



Superintendent's Report - Board of Education Meeting – February 16, 2021 - 7:00 p.m.

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

- Our [Return to School Plan](#) is the epitome of the 'Ambitious Instruction' category as our school community has engaged in simultaneous in-person and remote learning settings for our PK-8th students since Aug. 21st
- Mid-year [NWEA MAP](#) testing in Reading and Math is complete for students in grades K-8 and mid-year data across both subject areas indicate minimal learning loss - Reading: -2%; Math: -4% ([Appendix A](#))
- GM student course selection will begin 2/17 and includes a number of scheduling adjustments aimed at maximizing student access and [exploration of courses](#) throughout middle school experience ([Appendix B](#))
- 7th & 8th gr. students are receiving instruction in mental health and depression awareness through P.E. based on programming from [Erika's Lighthouse](#) and led by our P.E. staff, school counselor, and social worker
- 6th gr. students completed the [Candor Ed. Life Begins](#) program (2/11) as part of the Health 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.*

- Year to Date attendance rates (*Previous Year*): 96.2% (95.8%) for our 901 (886) students; 94.7% (96.0%) for our 90 (84) Certified Staff and 92.5% (97.0%) for our 52 (62) Non-Certified Staff. Goal = 97%+
- Required staff trainings held during February faculty meetings were focused on State Testing protocols, schedules and updates (the Illinois Assessment of Readiness; CogAT) and led by building principals
- The 8th grade and High School Counselor visits were held remotely to build student schedules for 2021-22
- [Gower Cares](#) continues for students, parents, and staff to identify student/family needs (additional support, clothing or school supply items from the Gower Cares Closet, recommendations for community resources)
- Our [on-site COVID-19 testing](#) continues on Tuesdays (GW 4-6 pm) and Thursdays (GM 4-6 pm). Please continue to do YOUR part so we can do OUR part.
- Facilities Update: School-based design teams have started the process of planning new/renovated spaces with our architects and the [Campus Projects & Referendum](#) webpage will be updated as progress is made

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

- The annual [5-Essentials Survey](#) is open and we encourage all Gower parents to participate. Our standing goal is 35% parent participation and need your help to meet it!
- The [Gower PTO](#) and Gower 62 ELL Team are co-sponsoring a multicultural cookbook to celebrate our diversity; contributions for the cookbook are being accepted online through Feb. 12
- The [Gower Foundation](#) Parent Speaker Series included virtual screenings for the film [Like](#) on Feb. 11th
- Save the Date for our virtual Family STEM Night on February 25th at 7:00 pm; register [HERE](#) by 2/15.
- Our Feb. 12th Early Release schedule will allow GW Teachers to host parent conferences as-needed

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

- District Committee work continues and most recently involved our Special Education teams, Tech Team, AT Committee, Mentoring, GM Exploratory, and GM STEM.
- Feedback collected on the [2021-22 draft calendar](#) has been positive. 63% of Gower Teachers surveyed (95% response rate) support the change in school start times; final recommendation expected 3/16 ([Appendix C](#))
- The GM P.E. Team has applied for their 3rd consecutive [IAHPERD](#) Blue Ribbon of Excellence Award
- Gower was awarded a Back to Books Grant (\$4,998.37) through the efforts of our District Librarian/Media Specialist-Funds will be used to purchase additional books for the GW book collection

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

- Gower was involved in multiple collaborative vaccine efforts resulting in ~85% of our staff being vaccinated against COVID-19 (remaining staff have elected to schedule on their own or not receive at this time)
- Gower hosted a vaccine drive for 350+ Phase 1A and Phase 1B 65+ on Feb. 4th and coordinated a second drive for 320+ Phase 1B (School Staff) from across more than 20 school organizations (public and private)
- Gower Admin completed the [EL - Title III](#) Intent to Apply application with local partners by Feb. 12
- A recommendation for 2021-2022 school registration and transportation fees has been provided to the Board for approval and includes a reduced rate in response to the COVID-19 pandemic ([Appendix D](#))
- District administrators continue to review staffing plans for the 2021-22 school year with an ongoing commitment to maximize student supports - staffing plan is expected for the March Board Meeting