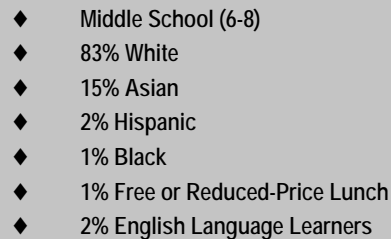


Twin Groves Middle School

2600 N. Buffalo Grove Road
Buffalo Grove, IL 60089
Principal: Marie Schalke

Twin Groves has been very successful in establishing a mathematics framework closely linked to standards and assessments. The school believes in involving the teaching staff at every level, and teachers were integral in the process of developing power standards that were the “best and most important” standards for their middle grades. The school also believes it’s essential to “unwrap” the standards so teachers at all

grade levels share a common understanding and vocabulary. At Twin Groves, everyone works together to build a professional learning community. Teams share their ideas and knowledge, constantly asking, “What do we expect kids to know and do? How do we know they’ve learned it? What do we do if they haven’t learned it?” The school makes a great effort to ensure that all teachers fully understand the power standards.

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- ◆ Middle School (6-8)
 - ◆ 83% White
 - ◆ 15% Asian
 - ◆ 2% Hispanic
 - ◆ 1% Black
 - ◆ 1% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch
 - ◆ 2% English Language Learners

One key to the school’s success has been their focus on vertical alignment. Marie Schalke, the principal, notes that “vertical alignment is the key to our students’ success in achieving at greater levels...teachers met together as a team, between the grade levels, looking at the standards that were identified for the grade before and after theirs; and in that process, looked for the repetition of skills, and the gaps in standards that seemed to be missing from all levels.” One challenge to this process has been finding the time needed for teachers to collaborate. Paul Louis, the District Director of Curriculum and Instruction, explains, “[What] we always seem to face is the time to get all of that work done—to be able to find that collaboration time, to be able to have all of the different groups meet, and to use their professional knowledge in order to have that happen.”

Using formative assessments based on the power standards is a central part of the Twin Groves mathematics instructional program. Student progress is monitored through quarterly benchmark assessments, and the school has created a strong connection between standards and assessment, linking “each question, on each assessment, to each of the power or supporting standards.” Staff view assessment—mostly formative in nature and intended to “help a teacher know where they will need to focus, where they can eliminate certain things, or where they need to spend extra time”—as part of the entire instructional plan. Sharing assessment information is key to improving instruction at Twin Groves, and the school’s computerized assessment system enables staff to easily access and share data and results across staff roles and within and across grade levels. A variety of intervention programs are available to provide additional time and instruction to students who do not meet the quarterly proficiency goals, including participation in after-school, online, before-school, and study hall programs.

The seventh- and eighth-grade algebra teachers have an in-depth knowledge of their subject matter and teach the topics of algebra in a logical sequence with an emphasis on connections among topics. They are committed to providing opportunities for all students to learn algebra and use a variety of instructional strategies and materials to ensure that all students succeed.