|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **QUEST Commitee Page** |   |

**QUEST COMMITTEES**

QUEST has three parent committees that meet on an as-needed basis. Parents are welcome to join any committees of interest.

***EDUCATION COMMITTEE***

District Level Initiatives:

* Educate parents and the district on best practices in gifted education by bringing in knowledgeable speakers, attending conferences, and consulting with experts in the field of gifted education
* Review research from the most highly regarded academic institutions in the field of gifted education
* Share resources and information gathered with parents and the district

Beyond District:

* Participate in state and national conferences and events focused on gifted education.

***NETWORKING COMMITTEE***

District Level Initiatives:

* Share information among parents across all PCSD schools and grade levels
* Act as a parent resource/liaison for parents within the district

Beyond District:

* Reach out to other local districts to share resources and information
* Participate in state and national gifted education networking groups

***ADVOCACY COMMITTEE***

District Level:

* Identify common areas of concern by parents in the district
* Collect data to understand the depth/breadth of the targeted areas of concern
* Advise QUEST members and district on outcomes of research
* Collaborate with district to make improvements

Beyond District:

* Understand legal changes taking place at the state and national levels that affect gifted education
* Participate in gifted education discussion and advocacy efforts at the local, state, and national levels

**2016-2017 School Year Committee Accomplishments**

1. ARI Process—The ARI committee was tasked with reviewing and modifying the current ARI process. The committee was facilitated by Assistant Superintendent, Melanie Ward, and Instructional Challenge District Standards Leader, Nancy Campbell. It included three QUEST parents, building principals, instructional challenge teachers, counselors and classroom teachers. The committee’s work resulted in an updated process that reflects today’s best practices in gifted education and improved ARI communication materials for parents and staff. A special thank you goes out to QUEST parents Meredith Smith, Natalie Raskin, and Maura McGrath for their dedication and contributions to the committee’s work.

2. UR Partnership--A partnership with the University of Rochester was established, offering access to college level math courses at a 50% discount for students that have exhausted math options at their high school. The program will pilot this fall and it is our hope that it can expand to other subject areas in the future. A special thank you goes out to Wendi Heinzelman, QUEST parent and UR Dean of the Hajim School of Engineering & Applied Sciences, for initiating the program and swiftly moving it forward. An FAQ about the math courses and process for registering will be sent out in the next few weeks.

3. Science Feedback--Through the QUEST survey and feedback sessions, QUEST identified that high ability students have experienced frustrations in science at the middle school level. Parents also expressed concerns that high school students opt-out of lunch to double up on science courses, to allow time in their schedules for AP level and elective science courses. In December 2016, NYS released new P-12 Science Standards, which presents an opportunity for change. The district will be reviewing science curriculum at all levels, as the new science standards must be implemented over the course of the next few years. QUEST leaders have communicated input from parents and our suggestions will be considered during the planning discussions.

4. Awareness--A hard to quantify, but important change, has been increased awareness about the needs of high-ability learners in the district. I have received feedback from parents across the district that teachers, counselors and administrators have been more open and responsive to parent concerns related to their child’s unique needs. Awareness will increase as QUEST continues to collaborate with the district and involve more teachers and staff in our programs.

5. Education & Resources—Next year we will increase the number of QUEST meetings and outside speakers. Several parents have asked for referrals for academic and social/emotional counselors that understand the unique needs of gifted learners. A resource list has been created and will be published on the QUEST webpage in the coming weeks. We are excited that four speakers from the resource list have agreed to speak at our meetings next year (exact dates and topics to be determined.)

6. Continued Collaboration—Since the group reformed two years ago, QUEST leaders have met with the district superintendent and assistant superintendent on a quarterly basis, which will continue next year. Additionally, quarterly meetings with the instructional challenge standards leader will start next school year. QUEST will also invite teachers, counselors, and district administrators to our meetings on occasion with a goal of learning from each other.

**2015-2016 School Year Committee Accomplishments**

* Collected feedback from parents at meetings and through emails to identify common areas of concern
* Met with school district leaders multiple times to share parent feedback and advocated for student needs
* Wrote and administered parent survey to further understand perceptions on gifted education in PCSD
* Analyzed parent survey results and presented to district leaders
* Successfully collaborated with school district to identify short term steps and implement them
* Arranged speakers: Nancy Campbell (Nov); Jeremy Duntley & Rebecca Berardino (Mar)
* Created QUEST ‘Resource’ webpage
* Attended NAGC conference
* Corresponded with national experts in gifted education
* Reviewed research papers on gifted education
* Started a QUEST family directory
* Established LinkedIn and FB communities for parents within the district to communicate
* Created a ‘Master List’ of enrichment activities such as camps, classes, and internships
* Created a communication plan to reach parents/families that may benefit from QUEST’s efforts
* Attended state meetings in Albany to review new ESSA law