84% of Gower families have completed registration between the early verification process (July 24-August 2) on and Registration Night on August 8.

The PTO was a tremendous support throughout the event and their involvement is greatly appreciated.

**Current State**

Registration Day for the 2013-2014 school year was largely unchanged from previous years. One adjustment was the extension of hours for the event. Another was the development of an "incomplete registration" process to allow for the distribution of class assignments and schedules in cases where documentation was incomplete. Finally, a late fee of \$25 was used to deter late registration.

**Future State**

Informal feedback collected and direct observation made by the Superintendent indicates a need for a change to the current process. Residency verification was the single component that appeared to limit the overall process. An administrative effort will be made to expedite the overall Residency Verification and Registration Process as well as incentivize early and perhaps digital participation.

The Superintendent recommends an alignment between Registration Night with the (now) Annual Back to School Bash at Borse Park (Willowbrook Park District) – e.g. formally through the 2014-2015 school calendar.

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

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**Date:** August 20, 2013

**Title:** EXPLORE Assessment Update

**Initial**

**Contact:** Rebecca Laratta

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**Background**

Each year, Hinsdale 86 invites all feeder 8<sup>th</sup> grade students to take the EXPLORE test at either Hinsdale South or Hinsdale Central. Students are directed to take the test at the high school on a specific Saturday morning in the fall. Historically, the EXPLORE testing was held in November, however in recent years the testing has occurred in October and even late September.

The EXPLORE test results are used by Hinsdale 86 for placement of incoming freshman in specific courses. After Hinsdale 86 receives the EXPLORE results, eighth grade teachers are given the opportunity to review each student's individual EXPLORE scores and review course recommendations for the high school. In early February of the 8<sup>th</sup> grade year, counselors from Hinsdale South High School will meet with individual students and their parents at Gower Middle to discuss the student's course schedule for his/her freshman year.

At the July 16, 2013 Board Meeting the 2011-13 EXPLORE data from Gower was presented and students generally performed better than other 8<sup>th</sup> grade students that feed into Hinsdale 86 in both years. Nationally, Gower students scored significantly higher than their 8<sup>th</sup> grade peers in all subject areas tested.

A question remained about current strategy to support student "readiness" for the EXPLORE assessment and a possible recommendation from the Superintendent regarding next steps in this area.

**Current State**

After hosting an individual discussion with Ms. Tracy Murphy about the current "EXPLORE strategy" and including EXPLORE as a topic for the Leadership Retreat (July 23-24), it was determined that 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers do promote student participation in the EXPLORE test and also provide some background to students about the format and general content as it is assessed on EXPLORE (e.g. the inclusion of "EXPLORE-like" questions on local assessments and activities for 8<sup>th</sup> grade students). The implementation of this strategy varies by teacher and is focused on building a students level of familiarity and confidence in taking this test. It has been determined that our district has been limited to a degree in using this point of student performance data to inform or help design more precise instructional strategies as Hinsdale 86 is the current "owner" of the more fine-grained strand data of EXPLORE.

**Future State**

The Superintendent recommendation is as follows:

1. Develop a clear communication from Gower Middle School to 8<sup>th</sup> grade students/parents to further increase the awareness of the EXPLORE assessment.
2. Continue the strategy of building student familiarity and confidence related to EXPLORE through current measures and focus on establishing a level of consistency in practice across the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Teacher Team (6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade articulation is a related, but lower priority action recommended)
3. Continue to work with Hinsdale 86 to secure strand-level data as it applies to Gower and provide such information to Ms. Murphy to be incorporated, at her discretion, into SLT work moving forward.

# Gower District #62 Superintendent's Report Appendix D

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**Date:** August 20, 2013

**Title:** 5 Essentials Survey: 2012-2013  
(Source material downloaded from [www.Illinois.5-essentials.org/2013](http://www.Illinois.5-essentials.org/2013))

**Initial**

**Contact:** Victor Simon

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## **Background:**

The 5 Essentials work is based on more than 20 years of research by the University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research on schools and what makes them successful. Specifically, researchers determined five essential components for school success:

- Ambitious Instruction
- Supportive Environment
- Involved Families
- Collaborative Teachers and Staff
- Effective Leaders

Test scores alone do not provide a full picture of teaching and learning in any one school. Under recent legislation (Senate Bill 7, PERA), the State Board is now mandated on a biennial basis to implement a learning conditions survey that will finally help paint that fuller picture. While this survey may help inform state policy and improvement initiatives, it is primarily intended to help local administrators identify strengths and weaknesses at the district and school level and target the necessary resources and interventions. Aggregated data from this anonymous survey will also be shared with parents and the general public on school report cards.

Students in grades 6-8, teachers, and parents can participate in the Illinois 5 Essentials Survey. A particular response rate is required per participant group to generate a report. All survey questions offer multiple-choice responses. There are no open-ended questions. The survey takes about 20 minutes for participants to complete and is administered online.

- The student survey asks questions about students' experiences, attitudes, and activities in school.
- The teacher survey asks questions about a variety of topics, including instruction, professional development, and the school as a workplace.
- The parent survey asks questions about the parent's overall relationship with the school.

Individual participation is completely voluntary and participants may skip a question if they do not wish to answer. University of Chicago Impact, a division of the Urban Education Institute at the University of Chicago is conducting the survey on behalf of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).

Schools and districts began receiving their 2012-13 Illinois 5 Essentials Report in June 2013. The results of these surveys will also be included in the State report card that is scheduled to be released in October 2013. All survey responses are strictly confidential. No unique identifiers will be connected with individual responses or used in any report.

The following message was sent to School Administrators on July 30, 2013.

## Message From State Superintendent Christopher A. Koch

As we have reviewed the initial results from the 5Essentials survey there have been a number of questions raised, both internally and from many of you. We take the integrity and validity of the survey very seriously and I want you to know we are taking some additional steps to ensure that this year's results are something that we can stand behind. We will be rescoring the 5Essentials survey with a new benchmark and re-releasing those to districts for examination. Previously, the University of Chicago had used 2011 Chicago Public Schools results as a benchmark for the 2013 statewide survey. We have decided to use the 2013 statewide administration as our baseline, the point at which we begin comparing future administrations of the survey. The intention of this survey is to provide additional information to the public as well as additional data points to schools and districts for reflection and improvement. We have historically often only had test and AYP results to share with the public and we must provide multiple measures to districts and schools so that we can tell the positive stories of public education and more easily identify areas for improvement. The 2012-13 school year was the first time schools were required to give this survey to students and teachers on a statewide level. I appreciate your feedback and we are working to improve the report so that it is relevant and transparent for you, teachers and your communities. I believe this rescore will take about a month and we will again open up the data for you to review.

**Current State:** District and School Administrators have accessed the 5 Essentials reports for Gower West, Gower Middle School, and the Gower School District in their original and initial format. The reports were an intense topic of study during the Administrative Team Retreat (July 23-24). Each administrator agreed that the information provided is valuable and were glad to see that the feedback essentially reaffirmed what our Principals were confident in already having some awareness of. The decision to move forward with interpreting and sharing the data with School Leadership Teams (SLT) and presenting to the Board, despite the call for rescoring at the State level, indicates a forward-thinking approach and a responsible use of data from the point of view that “we can determine our own benchmarks and standards of performance as a district.”

**Future State:** The 5 Essentials Survey data will be shared with both SLTs in a more formal setting and action plans will be determined once a more comprehensive analysis is conducted and the “rescoring” effort is completed and held against our interpretation as an additional watermark.

The images below provide an **overview** of the District and side-by-side comparisons of individual school performance on each of the 5 Essentials measured in the Survey. The information is designed to encourage BOE discussion, as well as School Leadership goal-setting, although no formal action is required from the Board at this time.

Parents did not participate in the 2012-13 survey, but will have the opportunity to do so for the 2013-14 school year. Furthermore, students in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade will have the opportunity to participate in the 5 Essentials survey in 2013-14 on a pilot basis as sponsored by the University of Chicago.

A more formal analysis will be included as part of our “Fall Data” presentation at the October Board Meeting which will include related Action Plans at each of our schools around the 5 Essentials measures.



As a District, the 5 Essentials Survey tells us that we are “Well-Organized for Improvement”

5Essentials Overall – **WELL-ORGANIZED** for improvement



In 2013, students and teachers in The State of Illinois participated in the **2013 Illinois 5Essentials Survey**, which asked questions about their school’s culture and climate. Gower West Elem School’s performance on the 5Essentials (see diagram) summarizes the participants’ answers to those survey questions as they relate to the 5Essentials.

**Survey Response Rates for Gower West Elem School**

Respondent	Response(Illinois) Rate
Students	0.0% (68.8%)
Teachers	97.4% (69.6%)
Parents	0.6% (10.6%)

5Essentials Overall – **ORGANIZED** for improvement



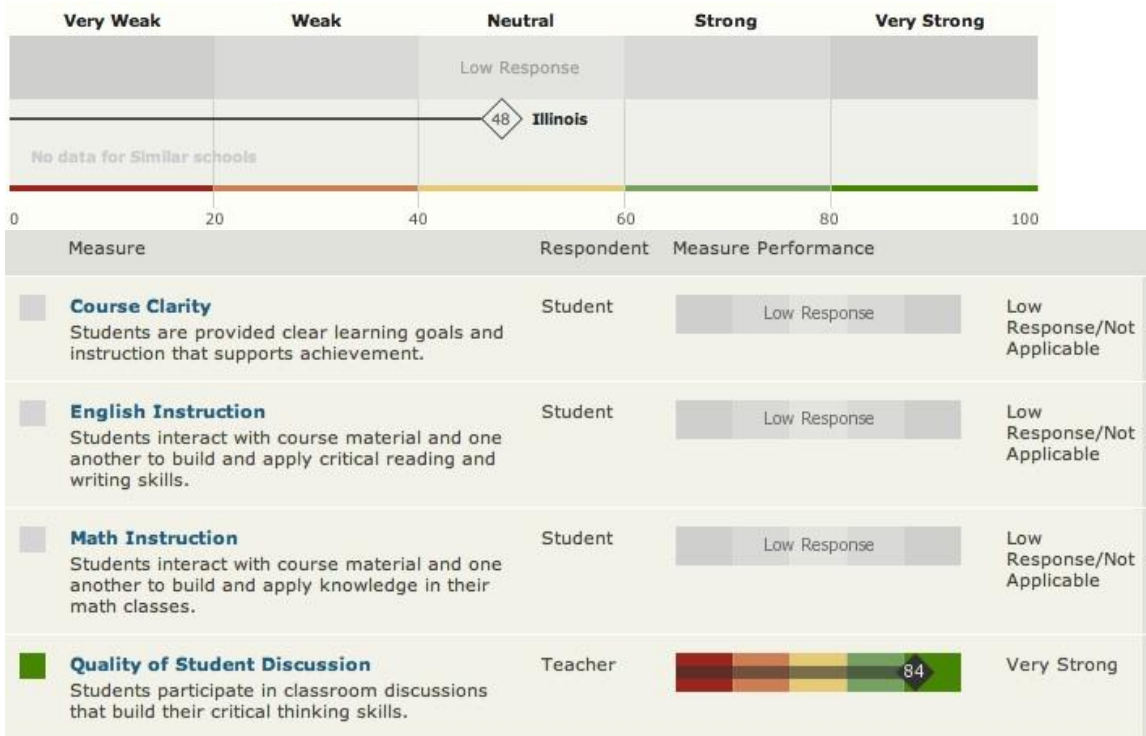
In 2013, students and teachers in The State of Illinois participated in the **2013 Illinois 5Essentials Survey**, which asked questions about their school’s culture and climate. Gower Middle School’s performance on the 5Essentials (see diagram) summarizes the participants’ answers to those survey questions as they relate to the 5Essentials.

**Survey Response Rates for Gower Middle School**

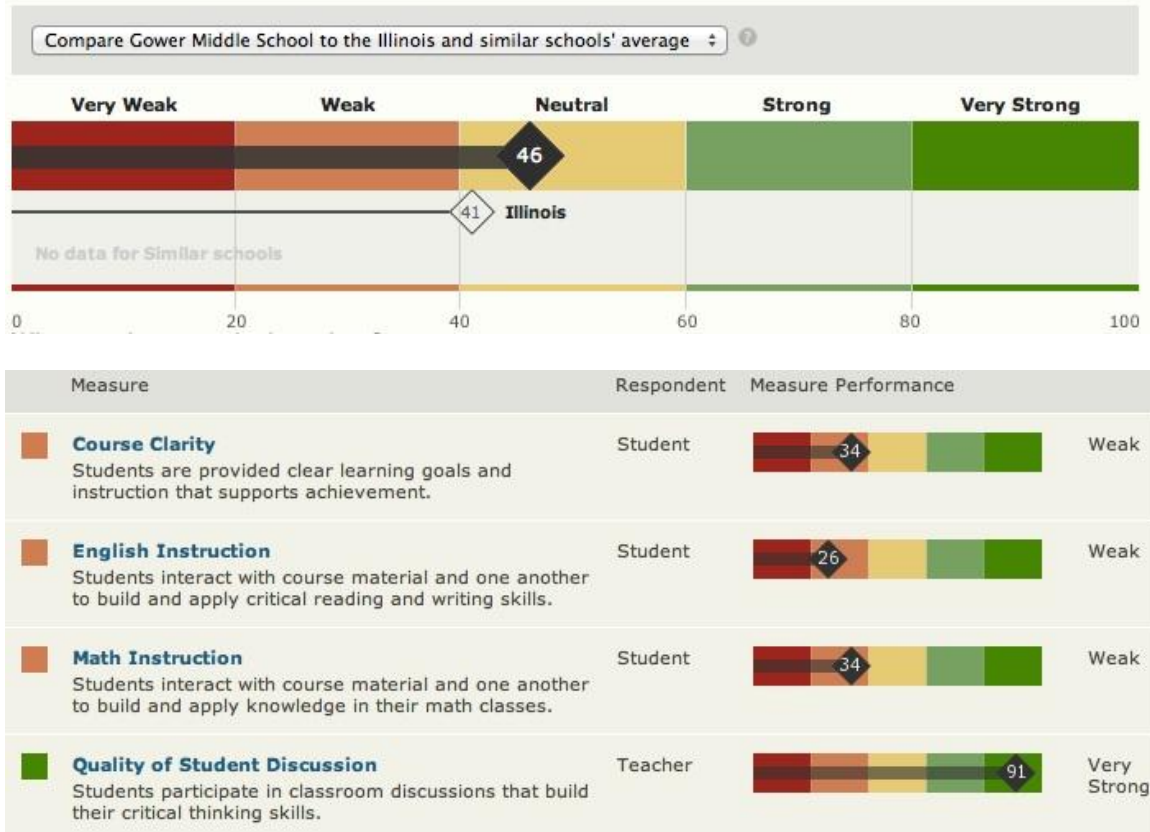
Respondent	Response(Illinois) Rate
Students	94.4% (68.8%)
Teachers	94.4% (69.6%)
Parents	1.3% (10.6%)



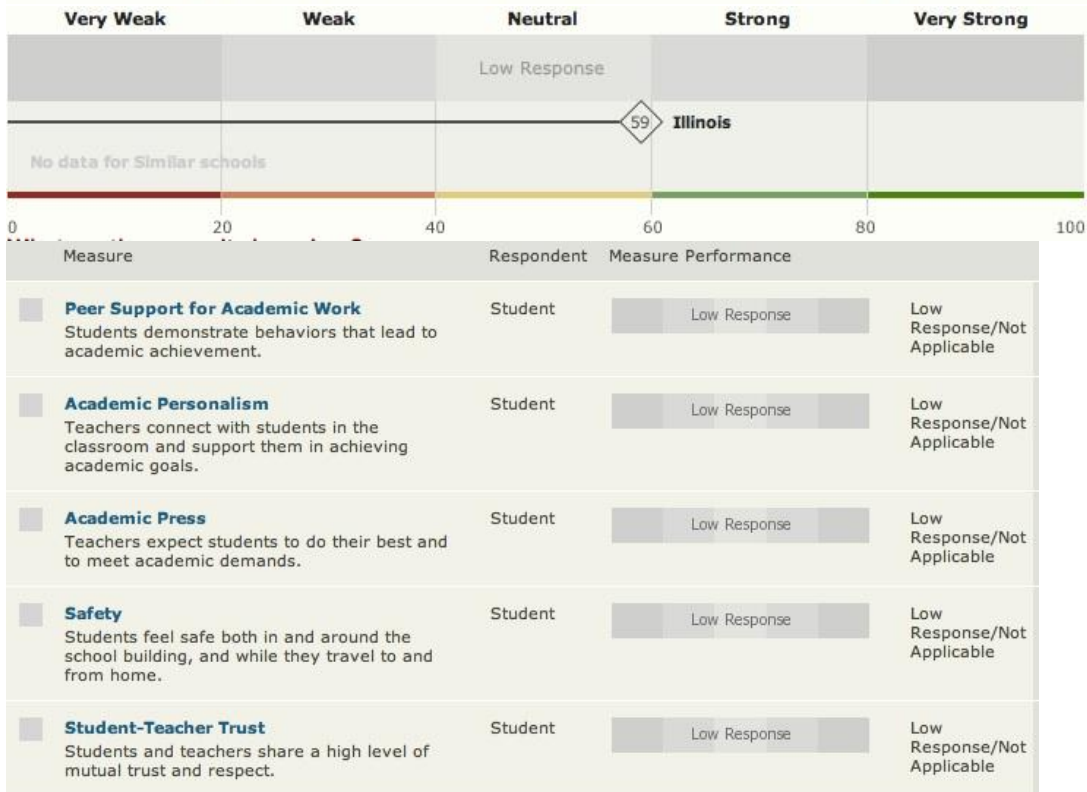
## Gower West Elem School Comparative Performance on Ambitious Instruction



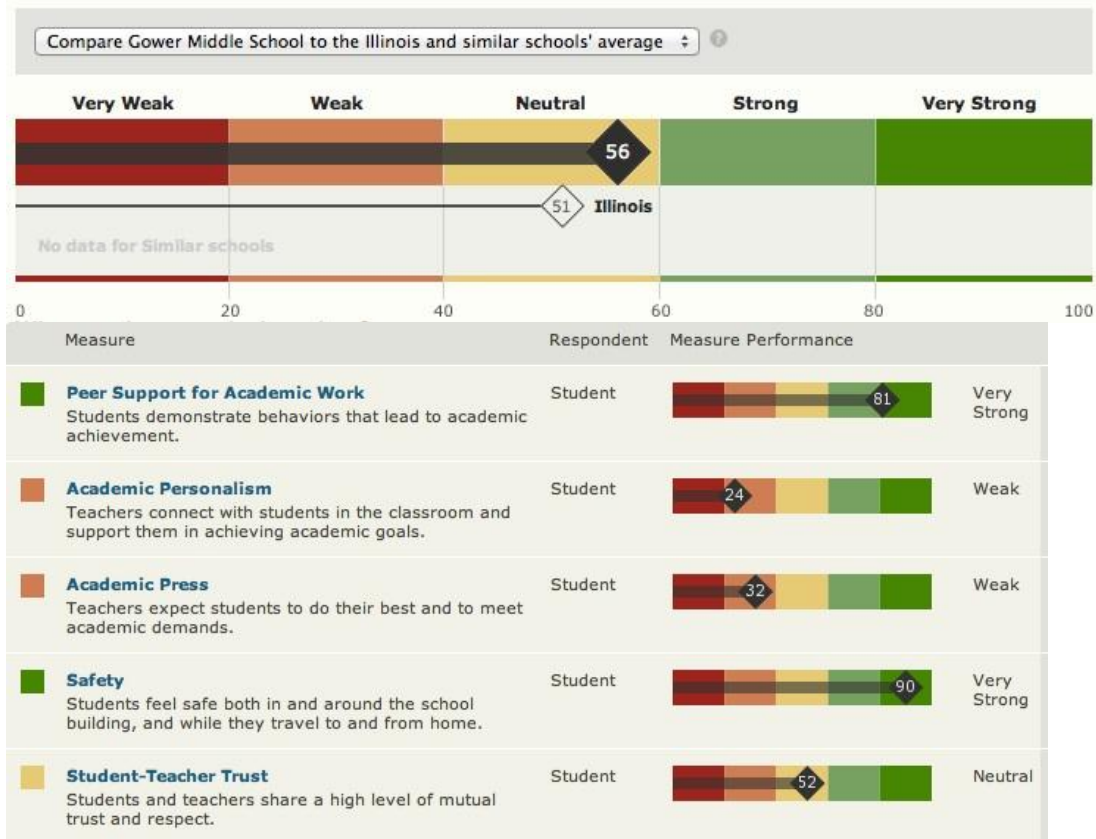
## Gower Middle School Comparative Performance on Ambitious Instruction



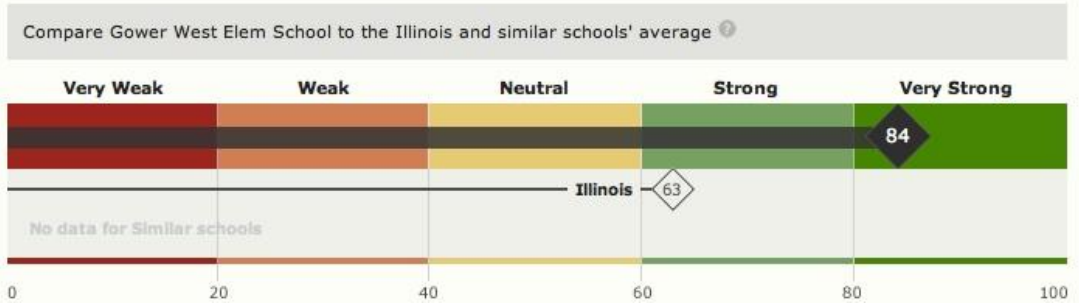
## Gower West Elem School Comparative Performance on Supportive Environment



## Gower Middle School Comparative Performance on Supportive Environment

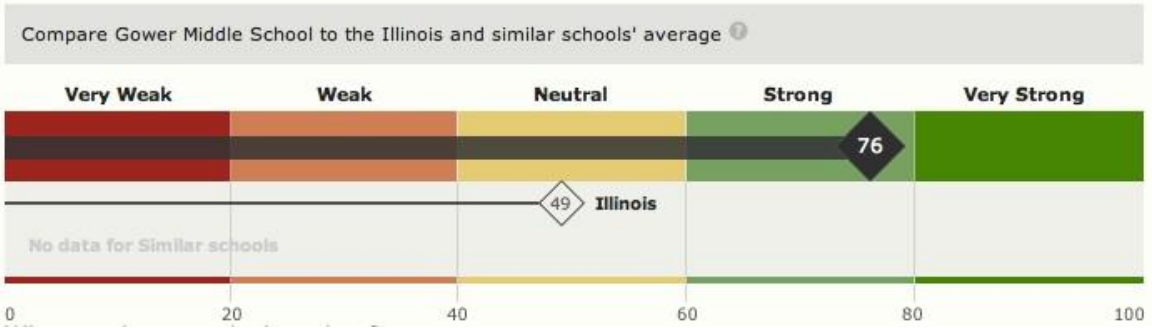


## Gower West Elem School Comparative Performance on Involved Families



Measure	Respondent	Measure Performance
<b>Human &amp; Social Resources in the Community</b> Students come from communities where there are adults they can trust who provide a safe environment.	Student	Low Response
<b>Outreach to Parents</b> The school creates a welcoming and communicative environment for all parents.	Teacher	80
<b>Parent Involvement in School</b> Parents participate in school activities related to their child's academic growth.	Teacher	76
<b>Teacher-Parent Trust</b> Teachers and parents are partners in improving student learning.	Teacher	97

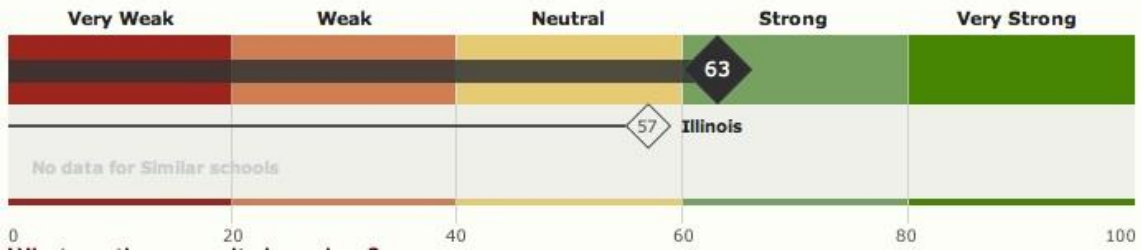
## Gower Middle School Comparative Performance on Involved Families



Measure	Respondent	Measure Performance
<b>Human &amp; Social Resources in the Community</b> Students come from communities where there are adults they can trust who provide a safe environment.	Student	96
<b>Outreach to Parents</b> The school creates a welcoming and communicative environment for all parents.	Teacher	75
<b>Parent Involvement in School</b> Parents participate in school activities related to their child's academic growth.	Teacher	46
<b>Teacher-Parent Trust</b> Teachers and parents are partners in improving student learning.	Teacher	87

## Gower West Elem School Comparative Performance on Collaborative Teachers

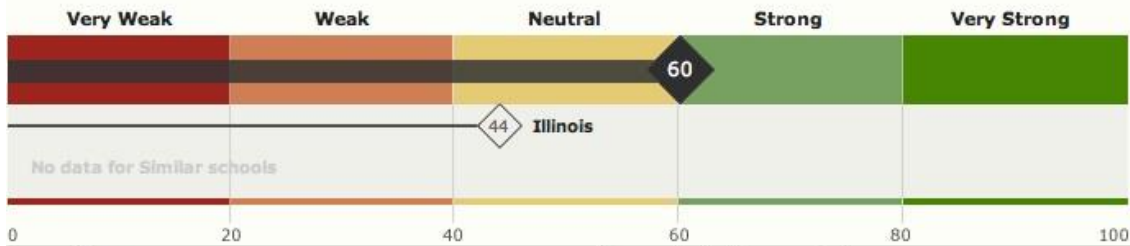
Compare Gower West Elem School to the Illinois and similar schools' average [?](#)



Measure	Respondent	Measure Performance
<b>Collective Responsibility</b> Teachers share a strong sense of responsibility for student development, school improvement, and professional growth.	Teacher	60 Strong
<b>Quality Professional Development</b> Professional development is rigorous and focused on student learning.	Teacher	68 Strong
<b>School Commitment</b> Teachers are deeply committed to the school.	Teacher	75 Strong
<b>Teacher-Teacher Trust</b> Teachers are supportive and respectful of one another, personally and professionally.	Teacher	48 Neutral

## Gower Middle School Comparative Performance on Collaborative Teachers

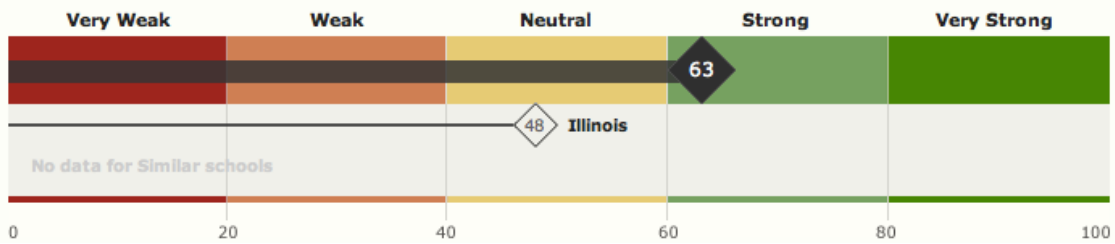
Compare Gower Middle School to the Illinois and similar schools' average [?](#)



Measure	Respondent	Measure Performance
<b>Collective Responsibility</b> Teachers share a strong sense of responsibility for student development, school improvement, and professional growth.	Teacher	58 Neutral
<b>Quality Professional Development</b> Professional development is rigorous and focused on student learning.	Teacher	46 Neutral
<b>School Commitment</b> Teachers are deeply committed to the school.	Teacher	81 Very Strong
<b>Teacher-Teacher Trust</b> Teachers are supportive and respectful of one another, personally and professionally.	Teacher	55 Neutral

## Gower West Elem School Comparative Performance on Effective Leaders

Compare Gower West Elem School to the Illinois and similar schools' average [?](#)



Measure

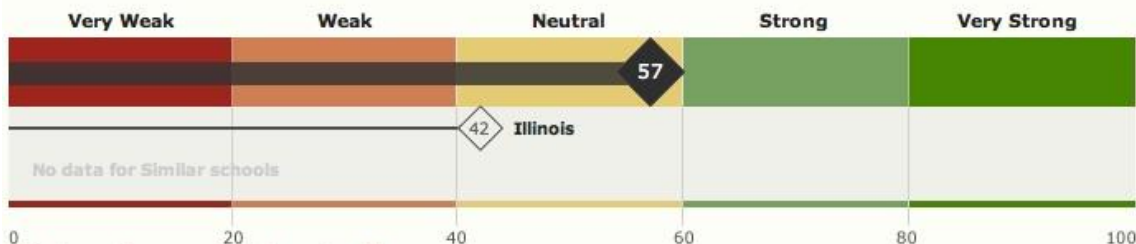
Respondent

Measure Performance

<span style="color: green;">■</span> <b>Teacher Influence</b> Teachers have influence in a broad range of decisions regarding school policies and practices.	Teacher		Strong
<span style="color: green;">■</span> <b>Principal Instructional Leadership</b> The principal is an active and skilled instructional leader who sets high standards for teaching and student learning.	Teacher		Strong
<span style="color: orange;">■</span> <b>Program Coherence</b> School programs are coordinated and consistent with its goals for student learning.	Teacher		Neutral
<span style="color: green;">■</span> <b>Teacher-Principal Trust</b> Teachers and principals share a high level of mutual trust and respect.	Teacher		Strong

## Gower Middle School Comparative Performance on Effective Leaders

Compare Gower Middle School to the Illinois and similar schools' average [?](#)



Measure

Respondent

Measure Performance

<span style="color: green;">■</span> <b>Teacher Influence</b> Teachers have influence in a broad range of decisions regarding school policies and practices.	Teacher		Strong
<span style="color: green;">■</span> <b>Principal Instructional Leadership</b> The principal is an active and skilled instructional leader who sets high standards for teaching and student learning.	Teacher		Strong
<span style="color: orange;">■</span> <b>Program Coherence</b> School programs are coordinated and consistent with its goals for student learning.	Teacher		Weak
<span style="color: yellow;">■</span> <b>Teacher-Principal Trust</b> Teachers and principals share a high level of mutual trust and respect.	Teacher		Neutral