



Superintendent's Report
Board of Education Meeting – May 20, 2014 – 7:00 p.m.

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

- The English Language Arts Committee proposed a curriculum adoption for grades K-5 ([Appendix A](#))
- Several of our Gower Middle School students were recognized at the Annual West Suburban Consortium for Academic Excellence Award Ceremony for their performance on the ACT and/or SAT (optional) exam
- The Illinois Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance awarded a Blue Ribbon, their highest honor for excellence, to the Gower West Physical Education Program. This is our 5th consecutive Blue Ribbon, an accomplishment unmatched by any other school district in the State
- The i³ Learning Initiative (Innovate, Integrate, Inspire) is scheduled to launch in 2014-15 in select classes in grades K-4 at GW and in grades 6 and 7 at GM. Remaining classrooms and grades will launch in 2015-16

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 95.5% for the 864 students enrolled in the District and 95.7% for the 137.5 staff employed by the District. Student Attendance Goal = 96%+; District Staff Goal = 97.0%+
- Capturing Kids Hearts' training is scheduled for selected staff to support further implementation through teacher modeling, coaching, and capacity building. Our CKH Consultant will present to the Board on 5-20
- Teacher Appreciation Week (May 5th–9th) included a strong show of gratitude from the Gower community
- Facilities Update: Parking lot repairs and resurfacing at GM is scheduled to take place in mid to late June. Screening of mechanical equipment at GM awaits final contractor review. GM monument sign lettering replacement may be required to address issues with original letters selected/installed ([Appendix B](#))

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

- The Illinois 5 Essentials Survey was completed on April 25th with participation rates attached ([Appendix C](#))
- Congratulations and thank you to the Gower PTO and the Gower Foundation on a successful year of fundraising and support. We wish all of the outgoing officers well and welcome new volunteers/members
- The Gower PTO Volunteer Appreciation Breakfast (May 20th) was held to recognize the important role our volunteers play in creating a supportive learning environment for our students
- Kindergarten Orientation was held on May 13th at GW and offered parents an opportunity to become familiar with the curriculum and grade-level expectations to support the upcoming transition for their child

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

- Summer PD for staff will include training for new English Language Arts curricula and a variety of training options related to the i³ Learning Initiative (i.e. Google Apps for Education, Flipped Classroom, etc.)
- The District Technology Team recommends [Illuminate](#) to replace our current student information system, grade book system, parent portal, and as a potential data warehouse beginning in the 2014-2015 school year.
- The Science Curriculum Committee met on May 15th to continue alignment of K-8 curriculum to the NGSS ([Next Generation Science Standards](#)) formally adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education in Feb. 2014

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

- Our new take-home registration process has been met with positive feedback from parents and staff. Many of our parents are taking advantage of the registration fee savings by meeting the May 23rd deadline
- FY15 (2014-15) preliminary Education Fund reflects an investment in teacher creativity/best-practice ideation through a more autonomous school-based *Research and Development* budget line
- District/School staffing plans for 2014-15 continue with current plans proposed to the Board for approval
- District Admin. recommend a more centralized and cost-efficient copy-print strategy for Board approval with implementation to begin in the 2014-2015 school year; ~\$40,000 savings over 5 years. ([Appendix D](#))

Gower School District #62
Superintendent's Report
Appendix A

Date: May 20, 2014

Title: K-5 ELA Curriculum Committee Recommendation (10 minutes)

Initial Rebecca Laratta: rlaratta@gower62.com

Contact:

Background

The last formal review of the Gower District 62 Reading and Language Arts curriculum was completed in 2007-2008 and resulted in the re-alignment of the curriculum and the purchase of new materials.

Since that time, the standards have changed to the Common Core English Language Arts (ELA) State Standards. To provide our students with the best possible learning experiences, we re-convened the committee in Fall of 2012 to complete a review of the current Gower English Language Arts program, the Common Core State Standards, and research of best practices. The committee met monthly throughout the 2012-2013 and 2013-2014 school years. The committee members include: Lea Newton (Kindergarten), Cheryl Nelson (1st), Cindy Kure (2nd), Anne Bjork (3rd), Brianna Marszalek (4th), Sarah Reichle (5th), Steve Prorok (6th), Annette Hanson (7th), Emily Ziebka (8th), MaryAnn Monroe (8th), Donna Halpin (Reading Specialist), Diane McCandless (Reading Specialist), Samantha Holland (ELL), Tricia Tokash (ELL), Holly Mulvenna (Speech and Language Pathologist), Jen Allison (AT), Gina Rodewald, Principal, Tracy Murphy (Principal), and Rebecca Laratta (Assistant Superintendent). While this curriculum committee is quite large, it was important to have representatives from each grade level as well as the expertise of specialists.

During the last two years, the committee did the following work:

- Analyzed the new standards and identified gaps and overlaps in the curriculum
- Participated in workshops and trainings on the Common Core ELA state standards
- Developed Common Core K-8 Writing Rubrics: Argumentative, Expository, Narrative
- Developed Common Core K-8 Speaking and Listening Checklists
- Worked with an ELA consultant during the 2012-2013 school year to work on specific Common Core units and skills such as Close Reading and Reading Informational Text
- Created units of study aligned to the Common Core and utilized Atlas Rubicon Curriculum Mapping Software
- Created an ELA Block Schedule at Gower Middle, implemented 7th grade during the 2013-2014 school year, and full implementation in grades 5-8 for the 2014-2015 school year
- Developed grade level writing tasks at Gower West
- Developed units of study for new ELA middle school blocks

Gower School District #62
Superintendent's Report
Appendix B

Date: May 20, 2014

Title: Facilities Update – Gower Middle Monument Sign (5 min.)

Initial

Contact: Victor Simon – vsimon@gower62.com

Background

The Gower Middle Referendum Construction Project included discussion about and planning of the monument sign, message board, and lettering. The existing sign included significant cost-savings by choosing fabricated plastic lettering and LED backlighting over a reverse-channel fabricated metal product. Installation of the sign was completed at the beginning of the 2013-14 school year and feedback regarding the sign, specifically the lettering, was received immediately from parents, staff and members of the community. This feedback was not positive and focused on the difficulty of being able to read the letters during the day as well as at night. Conversations between district leaders, and the vendors involved in manufacturing and installation ensued and it was determined that the district did in fact receive what was paid for.

Current State

Alternate solutions have been reviewed with district architect and planning partners and it is the Superintendent's recommendation to remove the existing lettering and install a more durable product that will withstand outdoor conditions and resolve the current visibility issues. District administrators and staff have coordinated site visits from local vendors, as well as the district architect, to explore options and determine potential cost. Steps taken to this point have been completed at no additional cost to the district. Price ranges vary from \$8,000 to \$20,000 to remove existing letters and replace them with a higher quality product. The photographs below show the existing conditions during the day and at night.

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

Date: May 20, 2014

Title: Illinois 2013-2014 5-Essentials Survey (5 min.)

Initial

Contact: Victor Simon – vsimon@gower62.com

Background

The Illinois 5-Essentials Survey is a comprehensive, evidence-based system designed to drive improvement in schools. The 5-Essentials Survey for students and teachers is made up of 22 measures and approximately 120 questions. Twenty years of research conducted by the University of Chicago in Chicago Public Schools found that schools strong on at least three of the five essentials were ten times more likely to show improvements in learning gains in reading and math. The parent survey is comprised of approximately 26 questions and will appear on its own page within the 5-Essentials Report. The responses from the parent survey do not affect performance on the Essentials and are meant to compliment the teacher and student data.

Administering the second annual Illinois 5-Essentials Survey in Gower provides a unique opportunity for teachers, students, and parents to have a voice in continuing to improve their schools. It will also provide important insight to school and district administrators, as well as Board of Education members, in terms of identifying strengths and weaknesses in our school's learning environment. This second annual survey will also be an important chance for the entire Gower School Community to reflect progress since last year's inaugural statewide implementation.

It was reported in August 2013 that the University of Chicago agreed to work with Gower School District 62 to pilot the 5-Essentials Survey for our 4th and 5th grade students. Despite our efforts to ensure that this survey data would be collected after the statewide implementation of the survey for students in 6th – 12th grade, the pilot will not be able to be held this school year as the research team at the University of Chicago decided that they would be in a better position to revisit the topic at the beginning of the 2014-15 school year.

Additional information about the 5-Essentials Survey can be found as part of the August 2013 Superintendent's Report, Appendix D as well as the March 2014 Superintendent's Report, Appendix B or online at Illinois.5-essentials.org.

Gower School District #62
Superintendent's Report
Appendix D

Date: May 20, 2014

Title: District Printing & Copying Strategy (5 minutes)

Initial

Contact: Victor Simon – vsimon@gower62.com

Background

Cost-saving strategies are important to identify and implement for a variety of reasons in organizations both large and small. Gower School District has over 850 students enrolled across both school campuses and utilizes taxpayer dollars to provide the best educational experience for each of them. This offers plenty of reason to consistently review our current practices and search for ways to be more efficient and to remain vigilant in doing “more with less”. Our current printing/copying strategy has been reviewed and a proposal is being recommended to the Board of Education that offers a significant cost savings and results in a more secure and more eco-friendly printer/copier environment.

The following article was highlighted in a recent SmartBrief on EdTech newsletter and exemplifies the type of cost-cutting measures that “just make sense”

A Pittsburgh-area middle-school student, who set out to create a science project that applied computer science to environmental sustainability, made a potentially cost-saving discovery for his school district -- and the federal government. In an analysis of ink consumption for fonts Garamond, Times New Roman, Century Gothic and Comic Sans, the student discovered Garamond's thinner typeface could save his district \$21,000. The student estimates the federal government could save approximately \$136 million per year by switching to Garamond. (SmartBrief on EdTech. 3/28/14)

<http://edition.cnn.com/2014/03/27/living/student-money-saving-typeface-garamond-schools/>

Current State

Our current strategy is based on a fleet of 5 managed MFDs (Multi-Functional Devices, Print/Scan/Copy) that utilize approximately 3.0 million copies per year and an additional 93 managed desktop printers located in classrooms and offices throughout the district that utilize close to 500,000 prints per year. This model is not cost-efficient and requires considerable staff time for printer set-up, troubleshooting, etc. The “managed” strategy involves a price per copy or print that includes basic maintenance and repair as well as all ink/toner and other supplies (i.e. staples for MFDs). The following table indicates our current approximate costs:

Device	Cost per copy/print (b/w)	Estimated Annual Cost (b/w)	Cost per copy/print (color)	Estimated Annual Cost (color)	Estimated Annual Cost of Equipment	Estimated Annual Cost (total)
5 MFDs 2010 (GW), 2010 (GM), 2011 (DO), 2012, 2012	\$0.0050 - \$0.0065	\$15,000	\$0.052	\$5,000	\$16,500	\$36,000
93 Printers (Various models including HPLJP2015, HPLJP2055DN, HPLJ4250, 4200, 2200, 2050, 4100, 4000, 1525NW, HPLJP1606DN, HPLJCP 2605, 4700, 4025N, 4600)	\$0.016	\$5,000	\$0.085	\$5,000	\$1500 (Current fleet is aging)	\$11,500
					Total/Yr:	\$47,500

The managed service for our fleet of printers is expiring this school year and the price adjustments are reflected below:

Device	Cost per copy/print (b/w)	Estimated Annual Cost (b/w)	Cost per copy/print (color)	Estimated Annual Cost (color)	Estimated Annual Cost of Equipment	Estimated Annual Cost (total)
5 MFDs 2010 (GW), 2010 (GM), 2011 (DO), 2012, 2012	\$0.0050 - \$0.0065	\$15,000	\$0.052	\$5,000	\$16,500	\$36,000
93 Printers (Various models including HPLJP2015, HPLJP2055DN, HPLJ4250, 4200, 2200, 2050, 4100, 4000, 1525NW, HPLJP1606DN, HPLJCP 2605, 4700, 4025N, 4600)	\$0.025	\$7,800	\$0.125	\$7,500	\$1500 (Current fleet is aging)	\$16,800
					Total/Yr:	\$52,800
					Total/5 Yrs	\$264,000

Proposal:

Device	Cost per copy/print (b/w)	Estimated Annual Cost (b/w)	Cost per copy/print (color)	Estimated Annual Cost (color)	Estimated Annual Cost of Equipment	Estimated Annual Cost (total)
9 MFDs 2011 (DO), 2012 (GW), 2012 (GM), 6, 2014 (3 @GW, 3 @GW)	\$0.0050	\$15,000	\$0.052	\$5,000	\$25,000 (3 year Lease)	\$45,000
MFD Management Software					(3 year Lease)	\$6,000
Essential Printer Usage (Not Managed by Vendor)	Use existing supplies	Use existing supplies	Use existing supplies	Use existing supplies	No printer purchases	\$1,000 (Incidental)
					Total/Yr 1-3:	\$52,000
					Total/Yr 4-5:	\$34,000
					Total/5 Yrs	\$224,000

By leasing 6 new MFDs and the management software, the cost savings will be minimal in the immediate and short term when considering the overall management of copying and printing in the district. There are immediate benefits in moving away from a fleet of 93 network printers in terms of print-job security and time and labor. After the expiration of the proposed new equipment and management software lease, cost savings will be significant.

1. Management Software costs will drop to approximately \$900 after the lease expires for a savings of \$5,000 per year.
2. Management Software implementation is expected to reduce total copy/print volume by 15-20% resulting in an annual savings of approximately \$3,000-\$4,000.
3. HID card authentication, transparent monitoring/tracking reports, and more centralized locations are strategies used across industries that typically result in an additional 10-15% annual savings of \$2,000-\$3,000
4. Fleet management will be revisited in FY17 to determine an appropriate turnover schedule with an expected cost of \$18,000 yearly, or a savings of \$7,000 per year.

With a minimum annual savings to the district of at least \$17,000 projected to begin in FY17, the added benefits of reduced training and ongoing maintenance needs, and a more secure, more economical, and more environmentally responsible copy/print strategy aligned to the i³ Learning Initiative, the recommendation to the Board of Education is to move forward with the copy/print management plan as proposed in substantial form and take formal action to approve the lease and maintenance contracts as presented.

Future State

The current desktop printer fleet will be fully evaluated against district protocol and Board policy for responsible disposal and presented to the Board accordingly. Staff training will take place throughout the summer for District staff and conclude with teaching staff and educational support personnel during the opening teacher institute days in Aug., 2014 and as needed throughout the school year and beyond. Reporting software recommended for purchase will be used to evaluate the copy-print management plan throughout its implementation and ongoing use and reviewed for change as necessary.

Current State

Gower students in grades 6-8, parents across the Gower community, and teachers at both schools participated in the 2013-2014 Illinois 5-Essentials Survey. The response rates are reported below and indicate that reporting thresholds have been met in order to receive a full report of the data collected:

Student	Teacher	Parent			
School	Total # respondents	Started but did not complete	Completed	Overall response rate	
Gower Middle School	295	24	210	* 71%	
Gower West Elem School	0	0	2	0%	

* indicates that the response rate has reached the reporting threshold of 50.0% for this survey.

Student	Teacher	Parent			
School	Total # respondents	Started but did not complete	Completed	Overall response rate	
Gower Middle School	29	7	16	* 55%	
Gower West Elem School	29	9	28	* 97%	

* indicates that the response rate has reached the reporting threshold of 50.0% for this survey.

Student	Teacher	Parent			
School	Total # respondents	Started but did not complete	Completed	Overall response rate	
Gower Middle School	407	62	146	* 36%	
Gower West Elem School	411	31	140	* 34%	

* indicates that the response rate has reached the reporting threshold of 30.0% for this survey.

Future State

UChicago Impact at the University of Chicago will generate school-level 5-Essentials Reports from carefully analyzed survey data of our teachers and students. Supplemental parent reports will also be provided for each school. Survey data will be normed using the 2013 statewide results so that all schools can demonstrate progress over time. UChicago Impact will disseminate 5-Essentials Reports as follows:

- Principals and superintendents will receive their 5-Essentials Reports this summer (~June), which will also include the parent supplement. At this time, administrators may access their 5-Essentials Reports with login credentials
- Survey results will also be reported publically on the Illinois Report Card website at <http://www.illinoisreportcard.com/> in the fall of the 2014-2015 school year (~Oct.) The results will include school performance on each of the Essentials.



Future State:

The images below reflect a more suitable layout using more durable material and resulting in more visible signage using appropriate backlighting. The Board of Education is being asked to consider the current and possible future state as presented and propose a “cost not to exceed” value for the district to proceed with this project.



- Researched the use of new Common Core curricular materials
- Analyzed and evaluated publisher materials
- Completed site visits and conference calls with teachers and administrators

We learned that the ELA Common Core State Standards are quite different from the K-12 Illinois Learning Standards and require significant changes in the District curriculum and materials utilized in the classroom. The major shifts in ELA are:

- A 50-50 balance of informational and literary text at the elementary level and 75-25 at the secondary level
- Use of multiple texts to compare and contrast how different texts provide information
- A focus on reading challenging text—an emphasis is placed on stretching students to meet the demands of more difficult pieces of text
- A targeted focus on “close reading”—returning to the text multiple times, paying greater attention to what the text says, its meaning, and implications
- An emphasis on academic vocabulary (words that have meaning and application in more than one content area) as well as content specific vocabulary
- Standards reflect an integrated model of literacy focusing on reading, writing, speaking and listening skills
- Greater emphasis on writing and research at all grade levels
- Increased use of technology and digital literacy—both in digital reading materials and word-processing skills

All teachers at Gower received professional development on these shifts in the ELA Common Core State Standards during the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 school years.

Current State

The ELA Curriculum Committee recommends updating our current textbook materials and curriculum to meet the demands of the ELA Common Core State Standards. The middle school recommendation (grades 6-8) was presented at the April Board Meeting and the elementary recommendation (grades K-5) will be presented at the May Board Meeting. The committee recommends *Journeys* (2014) for grades K-5 from Houghton Mifflin. This recommendation is aligned to the Common Core and represents the newest copyright dates. It also is in line with the middle school recommendation of *Collections* as they are all from the same company. The committee is recommending a classroom set of textbooks and online access for each student to use at home or from a device.

The committee is recommending *Journeys* because it includes:

- Scope and sequence and alignment to CCSS
- Integrated model of literacy
- Texts are engaging and rigorous
- Interactive technology components that focus on 21st Century Learning
- Comprehensive writing program connected to reading
- Consistent vocabulary throughout units of study
- Weekly themes which are consistent throughout the anchor text, comparing text, and leveled readers
- Quality materials to meet the needs of students at all levels: below grade level, on grade level, above grade level, special education, RtI (Tier 2 and 3), ELL

- Wide variety of genres
- Increased rigor to meet the demands of Common Core--digging deeper within two texts throughout a given week

The cost of upgrading the District Grades K-5 ELA Curriculum is summarized below. This amount will be included in the 2014-2015 Gower West Textbook Budget. This is the largest curricular area as it includes the areas of reading, grammar, spelling, writing, phonics, and vocabulary.

Journeys for Grades K-5:

Grade	Textbook Cost	Quantity	Total
K	Online Access for 6 years+ classroom set of Common Core student anthology/leveled readers/Common Core Reader's Notebook	75 students/ 2 classrooms	\$14,308.80
1	Online Access for 6 years+ classroom set of Common Core student anthology/leveled readers/Common Core Reader's Notebook	75 students/4 classrooms	\$35,350.20
2	Online Access for 6 years+ classroom set of Common Core student anthology/leveled readers/Common Core Reader's Notebook	80 students/4 classrooms	\$26,279.60
3	Online Access for 6 years+ classroom set of Common Core student anthology/leveled readers/Common Core Reader's Notebook	90 students/4 classrooms	\$24,234.60
4	Online Access for 6 years+ classroom set of Common Core student anthology/leveled readers/Common Core Reader's Notebook	95 students/4 classrooms	\$19,570.00
5	Online Access for 6 years+ classroom set of Common Core student anthology/leveled readers/Common Core Reader's Notebook	90 students/ 2classrooms	\$14,775.00
Shipping & Handling	10.5%		\$14,124.41
Total			\$148,642.61

The committee believes that having access to the classroom set of textbooks and close readers is necessary in order to teach the foundational skills of reading and writing. These materials are also important to meet the demands of the Common Core requirements for students to be able to compare and contrast several pieces of text and to meet the needs of all types of learners. There are several students at each grade level who require a textbook in the classroom and at home because of specific learning need. Teacher materials and professional development are provided from the company with the purchase of the student materials. The value of these complimentary teacher materials is \$143,786.25.

Future State

The recommended textbooks will be on display in the Board Room for 30 days as required by the Illinois School Code. The Board will be asked to take action and approve the purchase of these K-5 curricular materials at its June 17th Board meeting.