

October 2016

New Conference Format Launched

The mission of Quest Charter Academy is to provide a diverse student body with an innovative, world-class education, rich in math, science and technology, focused on preparing students to become bold inquirers, problem solvers and ethical leaders.

Quest graduates will be skill ready for post-secondary education to meet the challenges of a competitive global workforce.



Conferences at Quest are held each quarter at progress report time. This year we are taking conferences to another level where our goal is to have our students truly “own” their education. So, each quarter, your child will lead their own conference with you and their advisory teacher. Conferences will now be referred to as “Student Led Conferences,” or SLCs. During SLCs, your child will be prepared to share with you their data folder which will be complete with their grades, their reports on our high stakes testing, NWEA, as well as how they performed on our STAR assessment. They will also showcase some things they are proud of and the conference will end with your student declaring a goal they have for the next quarter and discuss what they will do to reach that goal. You, as the parent/guardian, will discuss how *you* will support your student in reaching their goal, and the teacher will also explain how they will help. Finally, all three of you will sign the goal contract. When you come back to your advisory teacher, or coach, the next quarter, the first thing you will do is see if your student met their goal. We believe in the power of goal setting and we believe it is an essential skill for life. During student led conferences, you have an opportunity to talk and ask any questions you may have. You are encouraged to share your insights regarding your child’s strengths and needs, learning styles, and non-school learning opportunities that can help support your student’s success in school. It is vital that you have as much information as possible about how your student is doing in school, as well as how to help your student learn. Hopefully you attended the first SLCs of the year and enjoyed the new format. If you were unable to attend, you missed a phenomenal opportunity to witness your child demonstrate what owning their education looks like, and we hope you will not miss the next round.

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High School: 2503 N. University, Peoria, IL 61604 Phone: (309) 402-0030 Fax: (309) 685-3001

www.questpeoria.org

From the Executive Director



Nicole Couri Wood, Ph.D.

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We have had an excellent start to the 2016-2017 school year, and I want to take this opportunity to celebrate YOU! We are putting a very big emphasis on increasing family engagement this year and I hope you have enjoyed some of the offerings we have been able to bring to you. We started the year with advisory meetings before school opened and had an incredible turnout of families—81% participation! What a great way to start our year getting to know our families! Thank you for making your student’s education a top priority! Did you know that new this year we have a Family and Community Liaison? If you have questions, need help with anything at all, or have ideas and suggestions, please do not hesitate to reach out to Mrs. Kertrina Dickerson at dickerson@questpeoria.org. Mrs. Dickerson’s main office is at the High School, but she splits her time between both the Middle School and High School.

We hope you also enjoyed our first student led conferences. We have been wanting to launch this for some time and were so impressed with the way our scholars created their data folders and prepared so well to share their success and goals with you. We had an incredible turnout again at our conferences with 79% participation at the Middle School and 69% at the High School for an average of 74% participation for our fall conferences! Our goal is 100% participation and I know for our next round of conferences we will get there! If you don’t have this marked down on your calendar already, please plan to attend our next student led conferences which will be held November 11 and 12. Please be on the lookout for your student’s scheduled conference time!

Have you seen our new website? We have updated it with the goal of having resources and information you need always at your fingertips. Simply go to www.questpeoria.org and bookmark our site! Should you find that there is anything missing, please do not hesitate to provide us with that important feedback so we can get you what you need.

Finally, I would like to celebrate our attendance for the month of September. Our student attendance target is 96% and we are proud to report 95% attendance at the Middle School and 96% at the High School. This is absolutely incredible! Thank you for making this a top priority. Please also join me in celebrating our Quest staff whose attendance target is 97% and we are proud to say that the Middle School has 97% and the High School has 99% so far this year! We should all be thankful for their outstanding commitment to our students. We are so proud of them!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. Nicole Couri Wood". The signature is fluid and cursive.

United Way Day of Caring Touches Quest



Quest High School was fortunate to have a wonderful group of volunteers from Peoria Promise as part of the Heart of Illinois United Way Day of Caring on September 9. These men and women spent a morning doing fall clean-up around the grounds and hanging pictures in the building. Thank you to the Heart of Illinois United Way and our friends from Peoria Promise!

From the Principal



Robyn S. McCracken, EdS

Dear Quest Charter Academy Families,

Autumn has arrived and it's hard to believe it's the end of our first quarter! We are off to a fantastic start due to the hard work of the staff and the great attitude exhibited by students. We are dedicated to providing all students with the educational foundation necessary to succeed in school and life. Your student's report card provides you with their academic progress at this time. I'd like to share some of the things that are new this year:

- Teachers meet daily in "Professional Learning Communities," or PLC's, to collaborate on lesson planning and effective teaching, analyze data and create action plans for individual student and classroom needs.
- Teachers and students prepared "Student Data Folders/Binders" for our Student Led Conferences in September. These folders contained information on individual academic goals and progress which were shared with our parents/guardians. Students were able to tell the story of their own success and/or challenges. We had 182 families participate!
- Your student was recently assigned a Chromebook to be used all day, every day for academic purposes. One-to-one technology will provide them with strong backgrounds in technology and diversity in 21st century skills" such as critical thinking, collaboration, oral and written communication, analyzing information and imagination.

As we prepare our students in college and career readiness, the juniors and seniors have signed up for the ACT and/or SAT test to be given in October. Our seniors are taking the ICC placement test to determine what classes they can take in January. Mr. Jenkins, our College and Career Counselor, is also assisting seniors with completing their FAFSA which became available on October 1. I am so excited about the rest of the school year! We know that a strong partnership will make a great difference in your student's education. We will do our very best to provide excellent opportunities for you student to learn.

Robyn McCracken



College Corner



The 2016-2017 school is off to a fast start in the college and career counseling department. Mr. Jenkins began the year preparing schedules for every student in time for the first day of school, paying particular attention to the Juniors and Seniors and working towards getting as many as possible in the Strong Start program at ICC. Seven of our seniors are enrolled in this new program where they go to ICC during the school day and take college level courses that will be transferable when they attend a university next year. With Mr. Jenkins' assistance, every senior has already applied for admission at ICC and they're taking the placement tests required hoping we can increase that number enrolled in Strong Start next

semester, including some juniors. This is a great opportunity for our students to earn college credit while in high school. ISAC is once again involved with regularly scheduled days at Quest High School where they provide assistance to our seniors in completing the FAFSA as well as college applications. Mr. Jenkins also invited representatives from several colleges to attend the High School back to school night on August 17 with several actually attending. He has continued to reach out to them to come periodically and visit with seniors. Thus far, representatives from Eureka College, Bradley University, ICC, and St Louis University have visited. Representatives from Drake, Knox College, Eastern Illinois University, and University of Missouri are all scheduled to visit during the second quarter, with many more to follow. We had an in school FAFSA workshop for seniors and thus far, 38 of our 42 seniors have completed the FAFSA. Many seniors are taking the ACT again in an attempt to increase their scores prior to applying to college. Mr. Jenkins has also been instrumental in arranging for Drivers' Ed to be offered during the school day with 20 students enrolled in the class for the second quarter, and another nine students taking behind the wheel after school.



Family & Community Engagement

When I began my role as Quest’s first Family and Community Liaison, I was surprised by how many Quest families I already knew and I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting so many others. This role is very near and dear to my heart because I have been working with families for more than 20 years and it is what I love. Working in this type of role in a school setting is different and challenging, but I am ready, willing and able to take it on and take family engagement to new heights at Quest. The term “family engagement” encompasses a wide range of activities conducted at the school, at home and in the community and is often called parent or family involvement. For

Quest, family engage includes anything that better prepares students to learn, and families’ and schools’ support of that learning.



I kicked off this effort at the High School with a back-to-school night on August 17 where families had the opportunity to visit with their child’s teachers, speak with community resources such as Tri-County Peoria Urban League, and Common Place, as well as representatives from several different colleges.

Our first Family Learning Institute was held on October 11 with the theme “Show me your friends and I’ll show you your future.” Guest speaker, Ryan Hobson, who shared his personal journey from youth to the present that involved instances of making poor choices and following the wrong crowd. It was a very impactful session. Thank you to all of our parents and students who took the time to attend. I

hope you’ll plan to attend our [next Learning Institute session- “My past doesn’t define me”- scheduled for Tuesday, November 15 at 6:00 p.m. at Quest High School.](#) These sessions are for *all* Quest families.

I also have launched a Booster Club at the High School. A motivated group of parents with a drive to coordinate events and raise money to support sports teams, school clubs, and other school related activities with the goal of supporting student programs and ultimately contributing to student success and the overall success of Quest High School. A Booster Club kickoff meeting was held on September 28, but the turnout was not as good as hoped. Another will be held soon to plan for a chili cook-off and, with the upcoming basketball season right around the corner, we will need parent volunteers for all of our home games. Your voice and involvement is critical to your child’s success, as well as the success of Quest High School.

Research has found that when families are involved with their child’s school, the school outperforms similar schools without family engagement; teacher morale improves; family members rate teachers more highly; and the school has a better relationship with the community. If you have thoughts/ideas for how to involve families in meaningful and inclusive ways, please don’t hesitate to contact me at 309.402.0030 ext. 103 or dickerson@questpeoria.org

Kertrina Dickerson
Family & Community Liaison

DON’T MISS..... **FALL—O—WEEN**



**Friday, October 28
4:00—6:00 p.m.
Quest High School**



Quest Candyland



Every year, a spirit of excitement fills the halls of high schools across the nation. Football jerseys and cheerleading outfits are sported, and cheers are heard in hallways. This year the idea of homecoming has a special meaning for Quest Charter Academy High School as it is the first opportunity for the initial class of graduating seniors to return to their alma mater and enjoy an experience as an alum instead of a student. The Homecoming theme for the year was Candyland, and student volunteers worked hard the Friday before to prepare the students for the upcoming festivities. On Monday, the halls were decorated with signs, streamers and balloons and were also filled with students participating in the Homecoming dress up days. There was class color day, twin day, throwback day, dress like your favorite movie character and, to finish the week, school spirit day. Many juniors and seniors participated in the Peoria Heights pep assembly and then returned to be a part of the Quest High School whole school assembly that ended the school week. There were games, awards, cheer routines by the cheerleaders, a dance performance, and the announcement of the Homecoming court as well. The students voted by their peers for the court were as follows: King- Jalen Hughes, Queen – J'Chayla Linwood, 9th grade attendants – Melaysia Wren and James Tipton, 10th grade attendants – Simone Minor-Trapp and Adrian Hinton, 11th grade attendants – J'Chantay Linwood and D'yami Gibson, and 12th grade attendants – Audrey Foster and Chaz Sardin. Our royalty was invited to be a part of the Homecoming parade in the Heights, and students enjoyed an excellent Homecoming football game win as well. To end the festivities, the Homecoming dance gave students a chance to have a fun experience with friends, with over 180 tickets sold. Overall, the 2016 Homecoming was a huge success!

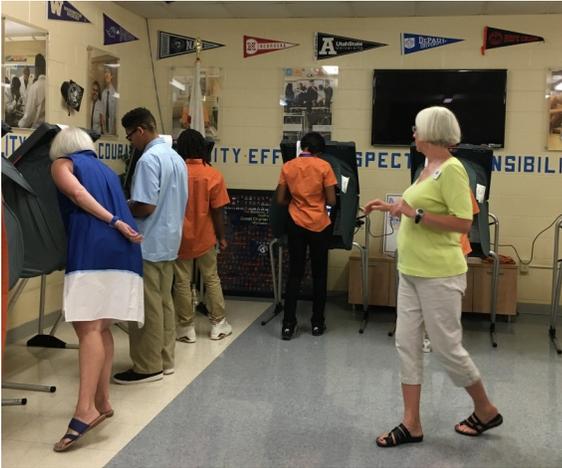
Partnership in Action



We are thrilled to have our Peoria young professionals back to serve as mentors to students through the Quest for College and Careers program. One group of mentors works with Freshmen on financial literacy and another group works with Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors on college and career readiness including essays associated with college applications, conducting mock interviews, going over resume writing, character-building and more. These mentors give an enormous amount of time to help prepare our students for success in college and careers and we could not be more grateful. The mentors are: Trip James, Vice President of Commercial Lending at Illinois National Bank; Becky Rossman, Executive Director of Neighborhood

House; Sherneka Cagle, Director of Events and Programming at the Peoria Area Chamber of Commerce; Adam Lofgren, Mortgage Loan Officer at Illinois National Bank; Brian Gruber, Pearl Companies; Ashley Donohoe, Health Education Specialist at the Hult Health Education Center; Crystal Barr, Product Support Analyst at Caterpillar; and Thu Truitt with Infrastructure Engineering Inc.

A Lesson in Civics



As part of their “Get out the vote” plan, the League of Women Voters’ Peoria Chapter held mock elections at area high schools, including Quest. With voting booths and equipment actually used on election days, students received a hands-on civics lesson that gave them a chance to familiarize themselves with election equipment and actually cast a mock vote for President of the United States. In addition, several Quest students who were in training to be election judges were able to practice their role. A specialist with Peoria County Election Commission, helped set up voting booths and tabulated results. Quest’s mock election results? Quest students overwhelmingly chose Hilary Clinton to be the next President.

Capstone projects: An opportunity for senior student leaders

Students have been working hard in classrooms, and arguably none harder than Quest seniors as they work on their capstone research and the culminating projects that accompany them. Seniors are expected to choose a research question of interest to them, do substantial work with resources to gain a better understanding of the topic and then develop a project and presentation that relates to the work they complete over the course of the year. Several of the students’ projects are already coming to fruition, and they have been learning how important it is to work with authentic deadlines, to be able to communicate with adults and mentors who work to help and support them, and to have a clear reasoning for how their research will benefit them and others in the school and community. One student pair, Cambrya Jordan and Landon Griffin, have been working with Mrs. Dickerson to create an event to build school spirit and increase family involvement at Quest. They have created programming for a “Fall-o-ween” event at the high school for Quest families with enjoyable Halloween-related activities for kids of various ages. It will also encourage volunteering on the part of our high school students as well. Another senior, Danisha Washington, has had the opportunity to be a participant in meaningful Veterans’ Day assemblies before, and wanted to recreate a similar experience for students here, too. She has been working extensively with our guidance counselor, April Troyer; local JROTC teacher, Sergeant Chris Oertwig; and has reached out to veterans in our community as well so they can be a part of the festivities, too. All students in the grade level have been working hard with their research, and this is just a small taste of the activities that will be occurring as a result of their diligence. Stay tuned for additional projects—when leaders have a chance to shine, they become the brightest stars in our student universe.

Quest in the Community

Key Club



Key Club has been busy this year volunteering around Peoria with different activities as well as at our school helping to build a positive community. Our members have been seen at local areas such as collecting food at the Midwest Food Bank, to helping serve at Loaves and Fishes at First United Methodist Church, and even helping the Boy Scout at their events. In our own building, Key Club members could be seen helping the student council prepare for homecoming by decorating or writing encouragement notes and taping them to each student's locker to brighten their days. Our next event is a coat drive beginning October 24. Advisories will compete to collect the most coats to be donated to Peoria Rescue Mission. Stay tuned for more from our Key Club members.



GATORS ATHLETICS

High School

Cross Country



This year's Cross Country team is small but mighty. We have competed in local invitational meets and an all-city meet. Several of our runners have accomplished their personal bests and are gearing up for the Regional meet on October 22. We are looking forward to bringing this season to a close and gearing up for next year! GO GATORS.



The PHQ football team is 4-4 after beating rival North Fulton last week 36-24. It's been a good season so far with a few tough losses to Illini West and Bushnell West Prairie, and picking up another win last Friday. This Friday PHQ will be hosting Knoxville High school on senior night where Quest seniors Ryan Hamilton, Jalen Hughes, Jose Perez, Datreon Proctor, and Lantez Carpenter will be recognized. PHQ will take the field @7:00 p.m. this Friday at Peoria Heights High School's "Patriot Bowl" with senior activities starting at 6:30 p.m. We appreciate the fan support shown thus far and hope you will come out and support your Quest Gators as they make a push to be playoff bound for the second year in row.



We had a very small and young soccer team this year, but we were still able to hold our own and come out with two ties and two losses. Next year we anticipate having a larger and even more competitive team and, hopefully, more games on the schedule. Thank you to everyone who came out to support us for our games and we hope to see you again next year.



On October 5th, the Quest High School Girls Golf Team participated in its first ever Regional tournament at Metamora Fields Golf Course. Although the girls did not advance, they did manage to shoot one of their best 18 hole scores of the season. Tylhor Chaney (Sophomore), Kaylee Munter (Freshman);6 and Kaitlynn Herbst (Freshman) were our three representatives from Quest that day, but we had a total of six girls who practiced and comprised the team. Please congratulate them on a job well done!



The 2015-2016 season came to a close in early March for the Gators with a record of 21-10 and making the Illinois Class 1A Sweet 16. Pretty impressive for a program in just its second varsity year. The team had an exceptional summer with a record of 35-11 with a new group of Varsity players. Excitement is at an all-time high as we prepare for the 16-17 season that officially begins November 7. The coaching staff at the varsity level remains the same with Mr. Jenkins as head coach and Dillon "Coach DJ" as top assistant, Coach Schertz as Varsity Assistant, and Coach Hill as the JV Coach. The Varsity will open the season in the very popular Peoria Heights Thanksgiving Tournament that kicks-off November 21. The varsity will play in a pre-holiday tournament at Monmouth United, and have added a very strong tournament in Williamsville over the winter break.

We have increased our home game schedule at Woodruff to ten games and one at ICC this year. There is great anticipation about this varsity season as the players and coaching staff have been working hard for the past four years to compete at the varsity level. The expectations for this year's team are very high and we hope to have a great crowd at every game.

Colorful Fun at the ColorVibe Run/Walk



More than 2,000 people gathered on a beautiful July morning to participate in the 3rd annual ColorVibe fun run/walk on Peoria's riverfront. Participants walked, ran or trotted through a 5K route, getting doused with color from start to finish as well as after during the after event dance party. Quest is extremely proud to be the ColorVibe charity partner for the third year, receiving a portion of the proceeds from the event. If you missed it this year, you must plan to be there next year. It is more fun than you can imagine! Many thanks to the Quest staff, students and parents who served as volunteers and contributed to the overwhelming success.

PICTURE RETAKES!

Mark your calendar for November 2 when the photographer will be at school to take school pictures for any student who missed the original picture day as well as for picture re-takes. Again, if your student missed having their school picture taken or if they had your picture taken but do not like how it turned out, pictures will be taken again on November 2. ***If you purchased a picture packet but will be having a retake, you must bring back your original picture packet to turn in to the photographer.*** Please pick up a re-take packet from the school office if you plan on having your picture re-taken. **Please remember that you will**

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**Remember to check the Activity Calendar
for dates of athletic events and
come out to support your Gators!**

Mark Your Calendar:

- November 11—NO SCHOOL, Veteran's Day; student-led conferences 10:30 a.m.—6:30 p.m.
- November 12—Student-led conferences 9:00 a.m.—12:30 p.m.
- November 15—Family Learning Institute—"My past doesn't define me"; 6:00—7:30 p.m. @ Quest High School
- November 21-26—Varsity Boys' Basketball season kicks-off with the Peoria Heights Thanksgiving Tournament
- November 23—27—Thanksgiving break
- December 12-16—Winter NWEA testing
- December 20—2nd Quarter ends
- December 21—January 3—Winter Break
- January 10—Family Learning Institute; 6:00—7:30 p.m. @ Quest Middle School