

PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

12IL4

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2011-2012 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take foreign language courses.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2006.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 or 2011.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

12IL4

All data are the most recent year available.

DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district 1 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
 (per district designation): 1 Middle/Junior high schools
0 High schools
0 K-12 schools
2 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 8066

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Suburban
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 6
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2011 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total			# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0		6	47	50	97
K	0	0	0		7	51	47	98
1	0	0	0		8	62	50	112
2	0	0	0		9	0	0	0
3	0	0	0		10	0	0	0
4	0	0	0		11	0	0	0
5	40	38	78		12	0	0	0
Total in Applying School:								385

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
17 % Asian
5 % Black or African American
7 % Hispanic or Latino
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
67 % White
4 % Two or more races
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2010-2011 school year: 4%

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	9
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	10
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	19
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2010	441
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.04
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	4

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 1%
Total number of ELL students in the school: 4
Number of non-English languages represented: 21
Specify non-English languages:

Urdu, Gujarti, Lithuanian, Cambodian, Arabic, Mandarin, Farsi, Polish, Hindi, Tamil, Spanish, Bengali, Romanian, Marathi, Cantonese, Serb/Croatian/Bosnian, French, Korean, Ukrainian, Konkani, Portuguese

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 8%
 Total number of students who qualify: 30

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 6%
 Total number of students served: 22

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>2</u> Autism	<u>1</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>6</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>8</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>1</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>4</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>1</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>1</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>3</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>0</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>23</u>	<u>0</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>13</u>	<u>2</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>9</u>	<u>13</u>
Total number	<u>51</u>	<u>17</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1: 16:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Daily student attendance	96%	95%	94%	96%	96%
High school graduation rate	%	%	%	%	%

14. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools):**

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2011 are doing as of Fall 2011.

Graduating class size:	_____
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	_____ %
Enrolled in a community college	_____ %
Enrolled in vocational training	_____ %
Found employment	_____ %
Military service	_____ %
Other	_____ %
Total	_____ 0%

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award:

No

Yes

If yes, what was the year of the award?

Gower Middle School serves 375 students in grades five through eight from the southwest Chicago suburbs of Burr Ridge and Willowbrook. The school reflects the diversity of the area, serving a racially and ethnically mixed population that includes students of Asian, African-American, Hispanic, and Mix-Race heritage and an economic diversity that includes 8.8% low income. Gower Middle School has always been a good place for students to learn and grow, but it is only in the past five years that the instructional program, student achievement, and programs and services have risen to Blue Ribbon status. Student achievement on the Illinois Standards Achievement Test is outstanding, but there is so much more that makes Gower Middle great!

The Gower Middle community fully embraces the Gower School District 62 vision of “Children at their best!” At Gower Middle, this means:

- Challenging the intellect;
- Inspiring creativity;
- Building the body;
- Developing good character;
- Aligning resources to our vision; and
- Celebrating improvement efforts.

This vision of the District translates into meaningful classroom instruction, innovative programs, a plethora of athletic and student-interest driven activities, a commitment to doing good work, helping others, and focuses on outcomes.

The instructional program at Gower Middle is centered around grade-level, interdisciplinary teams. All students at a grade level share the same language arts, literature, math, science, social studies, and foreign language teachers. It is the team’s responsibility to collaboratively guide the learning of students through interdisciplinary units, “just right leaning” (instruction that is personally tailored to a student’s academic needs), and the close monitoring of student learning habits and social and emotional needs. Common daily planning time allows teachers to collaboratively plan instructional activities and set goals for students. Teams take collective responsibility for student learning, providing support for both enrichment and support as needed. In addition, subject area teachers meet to collaborate and vertically align their curriculum and instruction.

Gower Middle students have a surprisingly large amount of choice—in classes and beyond the school day. The school’s unique exploratory program provides a differentiated approach to learning that can be seen in the products students create. Classroom projects leverage technology tools so that students can demonstrate their learning through presentations, podcasts and movies, etc. All fifth grade students explore Spanish, computers, art, and music. All students in grades six through eight are enrolled in exploratory classes that build from the traditional art, music, family and consumer science, and industrial technology offerings in grades six and seven to a menu of choices in eighth grade that include robotics, guitar, engineering, space discovery, food for life, computer animation, digital photography, and music and the media, and clay sculpture. Eighth grade students follow their interests by choosing exploratory classes that build depth and skill.

After school, Gower Middle students can choose from three sports per season and over twenty-six different clubs. Over eighty-three percent of the students are active in one or more extracurricular activity. Twenty-five percent participate in Student Council and/or the schools acclaimed band program. Gower students also actively serve others, raising thousands of dollars for a worthy charity through Gower Hearts at Work, promoting resource conservation, and the incorporation of service learning into classroom work.

Finally, what has truly raised Gower Middle from good to great is the development of leadership at all levels at the school. Student leaders in formal and informal roles plan student activities, contribute new ideas for exploratory classes and extracurricular activities, and lead service learning projects. A strong School Leadership Team, comprised of teachers and parents, reviews school performance in all areas, sets goals, and leads the implementation of action plans. The school community has journeyed together to examine best practices, adjust, modify, and introduce programs to help every student be his/her best.

1. Assessment Results:

Gower District 62 has a vision of Children at their best, and one of the components is to challenge the intellect. The Board of Education, the teachers, and the school community value improving student achievement and working to ensure that every student is successful. Gower Middle has been named in the 2010 Best Elementary Schools in *Chicago* magazine, and in 2011, we were ranked 6th among suburban middle/junior high schools. Over the last five years, Gower Middle School has received the Illinois State Board of Education Academic Excellence Award.

The goal for our district is to increase our achievement to 100% of our students to meet and exceed on the state assessment. While engaged in a rigorous curriculum, students are showing growth on the Measure of Academic Progress and the state assessment (ISAT). Overall on ISAT performance, in 2006, there were 92% of the students in the meets and exceeds categories, and in 2011, there were 98% of the students in the meets and exceeds categories.

Within our School Improvement Plan, we have focused on moving students from the "meets" category to the "exceeds" category. In 2006, there were 25.5% of students in the exceeds category for Reading. In 2011, there were 51.9% in the exceeds category. In 2006, there were 28.5% of students in the exceeds category for Math, and in 2011, there were 57.8% of students in the exceeds category for Math. In 2006, there were 36% of students in the exceeds category for Science, and in 2011, there were 50.0% of students in the exceeds category for Science.

When data is disaggregated, students with IEPs or English as a Second Language perform slightly lower than their regular education peers. Through analyzing data, there are students who are new to Gower Middle that tend to score slightly lower than their grade level peers. In order to address these gaps, there are specific programs that these students need. New students, IEP students, and ELL students may access a second direct instruction reading or math class. In addition, targeted students may participate in interventions during study hall, a resource period, or after school tutoring.

As you can see from the data tables, in the last five years, the trend has been onward and upward. Students in all subject areas are making gains, including the exceeds category. There are several factors that have contributed to these gains, and combining the factors together has led to improved student achievement. The School Leadership Team develops a strong school improvement plan in which the teachers buy-in and work together to implement building-wide. There has been consistent leadership by the principal and School Leadership Team over the past five years. Teachers have reallocated time during study hall for direct instruction and additional support. The RtI committee and the principal have developed and implemented research-based interventions in the areas of reading, math, and language arts. The School Leadership Team developed an after school tutoring program to increase student achievement for targeted students in math and reading. Faculty meeting time has been dedicated to sharing ideas on how to move or challenge students to the exceeds level. Professional development has been focused on student achievement and initiatives that impact student learning. The principal spends important time with teachers and in classrooms to improve teaching and learning building-wide. It has been a team effort, and we are focusing on the right work!

2. Using Assessment Results:

Gower Middle School utilizes assessment data to improve instruction, make decisions about what students need to be successful, and work towards the overall goal of increasing student achievement. Data is also used to evaluate the impact of programs and services. Teachers administer formative and

summative assessments within the classroom, as well as school-wide assessments such as Curriculum Based Measures in Math and Reading Fluency, the Measure of Academic Progress (MAP), and the Illinois Standards Achievement Test (ISAT). The Cognitive Abilities Test is also administered to help place students in the school's accelerated math program or academically talented program.

Grade level teams and departments analyze student data to determine specific skills that may need to be addressed, the best placement for a student, or interventions that are necessary. Teachers meet weekly with the Assistant Principal and the Social Worker to discuss student concerns and to develop strategies to help students be more successful with academics, social interactions, and decision-making.

Gower Middle School has an active RtI Committee and teachers are organized in problem-solving teams. Students referred to problem-solving may receive Tier 2 or Tier 3 Interventions and have frequent progress-monitoring to ensure that strategies and interventions are effective for each student. In addition, teachers meet in data team meetings three times throughout the year to monitor student progress and assess the effectiveness of the interventions. Throughout the school day, time is dedicated to provide additional direct instruction on specific skills in reading, math, and language arts.

The Gower Middle School Leadership Team analyzes data to develop the School Improvement Plan. Through the students' MAP data, the team can identify students who are projected not to meet on the ISAT. As a team, a specific action plan was written to increase student achievement building-wide. For example, the School Leadership Team developed an after school tutoring program for targeted students to increase reading or math skills.

Individual teachers use the data to determine how they can improve learning for students. No matter how many years of experience, from two years to forty-eight years of teaching experience, each teacher is committed to continuous improvement. This may be reflected in teaching a different way, re-grouping students by a certain skill set, and providing additional direct instruction. Individual teachers may add a mid-year assessment as a check point on how students grow and progress. This data provides another opportunity for teachers to reflect on their practice and make changes during the second semester to impact student learning.

Formative and summative assessment results are shared with parents and students through in class feedback, parent/student conferences, and a web-based program that gives anytime anywhere access to grades and classroom information. Students and parents have an access code to monitor progress in each subject area on this web-based program. In addition, many classroom teachers utilize portfolios, Math target sheets, and self-assessment rubrics for students to gauge understanding of learning targets and mastery of skills. Teachers contact parents directly by phone or email to provide positive feedback about students, progress on goals, and to discuss areas of growth.

Gower Middle assessment data is shared with the community three times a year. Additionally, the assessment results are provided on the website, through email communication, and the school report card. Standardized test results and a detailed explanation of how to interpret the results are mailed home to parents. These results are also reviewed at parent teacher conferences.

Using assessment results is key to helping Gower Middle students be at their best!

3. Sharing Lessons Learned:

The Gower Middle School faculty collaborates effectively with each other and their colleagues within the district, state, and professional associations. Within the school and the district, there is a commitment to the middle school teaming philosophy. Teachers meet daily as interdisciplinary teams to address student concerns, plan instructional activities, analyze data, and develop strategies for students to be more successful.

Gower Middle teachers and the building principal participate on the District Professional Development Committee. Input is provided on the focus for professional development as well as presenters. Gower Middle teachers have been leaders within the district to present on data analysis, specific reading strategies across curricular areas, and technology integration. Teachers have led technology integration sessions on Edmodo and Smartboard lessons. As professional development is valued, teachers have the opportunity to share and collaborate with other teachers at workshops held by the local Regional Office of Education.

Teachers from surrounding districts contact Gower Middle teachers to observe in classrooms and ask for help in specific areas. For example, a principal from another district asked the Gower Middle principal if a Spanish teacher could observe within the classroom and discuss specific questions relating to speaking and listening rubrics. A teacher from another district asked a Gower Middle teacher for input on how to help struggling students with homework completion. The Gower Middle teacher was able to share the lessons learned in implementing a school-wide intervention, Homework Lab.

Several Gower Middle teachers share strategies and lessons beyond the district level at conferences. For example, the Gower Middle Reading Specialist presented at the Secondary Reading League Conference and the title of her presentation was “How Building Background Knowledge and Effective Vocabulary Instruction Increases Comprehension.” The Industrial Technology teacher presented his findings on how to incorporate reading strategies at the Illinois Technology Education Conference. A Gower Middle Literature teacher networks and collaborates with authors at the annual Illinois Reading Council conference. A Gower Middle Science teacher and Student Council sponsor presents to other schools on student leadership skills. One of the Gower Middle Physical Education teachers is known for his presentations at the annual Illinois Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. He has even incorporated students in his presentations.

Teachers are actively networking with teachers from across the nation through social media sites and professional organizations. Through this collaboration, teachers have skyped with classrooms teachers in Georgia and Brazil!

In summary, the Gower Middle teachers and administrators value collaboration, teamwork, and the sharing of lessons learned internally and externally. It is one of the ways that we achieve our vision of “Children at their best!”

4. Engaging Families and Communities:

Gower Middle School consists of a strong family and community relationship. We value this relationship as a partnership in student learning and reflecting children at their best.

The school has found success with its Parent Ambassador Program. New parents are connected with a current parent ambassador. The ambassador calls the new family to welcome them to the community, and they are a resource for them throughout the school year.

New families are invited to an annual orientation session in August. Parents are able to take a tour of the school and have a formal introduction to what the middle school has to offer its students. New students are engaged in team-building activities, brief locker tutorials, and a tour of the school.

Parents are welcomed each year for a fall curriculum night. In addition, Gower Middle School hosts fall and spring parent teacher conferences. Both provide an opportunity for parents to meet with their student’s teachers in a team setting.

To celebrate American Education Week, Gower Middle School holds a special event, Parent Visitation Day. Parents and community members may attend classes part of the day or all day to gain a better

understanding of what a day is like for students and provides a snapshot of how the various curriculums are being implemented.

Throughout the school year, parents are connected with the school through the web page, a virtual backpack, frequent email blasts, and Facebook. Parents are provided with online access to student grades and are able to monitor student progress on a weekly basis. If parents do not have email access, the students bring home a weekly packet. Parents may also volunteer in the Learning Center or to serve as a hallway monitor. In addition, parents may serve on the District Leadership Team, the Facilities Committee, and the School Leadership Team.

Gower Middle School engages families and community members through hosting several events in which the students showcase their talents. The Gower Chorus students perform at the annual village center's holiday festival. The Concert Band performs at the local retirement home during the holiday season. Students participate in the greater community through various service learning projects, such as Volley for the Cure, helping at a local clothing resale shop, and packaging food for children in need. An annual school-wide service project is Gower Hearts at Work. The students choose the charity for the year, and instead of buying holiday gifts, donations are made to Gower Hearts at Work.

The school benefits from the support of the Gower PTO and the Gower Foundation. Both organizations raise money to provide enhancements to current programs and additional opportunities for our students and teachers.

In summary, Gower Middle School believes in the importance of strong ties to parents and community members. We could not achieve our vision of children at their best without this positive, ongoing support!

1. Curriculum:

Gower Middle School curriculum is aligned with state and national standards and focuses on learning that is “just right” for every student. Teachers are currently aligning the English/Language Arts and Math curricula with the new Illinois Standards aligned to the Common Core. This encompasses alignment to the College and Career Readiness Standards.

Gower’s formal curriculum review cycle assures that each subject and program is systematically evaluated and reviewed to guarantee both horizontal and vertical alignment and that teacher’s classroom instruction embodies the most current research of instructional best practices. Over the last five years Gower Middle teachers participated in program evaluation, curriculum development and implementation of newly aligned curriculum in the following areas:

- Math (2007)
- Reading/Language Arts (2008)
- Social Studies (2009)
- Exploratory (2010)
- Spanish (2010)
- Science (2011)

This ongoing work to assure alignment to the Illinois Learning Standards resulted in increasingly high numbers of students meeting and exceeding standards on the Illinois State Achievement Test (ISAT). In the last five years the number of students exceeding standards on ISAT rose an average of 26.4% in Reading and 21.8% in Math.

To assure “just right learning” for all students, Gower Middle school provides a Reading Acceleration Program (RAP) for struggling readers, an intervention math program, and an intervention language arts program. Students exit these programs when they reach grade level benchmarks. The Gower Middle School Leadership Team redesigned study hall to provide similar supports for students who need additional instruction in core subject areas. Gower Middle provides accelerated learning for gifted and talented students through the Academically Talented program. Qualifying students are accelerated two years in reading and/or math. Gower Middle began a “child find” initiative two years ago to identify additional students for math acceleration. This resulted in increased numbers of students identified for a one year math acceleration program.

District initiatives to improve instruction focused on the research of Danielson, Marzano, Reeves, and McNulty. Implementation of Marzano’s research resulted in posting daily learning objectives in every classroom. Gower Middle teachers also implemented Marzano’s recommendation for bell to bell instruction to assure that learning time is maximized in each class period.

Teachers receive extensive and on-going professional development. Over the last three years teachers attended national and regional conferences. Science teachers attended a week-long Colorado conference to study newly adopted materials and lesson implementation of the updated hands-on science curriculum while another traveled to Washington, D.C. to attend a national workshop on teaching plate tectonics.

Gower Middle School continues to focus on implementing aspects of the 21st Century Skills in every classroom. Teachers at all grade levels integrate technology into instruction based on the National Education Technology Standards. Teachers self-assess this work annually to guide their instructional planning for the following year.

Gower Middle has an exemplary Exploratory program for a District of its size. The Gower Middle School daily Physical Education program was recognized in 2011 as a Blue Ribbon program by the Illinois Association of Physical Education, Health, Recreation, and Dance. Students take classes in art, music, computer/technology, and Spanish. In sixth and seventh grades, students are introduced to Industrial Arts classes that maintain a focus on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) and Family and Consumer Sciences where they complete service learning projects. Eighth grade Exploratory classes, in the tradition of the middle school philosophy, provide students with choices and the opportunity to follow an interest over the course two to three quarters. Eighth grade Exploratory classes include food planning and preparation, space and moon exploration, robotics, web design, computer animation, digital photography, clay sculpture, music and the media, music composition, and guitar. A total of 15 classes are offered.

2. Reading/English:

Gower Middle School provides a rigorous English curriculum which consists of a daily Literature and Language Arts period. The curriculum is challenging and aligned to the Illinois state standards and now the new English Language Arts Common Core Standards. The Literature program is based on the direct teaching of reading strategies, story elements, plot structure, themes, character development, and conflict through literary selections. Vocabulary, reading comprehension, reading fluency, and critical thinking are the key components of the Literature classes.

The Language Arts program at Gower Middle School is based on the 6 + 1 traits of writing and integrating grammar skills within writing. Students are taught how to write creatively, how to write essays, how to conduct research, and how to communicate their findings through writing and speaking. Within the Language Arts classroom, there is a strong focus on spelling, grammar, and usage integrated throughout the writing units.

Instructional methods are shared through the learning team, department meetings, and team meetings. Teachers integrate technology into the classroom as appropriate. For example, a literature teacher allowed students to choose their novel study, and each student created a book trailer on their web page to convince other students to choose their book for their next reading. Teachers utilize a variety of instructional strategies to engage their students. Teachers also differentiate instruction to meet the needs of the diverse learners. Formative and summative assessments are used to check for understanding, guide instruction, and determine whether or not the learning objectives have been met. Gower Middle School has a focus on 21st Century Learning and engages students in critical thinking and analytical writing. Students are often asked to reflect on their reading by writing.

If a student is not performing at grade level, the student is brought to a problem-solving meeting. Through this process, the specific student's data is reviewed, and the team develops strategies to help the student. The team may recommend that the student receive a Tier 2 intervention, which is the Reading Acceleration Program or Language intervention class. These intervention classes provide another class period of direct reading or language instruction. Students receive additional support on skills and have the opportunity to practice the skills in a small group setting. Individualized goals and progress monitoring are essential components of the intervention class. Students chart their own progress on curriculum-based measures, and work towards mastery of skills and performing at or above grade level. If students continue to struggle, interventions may be changed, or the student may be brought to the special education team for review.

Gower Middle School has an Academically Talented Literature (gifted) curriculum designed to challenge accelerated students. These classes are designed to enrich and enhance the education for these students. Teachers use a William and Mary curriculum, which is the center for gifted education. The students analyze complex themes, research, read diverse texts, engage in rich discussion, and aim to delve into material both independently and within the classroom setting.

Gower Middle School believes that all students can be successful, and we work collaboratively to find “just right learning” for each student.

3. Mathematics:

The mathematics experience at Gower Middle School is based on problem-solving, cooperative learning, the use of manipulatives, mathematical communication, reasoning, and mathematical applications to everyday situations.

The mathematics program allows students to learn to think mathematically, as well as apply and solidify arithmetic that has been previously mastered. At all levels of mathematics, students are required to relate and apply number sense and problem solving to areas of algebra, geometry, probability, and measurement. Students practice real-life problem solving and have the opportunity to make connections to other curricular areas.

Throughout their middle school career, students complete the EveryDay Math curriculum in fifth grade, and then progress through math, pre-algebra, algebra, and geometry concepts in grades six through eight. The school has an accelerated math program that consists of a one-year accelerated class, and a two-year accelerated (gifted) class. In order to qualify for the two years of acceleration, students must demonstrate a certain level of points on a rubric. This thoughtful placement of students in the math program based on data helps to ensure the appropriate level of challenge and the student’s success in the classroom.

The math teachers utilize differentiation, interactive math lessons on Smartboards, and hands-on math activities to engage the students. The teachers model critical thinking, and challenge students to solve problems and explain their thinking. Teachers provide additional assistance before school, during study hall, and after school. The Gower Middle math department utilizes learning target sheets for each unit. Students review the learning target and provide evidence of mastery.

If a student is not performing at grade level, the student is brought to a problem-solving meeting. Through this process, the specific student’s data is reviewed, and the team develops strategies to help the student. The team may recommend that the student receive a Tier 2 intervention, which is the V-Math Intervention class. This mathematics intervention provides another class period of direct math instruction. Students receive additional support on skills and have the opportunity to practice the skills in a small group setting. Individualized goals and progress monitoring are essential components of the intervention class. Students chart their own progress on curriculum-based measures and work towards mastery of skills and performing at or above grade level. If students continue to struggle, interventions may be changed or the student may be brought to the special education team for review.

The Gower Math Department works together to ensure that every student has "just right" learning throughout the program.

4. Additional Curriculum Area:

The science experience at Gower Middle School is anchored in problem and issues based hands-on learning and critical thinking. The program is driven by issues that force students to use 21st century learning skills such as decision-making based on scientific evidence and collaborative problem-solving. Students record lab data, analyze and draw conclusions using authentic lab Notebooks. This emulates real science investigations. Teachers empower students to work and think as true scientists. They are facilitators or learning. Often, as in real life, there is more than one correct solution. Students choose a solution and must substantiate their decision using data from their experiment. They also must employ logic using information provided by the issues based lab text or online resources. In addition, a traditional textbook is used for in depth study of the concepts, applied in their lab experiments. This is an expansion of the literacy in the issues-based text. The two together

provide students with opportunities to apply reading and writing strategies in the science classrooms. Students communicate their knowledge and understanding through oral presentations and debates.

Science teachers completed an extensive review of the curriculum and best practices that resulted in a new adoption of materials. They thoroughly analyzed and aligned the curriculum with the state standards and common core. The committee collaborated with Fermilab Education Department, a government research facility, at the time of the adoption. Gower Middle School has a strong, rich science program, and we value providing release time for teachers to continually address strengths and areas of improvement. This collaboration is critical to vertically aligning, sharing best practices, and providing continuous growth for the benefit of the students, the teachers, and the overall science program.

Gower Middle Science teachers seek professional development opportunities outside of the district as well. The administrators and the teachers have worked together to find the best training opportunities to support this continuous growth. Teachers have been awarded grants and district funding to attend conferences focused on STEM, science research, science labs in industry, military, and space facilities. Within some of these programs, teachers have actively participated in the research. A wealth of information and experiences has been shared with the students. Scientists have been connected to students through the collaborations of teachers and science professionals. Interactions with scientists continue with our students as scientists have been eager to correspond. This excites students about careers in science. Teachers continue to bring the real world of science directly into the classroom and help each student to be his/her best.

5. Instructional Methods:

Effective instruction is as important as an effective curriculum. Without solid instructional practices, the curriculum will not be implemented to its fullest. At Gower Middle School, the teachers maximize instructional time and ensure that learning is “just right” for every student. Teachers analyze data to plan instruction for their students. Instruction is differentiated and adapted to meet the needs of the learners. Teachers have high expectations for student learning and the students rise to meet those expectations. Formative and summative assessments are utilized to monitor mastery of skills and student growth.

Teachers utilize a variety of instructional strategies to teach their content. Using shared inquiry, Socratic seminars, literature circles, hands-on activities/labs, small group instruction, and whole class instruction ensures differentiated learning for our students. Often, students facilitate their own learning through investigations, problem-solving, and technology projects.

Instruction is enhanced through the integration of technology. Often technology tools are used as an accelerator or to engage students deeper into their own learning. Students often post questions and answers on Edmodo and have access to laptops, iPods, iPads, and Smartboards as technology tools. Students demonstrate their learning through the creation of podcasts, iMovies, and music compositions.

Gower students are provided individualized instruction in the least restrictive learning environment. All students are included in the regular education setting. Programs are in place to accelerate students and to provide interventions for struggling learners. The school provides a strong English as a Second Language Program, a solid Special Education Program, and a quality tutoring and intervention program.

Teachers not only demonstrate knowledge of their content and pedagogy but also show understanding of individual students and their needs. This leads to the development of lessons that are challenging, engaging, and nurturing to diverse learning styles and address the whole child. Students identified as being part of subgroup or any student that may need additional help can access intervention classes or after school tutoring. The teachers identify students based on standardized test data, curriculum-based

measures, and performance on classroom assessments. The teachers strongly believe in supporting students below grade level and challenging students to move from proficient to advanced or meets to exceeds standards.

Teachers actively pursue professional development opportunities to continue to grow in their practice, reflecting on their teaching and empowering their students to reflect on their own learning. This culture of self-reflection is passed down to students as children monitor their own progress and set goals.

As one teacher states, "I find this staff to be incredibly professional and dedicated to their students. The teachers, support staff, and administrators are consistently working to improve the learning atmosphere for Gower students." Another teacher explains, "The staff shares a love of learning and of kids." These sentiments reflect the values that make Gower great and make instruction effective for our students.

6. Professional Development:

The outcome for effective professional development is improved student achievement. Effective professional development also builds the capacity of staff as a key component to fulfilling our district mission and school improvement goals. It must be intensive and sustained. It involves observing good practice, practicing good practice, being coached in good practices, reflecting on good practice and then repeating the process until the new practice becomes our own. Effective professional development is structured to include, but does not rely on, sitting occasionally at the feet of experts in workshops. It emphasizes building skills and knowledge teacher to teacher, being informed from time to time by both the opportunity to observe exemplary practice and to benefit from experts. The goal of the Gower District 62 professional development program will be to enable every teacher, administrator, and support staff member to develop the knowledge, skills, and behaviors required to create learning settings which enable all students to demonstrate high levels of achievement.

Professional development is a shared vision and shared responsibility of the Board of Education, administration, and teachers. The Professional Development Committee meets throughout the school year to plan future opportunities for staff. The committee gathers and analyzes input from teachers to make recommendations for professional development topics and recommends a schedule for those activities. The committee also recognizes the unique learning needs of each certified staff member. Not all topics apply to all teachers. To help differentiate for teachers' needs, there are several different sessions offered at different times in addition to the Individual Professional Development Plans created by special area teachers. Agenda topics are tentatively scheduled based on the availability of trainers and identified needs throughout the school year. In addition, the principal provides opportunities for teachers to have professional release time for curriculum collaboration and to attend conferences outside of the district. The regional office of education in our county provides a wealth of quality workshops for teachers.

Professional development is aligned to district or school goals. In the last two years, the teachers have participated in a building-wide initiative on assessment. As a professional learning community, we have studied the "Seven Strategies of Assessment for Learning" and "Classroom Assessment for Student Learning". Because of this focused learning, teachers have redesigned summative assessments and they have increased the use of formative assessment in their classrooms. Through this process, students are charting their own progress on formative assessments and reflecting on master of specific learning targets. This has led to increased ownership for student learning and increased achievement as demonstrated by our test results.

In addition to these professional development activities, the principal has embedded "mini professional development sessions" within faculty meetings. School Leadership Team members have been influential in making this a success. The principal has empowered teachers to plan and lead sessions for their colleagues. This year, the School Leadership Team has embedded 21st Century Skills into each faculty meeting. This partnership in leading positive change has been critical to our success!

7. School Leadership:

The leadership philosophy is centered in having principals be instructional leaders and empowering teacher leaders. The leadership structure at Gower Middle School consists of a principal, assistant principal, and a School Leadership Team. The assistant principal is the school's athletic director and leads student management areas such as discipline, non-certified staff evaluations, bus transportation, and student attendance. The principal's role is focused on teaching and learning, with specific oversight of curriculum implementation, literacy coaching, technology integration, and providing quality programs for students. The principal works with the Director of Special Education and the English as a Second Language Teacher to ensure that programs and services meet the specific needs of each student. The principal evaluates all certified teachers and spends time in classrooms completing informal and formal observations.

The School Leadership Team develops our School Improvement Plan, which focuses on students increasing their achievement in Reading and Math. This team consists of the reading specialist, a special education teacher, an exploratory teacher, the principal, the assistant principal, and a teacher representative from each grade level. The School Leadership Team analyzes data school-wide, predicts which student will not meet on the state assessment, and creates a specific action plan for teachers and teams to implement in order to reach our goals. Team members serve as advocates for best practice, leaders on the faculty promoting the goals, and bring improvements and ideas forward for the greater good of the school. They work effectively with the principal to ensure that policies, programs, relationships, and resources are utilized to improve student achievement. The School Leadership Team created a school-wide theme of Commitment. Through a school-wide assembly, the students were energized and encouraged to demonstrate their commitment to their academics, to making good decisions, and meeting and exceeding expectations. This team has also modeled best practices to the faculty using student work samples.

The principal leads teams in data meetings to review classroom performance and assessment data, evaluate interventions, and make changes as necessary to ensure that students are learning and achieving at high standards. Data team meetings are held in the fall, winter, and spring. Through the data meetings, students may be identified for additional direct instruction or specific intervention classes in Math, Reading, and Language Arts.

The principal and School Leadership Team have demonstrated that consistent leadership has made a positive difference in student achievement and school culture at Gower Middle School! As our School Leadership Team motto states, "Celebrate the Power, Go Gower!"

PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 5 Test: ISAT

Edition/Publication Year: 2006-2010 Publisher: Pearson

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
meets + exceeds	99	94	99	87	96
exceeds	55	46	43	26	34
Number of students tested	96	94	115	115	117
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	0	0	1	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	0	0	1	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
meets + exceeds		90			
exceeds		10			
Number of students tested	9	10	8	7	6
2. African American Students					
meets + exceeds					
exceeds					
Number of students tested	7	3	5	6	4
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
meets + exceeds					
exceeds					
Number of students tested	9	4	8	9	6
4. Special Education Students					
meets + exceeds		55	100	69	93
exceeds		0	10	6	29
Number of students tested	6	11	10	16	14
5. English Language Learner Students					
meets + exceeds					
exceeds					
Number of students tested	1	1	2	5	1
6. Asian					
meets + exceeds	100	100	100	92	96
exceeds	78	63	55	40	43
Number of students tested	18	19	22	25	23
NOTES:					

12IL4

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 5 Test: ISAT

Edition/Publication Year: 2007-2011 Publisher: Pearson

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets + Exceeds	96	95	97	90	90
Exceeds	63	61	58	46	44
Number of students tested	96	94	114	114	114
Percent of total students tested	100	100	99	99	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	1	0	0	1	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	0	0	1	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets + Exceeds		90			
Exceeds		30			
Number of students tested	9	10	8	7	6
2. African American Students					
Meets + Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested	7	3	5	6	4
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets + Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested	9	4	8	9	6
4. Special Education Students					
Meets + Exceeds		73	100	69	79
Exceeds		9	40	25	29
Number of students tested	6	11	10	16	14
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets + Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested	1	1	2	5	1
6. Asian					
Meets + Exceeds	95	95	100	92	91
Exceeds	78	74	68	64	52
Number of students tested	17	19	22	25	23
NOTES:					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 6 Test: ISAT

Edition/Publication Year: 2006-2010 Publisher: Pearson

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
meets + exceeds	97	100	99	90	92
exceeds	53	61	47	34	36
Number of students tested	98	114	110	121	103
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	0	1	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	0	1	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
meets + exceeds			100		
exceeds			0		
Number of students tested	8	7	11	8	5
2. African American Students					
meets + exceeds					
exceeds					
Number of students tested	2	5	3	5	1
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
meets + exceeds					80
exceeds					10
Number of students tested	4	9	8	9	10
4. Special Education Students					
meets + exceeds	82		100	93	75
exceeds	0		10	21	0
Number of students tested	11	7	10	14	12
5. English Language Learner Students					
meets + exceeds					
exceeds					
Number of students tested	1	1	3	2	2
6. Asian					
meets + exceeds	100	100	100	91	95
exceeds	68	77	65	52	58
Number of students tested	19	22	23	23	19
NOTES:					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 6 Test: ISAT

Edition/Publication Year: 2006-2010 Publisher: Pearson

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets + Exceeds	98	98	97	93	92
Exceeds	56	52	57	39	41
Number of students tested	98	114	110	121	103
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	0	1	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	0	1	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets + Exceeds			91		
Exceeds			27		
Number of students tested	8	7	11	8	5
2. African American Students					
Meets + Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested	2	5	3	5	1
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets + Exceeds					90
Exceeds					30
Number of students tested	4	9	8	9	10
4. Special Education Students					
Meets + Exceeds	91		100	93	50
Exceeds	9		30	36	0
Number of students tested	11	7	10	14	12
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets + Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested			3	2	
6. Asian					
Meets + Exceeds	100	100	100	96	89
Exceeds	74	59	78	48	53
Number of students tested	19	22	23	23	19
NOTES:					

12IL4

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 7 Test: ISAT

Edition/Publication Year: 2006-2010 Publisher: Pearson

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
meets + exceeds	100	97	97	96	94
exceeds	58	62	44	48	46
Number of students tested	113	107	120	116	110
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	2	1	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	2	1	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
meets + exceeds	100	92	88		
exceeds	38	75	19		
Number of students tested	8	12	16	5	7
2. African American Students					
meets + exceeds					
exceeds					
Number of students tested	6	4	5	3	7
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
meets + exceeds				92	
exceeds				23	
Number of students tested	8	9	8	13	8
4. Special Education Students					
meets + exceeds		70		67	
exceeds		10		8	
Number of students tested	7	10	7	12	9
5. English Language Learner Students					
meets + exceeds					
exceeds					
Number of students tested	1	2	3	1	1
6. Asian					
meets + exceeds	100	96	100	95	100
exceeds	74	83	60	75	79
Number of students tested	19	24	20	20	19
NOTES:					

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 7 Test: ISAT

Edition/Publication Year: 2006-2010 Publisher: Pearson

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
meets + exceeds	97	95	96	91	87
exceeds	52	58	38	39	29
Number of students tested	113	107	119	116	110
Percent of total students tested	100	100	99	100	100
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	2	1	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	2	1	0	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
meets + exceeds		87	87		
exceeds		13	7		
Number of students tested	8	15	15	5	7
2. African American Students					
meets + exceeds					
exceeds					
Number of students tested	6	5	5	3	7
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
meets + exceeds				92	
exceeds				23	
Number of students tested	8	7	7	13	8
4. Special Education Students					
meets + exceeds				42	
exceeds				0	
Number of students tested	7	7	7	12	9
5. English Language Learner Students					
meets + exceeds					
exceeds					
Number of students tested	1	2	2	1	1
6. Asian					
meets + exceeds	100	95	95	90	100
exceeds	68	50	50	55	58
Number of students tested	19	20	20	20	19
NOTES:					

12IL4

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 8 Test: ISAT

Edition/Publication Year: 2006-2010 Publisher: Pearson

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
meets + exceeds	97	95	97	94	92
exceeds	66	44	55	49	45
Number of students tested	111	120	118	109	141
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	1	0	3	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	1	0	3	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
meets + exceeds	100	71			50
exceeds	45	14			0
Number of students tested	11	14	8	6	10
2. African American Students					
meets + exceeds					
exceeds					
Number of students tested	5	5	3	6	9
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
meets + exceeds	100		93	82	80
exceeds	50		33	18	13
Number of students tested	10	6	15	11	15
4. Special Education Students					
meets + exceeds		80	64		43
exceeds		10	0		7
Number of students tested	7	10	11	8	14
5. English Language Learner Students					
meets + exceeds					
exceeds					
Number of students tested	1	2	2	1	
6. Asian					
meets + exceeds	95	95	95	100	100
exceeds	86	63	79	75	74
Number of students tested	22	19	19	20	19
NOTES:					

12IL4

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading

Grade: 8 Test: ISAT

Edition/Publication Year: 2006-2010 Publisher: Pearson

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar	Mar
SCHOOL SCORES					
meets + exceeds	97	95	98	92	92
exceeds	37	24	31	17	32
Number of students tested	111	120	118	109	141
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	2	1	0	3	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	2	1	0	3	1
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
meets + exceeds	82	86			60
exceeds	9	7			10
Number of students tested	11	14	8	6	10
2. African American Students					
meets + exceeds					
exceeds					
Number of students tested	5	5	3	6	9
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
meets + exceeds	100		100	82	87
exceeds	10		13	0	13
Number of students tested	10	6	15	11	15
4. Special Education Students					
meets + exceeds		90	82		57
exceeds		10	0		0
Number of students tested	7	10	11	8	14
5. English Language Learner Students					
meets + exceeds					
exceeds					
Number of students tested	1	2	2	1	
6. Asian					
meets + exceeds	100	100	95	100	100
exceeds	50	42	47	40	63
Number of students tested	22	19	19	20	19
NOTES:					

12IL4

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month					
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets + Exceeds	98	96	97	91	93
Exceeds	58	53	47	39	40
Number of students tested	418	435	463	461	471
Percent of total students tested	100	100	100	100	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	5	3	2	4	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	0	0	1	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets + Exceeds	94	86	91	73	64
Exceeds	36	27	9	7	3
Number of students tested	36	43	43	26	28
2. African American Students					
Meets + Exceeds	95	94	93	69	81
Exceeds	45	41	37	14	47
Number of students tested	20	17	16	20	21
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets + Exceeds	100	89	92	73	79
Exceeds	38	31	25	14	12
Number of students tested	31	28	39	42	39
4. Special Education Students					
Meets + Exceeds	81	73	87	74	71
Exceeds	0	5	10	11	10
Number of students tested	31	38	38	50	49
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets + Exceeds			70		
Exceeds			9		
Number of students tested	4	6	10	9	4
6.					
Meets + Exceeds	98	97	98	94	97
Exceeds	76	72	64	59	62
Number of students tested	78	84	84	88	80
NOTES:					

12IL4

STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month					
SCHOOL SCORES					
Meets + Exceeds	97	95	96	91	90
Exceeds	51	47	45	35	36
Number of students tested	418	435	461	460	468
Percent of total students tested	100	100	99	99	99
Number of students alternatively assessed	5	3	2	4	1
Percent of students alternatively assessed	1	0	0	1	0
SUBGROUP SCORES					
1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students					
Meets + Exceeds	86	87	93	76	57
Exceeds	33	12	14	4	10
Number of students tested	36	46	42	26	28
2. African American Students					
Meets + Exceeds	84	100	100	69	80
Exceeds	35	44	31	5	23
Number of students tested	20	18	16	20	21
3. Hispanic or Latino Students					
Meets + Exceeds	96	88	92	76	77
Exceeds	32	22	26	16	12
Number of students tested	31	26	38	42	39
4. Special Education Students					
Meets + Exceeds	84	85	92	64	55
Exceeds	3	11	23	18	8
Number of students tested	31	35	38	50	49
5. English Language Learner Students					
Meets + Exceeds					
Exceeds					
Number of students tested	3	5	9	9	2
6.					
Meets + Exceeds	98	97	97	94	94
Exceeds	66	56	61	52	56
Number of students tested	77	80	84	88	80
NOTES:					

12IL4