



Superintendent's Report - Board of Education Meeting – March 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
- The schedule for Illinois Assessment for Readiness (IAR) testing, although required, has not been finalized as the Illinois State Board of Education is collecting testing preferences through a [local school survey](#)
- GM student course selection was delayed to make better utilization of the Powerschool student information system - parents/students selected courses through electronically
- Gower will host a variety of summer programming options for students including, but not limited to - Summer Step Up, Camp Invention, Virtual Art & Nature, as well as a number of S.T.E.A.M. programs

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*): 96.1% (95.7%) for our 905 (888) students; 94.9% (96.2%) for our 90 (84) Certified Staff and 93.4% (96.9%) for our 51 (62) Non-Certified Staff. Goal = 97%+
- Required staff training for March focused on the Americans with Disabilities Act and led by Gower staff
- Our [on-site COVID-19 testing](#) continues on Tues. (GW 4-6 pm) & Thurs. (GM 4-6 pm) and will include the following dates during spring break: 3/26, 4/1, 4/3, & 4/5 - Held at Gower West from 8:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
- 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 parents to participate. Our standing goal is 35% parent participation and need your help to meet it! *Current participation rates: GW=35%; GM=13%*
- The [Gower PTO](#) and Gower 62 ELL Team are co-sponsoring a multicultural cookbook to celebrate our diversity; cookbooks will be on sale through the PTO after spring break
- The [Gower Foundation](#) Parent Speaker Series will continue on March 18th with the following topic: *Mental Health in the Pandemic: How to Help our Students* and will be led by Gower Social Workers and School Counselor
- Our virtual Family STEM Night (2/25) was well-attended and helped preserve an important school event
- [Kindergarten Registration](#) for 2021-22 is open - The current student count (72) is higher than last year (+14)
- Legislative update: [HB 2170](#) was signed into [law](#) on 3/8 and creates a [number of changes](#) not limited to Early Intervention, Kindergarten Readiness, and the development of a statewide Whole Child Task Force

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

- Gower hosted staff from Maercker SD60 on 3/3 and 3/5 to support their expanding Return to School Plan
- District Committee work continues and most recently involved our Special Education Team, ELL, K-8 PE, Professional Development, Summer School, Innovate 62, District Threat Assessment, and GM STEM
- The [2021-22 final draft calendar](#) is recommended for Board approval. eLearning days are not recommended for extension for the remainder of the current school year except for emergency days ([Appendix A](#))
- The Professional Development Committee reviewed the new [Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning Standards](#) and will include these in our professional learning plan to meet the required timeline of Oct. 2025
- 3/26 Early Release professional learning will focus on Supporting English Learners and ALL learners with the writing process, a Reading Instruction break-out session for GW, and Team planning meetings for GM

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

- Gower hosted a second dose vaccine drive for ~700 Phase 1A and Phase 1B 65+ and School Staff on March 4-5 which included staff from 25 separate school organizations (public and private)
- Gower Admin completed the [Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief II Fund](#) grant application for \$270,284 in additional funds for technology, COVID test kits, and air purifiers
- The 2020-21 Principal Evaluation Cycle has been completed ahead of the March 1st state deadline
- District administrators completed the Preliminary Staffing Plan for the 2021-22 school year with an ongoing commitment to maximize student supports and meet district fiscal goals ([Appendix B](#))
- Gower has been recognized by the state and was invited to be a member of the ISBE 2021-22 School Year Advisory Group to help develop guidance that emphasizes and supports the return to in-person learning
- Gower was represented on a [Return to School webinar](#) hosted by the Franczek Law Firm on 2/25 and was also represented as part of a Motivation Panel/webinar hosted by the [Learning Counsel](#) on 3/9