

October 2016

Welcome back Gators!

Images from the First Day of School

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.



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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.
Executive Director & Acting
Middle School Principal

Dear Middle School Parents/Guardians,

This school year, 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.

I am excited that we launched our student led conferences, or SLCs last month! I am 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! Please mark your calendar now for the next round of student led conferences which will be held November 11 and 12, and be on the lookout for your student's scheduled conference time!

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!

On Wednesday of last week, you were notified of changes in leadership at Quest Middle School. I wanted to take this opportunity to share with you our plans going forward. We are currently in the process of searching for a permanent replacement for our principal and assistant principal positions. In the interim, we are bringing in several retired administrators from Peoria to assist in the day-to-day operations including Valda Shipp, Kathy Habecker, Steve Schoch and Delores Turner. We are being very intentional in resetting the expectations at Quest Middle School. As a college prep academy, we have high expectations for excellence. Please talk with your child about being a leader and being a positive example when it comes to following the schoolwide expectations including:

- being silent in the hallways;
- lining up in a straight line with hands behind our back and no talking;
- being respectful to teachers, every adult in the building and to one another;
- following instructions the first time they are given;
- upon entering the classroom, sitting in their seat, being silent and with a pen or pencil out, ready to learn.

It is important for our students and you, as parents/guardians, to understand that disrespect, not following instructions, and loud, obnoxious behaviors **will not be tolerated**. If students do not follow instructions, are disrespectful or defiant, you will be called. In addition, here are a few changes in the expectations we have shared with students.

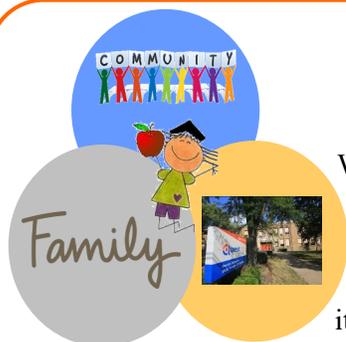
- No outside food, drink, candy or chips is to be brought into the school unless it is in your cold lunch.
- No gum is allowed at school.

I am excited to announce that we are bringing our friends from ELITE back into the Middle School. ELITE will work with us to customize a program that will highlight the Quest core values and those who are making positive choices. They will assist with supervision so that we have the respectful and positive learning environment we expect at Quest. In the classroom, the following is the protocol in the event a student is not following the classroom expectations.

1. The student is redirected.
2. The student moves their seat to take a break and do a silent reflection so they may begin again.
3. The student has a 10 minute conference with the teacher to discuss why they were not following the expectation and discuss what they will do the next time.
4. The student, parent/guardian, and administrator have a meeting outside of the school day to discuss the behavior.

Thank you for your help and support in also going over and reinforcing these expectations at home with your student. It is important that students understand that parents, staff, and our community all have the same desires for them. They have an incredible opportunity to have more here at Quest and to truly achieve their highest potential, and we are all here to support them on their journey. With all of us on the same page, our students will be set-up for the highest level of success. As always we appreciate your partnership. We know you have a choice in your child's education and we thank you for choosing to partner with us. As always, our door is always open to you! Thank you for all you do.

Dr. Nicole Couri Wood



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 engagement includes anything that better prepares students to learn, and families' and schools' support of that learning.

I kicked off this effort with back-to-school night on August 31 where families had the opportunity to visit with their child's teachers, speak with community resources such as Tri-County Peoria Urban League, Boys and Girls Club of Greater Peoria, and South Side Mission, do an arts and crafts project and get to know one another. While I wish we would have had more families attend, I believe those who did had a great time.

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 PTO at the Middle School. Making our school a good place to thrive will be accomplished by a group of committed volunteer parents willing to aid and assist in the capacity as it relates to the needs of the school. Brainstorming to establish events will encourage parent involvement. The PTO had its first meeting on September 21 with good attendance, but not nearly enough. Your voice and involvement is critical to your child's success, as well as the success of Quest Middle 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 FORGET.....

**Middle School
FALL FAMILY FESTIVAL
featuring Trunk or Treat**



**Saturday, October 29
11:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.**



Teen REACH Underway



Teen Reach is a structured after school program for students with homework/tutoring, life skills, mentoring and social skills. We have had a great start to our second year here at Quest Middle School! Many of our students have returned from last year and we are seeing great progress from last year. It has been such a tremendous honor to help them through one of the hardest parts of growing up—the preteen and early teen years. One new thing this year is we have started a cooking club, called Beth's Bistro. We started with the basics, how to measure ingredients, how to keep a kitchen clean, how to prep before cooking. Then we moved on to lasagna, a filling, versatile and easy dish to cook for your family. Next, we will tackle some desserts. I have been impressed with the students' eagerness and to learn and how much they already know! Another lesson that has sparked some great conversation and a few debates was watching TED talks (www.ted.com) and discussing how they relate to our lives. It is fun to watch the students become passionate about something they have just learned is happening in the world and develop a desire to help those who have much less than them and process what that would be like, as well as knowing that they, as an 11+ year old, could think of and design something that could change an entire village's way of thinking and farming (Richard Turere: My invention that made peace with lions). My staff and I have learned as much as the students have from these videos and, as usual, from the students as well. One program we want to start is a Math Study Group, on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 3:30-5:00 p.m. We have a volunteer with a PhD in Mathematics as an Algebraist, who has been helping the Teen REACH students and knows there is a greater need out there. Dr. Rice (my brilliant husband), will be working with the Algebra teachers to get information out once we have this organized and ready to go, so please be looking for this in the near future. We are full in Teen REACH right now, but so have a wait list. If this is a program you would like your student to be in, please email me at brice@chail.org and I will get them on my wait list.

Beth Rice
Teen Reach Coordinator
Children's Home

Middle School Benefits from United Way Day of Caring



This awesome group of volunteers from Wells Fargo Bank in Peoria spent a morning doing fall clean-up at the Middle School. Organized through the Heart of Illinois United Way for their Day of Caring on September 9, these Wells Fargo employees helped get the Middle School grounds ready for fall with weeding, trimming, etc. Thank you to the Heart of Illinois United Way and our friends from Wells Fargo Bank!

New Conference Format Launched



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.



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS COLLEGE OF MEDICINE AT PEORIA

Partnerships in Action

The first GUIDES session of the year was held in September and involved an emergency medicine relay where students were run through various emergency scenarios and were taught how to survey the scene, how to place a call to

emergency services, and how to stabilize a patient while they waited for emergency services to arrive. The scenarios were: 1) two patients with stab wounds that may or may not have been zombie related 2) a patient with heat stroke that turns into a seizure and another person with a heart attack who needed CPR 3) two people involved in a car accident, one behind the wheel and another who was struck by the car. As a reminder, GUIDES (an acronym for **G**uides, **U**nderstand, **I**nforn, **D**rive, **E**ducate and **S**erve) began in 2011 by students at University of Illinois College of Medicine in Peoria as a program to mentor children and encourage them to pursue careers in medicine. The UICOMP medical students take a different approach in engaging Quest students — instead of monotonous lectures or vapid tours of medical facilities, the medical students meet once a month and run the students through a simulated application of a daily task in the medical field. We are truly grateful to the UICOMP and its medical students for their continued partnership in offering this tremendous opportunity for our students.



We welcome back by popular demand the Junior League of Peoria’s Kids in the Kitchen program that is being offered as a club this year! The program’s goal is to promote child health and wellness by empowering children and youth to make healthy lifestyle choices, therefore preventing obesity and its associated health risks. Junior League member and Kids in the Kitchen chairperson, Jennifer Call, engages kids in the preparation of healthy meals as a means to educate them and their parents regarding nutrition and healthy lifestyle choices. This year’s club sponsor is Ms. Wilson.

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.



GATORS ATHLETICS

Middle School

Golf



IESA Peoria Sectional Scoreboard				IESA Peoria Sectional Scoreboard			
NAME	FRONT 9	BACK 9	TOTAL	NAME	FRONT 9	BACK 9	TOTAL
MORGAN GRANT	70	62	132	JAYCEE ADAMS	71	65	136
HANNAH ALBERT	85	88	173	LAUREN CERVANTES	66	51	117
JULIANNA BURWELL	75	77	152	MAGGIE KRIFT	65	55	120
LINDSAY WILLES	69	81	150	KAYLA PETERSEN	55	55	110
MARYJANE SPANGLER	65	47	112	MARIN RUSZAGSKY	55	55	110
GRACE THORVELDSEN	74	75	149	ELIZABETH SHERIDAN	55	55	110
KERRI TROUTT	75	69	144	KAVIA GRAHAM	71	71	142
ALANA MAY	SCRATCH	SCRATCH	SCRATCH	REBECCA WILSON	55	55	110
ELEANOR SESHUL	SCRATCH	SCRATCH	SCRATCH	REBECCA WILSON	55	55	110
PIPER SMITH	72	69	141	RYAN KENNEDY	55	55	110
	PAR 35	34	69				

Congratulations to Maryjane Spangler who became the first Quest Middle School Student Athlete to qualify for the IESA State Tournament by finishing in the top 24 at the IESA Golf Sectionals. We are excited to report that Maryjane finished 61st in the State at the IESA State Golf Tournament. Her coach, Mr. Trent Trotter, expressed that Maryjane did an outstanding job and shot her best 18 hole round of the season! If you see her in the hallways or out and about, please congratulate her on a job well done and for being an outstanding representative of Quest Charter Academy. We are so proud of her!

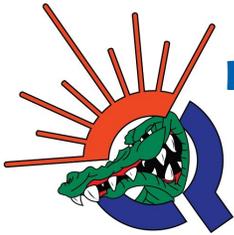
HOOPS



The lady Gators are experiencing some growing pains this year, but have continued to give great effort in the midst of a difficult season. 25 girls made the girls basketball team this year and now we've found 20 of those who have the work ethic and dedication. Out of 18 total games between both the JV and Varsity teams, they've been within 10 points in over half of them, but are still in search of their first win of the season. They are learning how to battle on the court as a team and improving every game, and they are also working on attitudes on and off of the court as well as supporting their teammates no matter who is on the court. The team is equipped with a big group of 8th graders who's job is to lead the young group we have this year. The girls have a couple home games left so let's rally behind them and provide them support and encouragement!

Miscellaneous Information

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.



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

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 still need to be in your school uniform for this picture.**

Yard Waste Collection

City of Peoria yard waste collection ends Friday, December 4. Yard waste is collected on a weekly basis and on the same day as other household garbage collection. Free "Yard Waste Only" stickers are available at Peoria area Fire Stations, City Hall (419 Fulton Street, Room #111) and the City of Peoria Public Works Operations & Maintenance facility (3505 N. Dries Lane). Yard waste includes: grass, leaves, limbs and/or brush ONLY. Do NOT mix yard waste with household waste or animal waste. Yard waste MUST be set out in one of the following methods:



- 30-gallon biodegradable paper yard waste bags. 50 lb. weight limit applies.
- Maximum 32-gallon garbage cans with yard waste sticker attached. 50 lb. weight limit applies.
- Cut and tied in bundles less than 4-foot long, weighing less than 50 lbs.
- Use only rope or twine to bundle. *Items bundled with plastic or wire are not accepted.*

Mark Your Calendar:

- November 9—U of I College of Medicine at Peoria GUIDES program; 3:30—5:15 p.m. at Middle School
- 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 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

