

QUINCY JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
100 South 14th Street
Quincy, Illinois 62301



NEWSLETTER FOR PARENTS
1st Quarter 2009-2010
Volume 13 Issue 1

A LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL



Welcome back! Learning is taking place at JH daily and we are having fun doing it. Our building is filled with responsible and kind young people who really do have their priorities in line. I truly mean this. Now, this does not mean the journey we travel with our young people won't be challenging. ☺

Today's adolescents can go from happy to sad or confused to scared in a matter of minutes. You know, like when your son/daughter begins an argument with you and reminds you they want to be treated like an adult and ends the argument with the antics of a 7 year old. Adolescent brains are still developing. These regressions in thinking will continue for the next several years. Be patient, it will get easier.

Here are some ways to support you son/daughter through these trying times.

- Teens need your support and guidance even though they act like they don't. Show interest in what they are doing without making it sound like you are checking up on them (i.e. rather than asking your teen if he/she finished his/her homework, ask him/her what he/she is studying in science).
- Respect their style and personality. Offer support, even if your teen doesn't necessarily do things the way you would. As many experienced parents will tell you, "Pick your battles."
- Listen to what they are not saying. Don't assume that your teen's quietness is due to "the age."
- Encourage extra-curricular activities. These activities supply increased opportunities for enjoyment and pride.
- Teach positive self-talk. Try to focus on your teen's strengths.
- Practice humor often. We all make mistakes and, while we learn from them, they are easier to take when we can laugh at ourselves.

Our school is focusing on two goals this year. The first is to support academic achievement through professional development for staff and learning opportunities and interventions for students. The second is to support learning by providing activities and strategies to improve the learning environment for the students at QJHS through our PBIS (Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support) initiative. To address the first goal, the district and building have offered staff development opportunities for teachers in all content areas. Discussions at Professional Learning Community team meetings will continue to support consistent curriculum, engaging instruction and assessment practices for all students. In addition, the HELP team collaborates on ways to assist at-risk students. Connections period continues to offer students an opportunity to organize and begin their homework with the help of a staff member. To address the second goal, seventh grade/new student orientation was continued to help relieve anxiety of new students coming to JH. Consistent expectations as defined in our "Go BLUE" PBIS matrix (see page 10) and the use of the planner are communicated and enforced. Many activities supporting these goals are already underway and will continue throughout the year. Stay tuned for more to come!

Everyone here at QJHS wants your student to have a wonderful educational experience. We hope to put all of our students on "a winning streak." We welcome your input and help as we strive to make our junior high school a place where all students feel welcomed and successful.

Sincerely,

Ms. Glaub



MESSAGE FROM MR. OWSLEY
Assistant Principal

Safety and Security

I would like to take this opportunity to share with everyone that Quincy Junior High School, along with the Quincy Public School District, keeps safety and security a top priority for students and staff members. As we all know, in addition to being responsible for educating our children to their fullest potential, we are also entrusted with keeping them safe each day at school.

On September 22, we conducted our school-wide campus lock-down drill. P.A. announcements were made each of the two days prior to the drill in order to minimize student panic and to prepare them for the drill. QJHS police liaison officer Matt Hermsmeier, with assistance from Quincy Police Department officers and the QJHS Crisis Response Team, conducted a quick sweep of the building. Students were kept in lock-down position until the all clear notice was given over the P.A. The drill lasted approximately eight minutes. Immediately following the drill, we conducted a follow-up meeting with Quincy Police Officers and QPS Security. We received much positive feedback regarding student and staff members' performance during the drill.

Also, on the morning of October 15, we conducted an unannounced, school-wide book bag search. This search was a large undertaking and joint effort that involved services from the Quincy Police Department, Quincy Public Schools Department of Security, and fifty QJHS volunteer staff members. The staff members were given training to ensure that we conducted our search in a safe, orderly, and non-discriminatory manner. In addition, volunteers were strategically placed in both inside and outside supervisory positions. While speaking with students, teachers, and parents regarding the search, most found it to be a positive experience.

The goals for this search were to: (1) deter students from bringing inappropriate items to school, (2) improve the safety and security for students and staff, and (3) send a message to everyone that safety and security is a priority at QJHS. We are pleased to announce that we experienced only a few situations which caused minor concerns.

We are planning to conduct more school-wide and smaller scale searches throughout the remainder of the 2009-2010 school year. Also, additional safety measures will be implemented throughout the year, including: (1) random locker searches, (2) campus search by the Quincy Police Department Canine Unit, (3) bus evacuation drills, and (4) fire and hazardous weather drills.

Please remember—it is everyone's job to keep QJHS a safe place for learning. If you become aware of any situation that is a risk to the safety of our students or school, please report the information to us immediately. Thanks, again, for your cooperation and support.

Sincerely,

Mr. Owsley





MESSAGE FROM MR. STEINKE
Assistant Principal for Curriculum and Instruction

I would like to welcome all parents and students back to QJHS for the 2009-2010 school year. We have a lot of new initiatives to start the year, and they all hold a lot of promise in helping to improve students' experiences.

Freshman Floor

This year, the freshmen will spend a majority of their day on the same floor here at QJHS. All lockers and Connections classes are now located on the fourth floor. In addition, the vast majority of credit-bearing freshman classes are also located on the fourth floor. This is an attempt to reinforce the idea that our 9th graders are freshmen in high school and that decisions now really do impact their futures. Research says that the freshman year is vital in making sure that our students stay in school and succeed. If you are interested in joining the Freshman Advisory Committee, a committee made up of parents, students, and both Junior High and Senior High staff, our first meeting will be October 28th from 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm in room 340 at Junior High.

Grading Practices

The new Quincy Public Schools grading scale is as follows:

A = 100-90 B = 89-80 C = 79-70 D = 69-60 F = 59-0

In addition, district grading practices now reflect the fact that students may retake two performance assessments per quarter in each of their classes.

Engaged Instruction

Students have changed since many of us were in school. It is estimated that the average junior high age student has sent over 90,000 text messages, has spent 5000 hours playing video games, has watched over 17,000 hours of television, and spends 31 hours per week online. Our students are used to constant communication, and they use online forums, cell phones, and other technology routinely. In addition, brain research suggests that teenage brains are physically different than teenage brains of just 20 years ago. At QJHS, we are currently engaged in the process of adapting our instructional techniques to best serve the new learning styles of our students. This includes scheduling brain breaks during instructional time, allowing students more time to communicate, using technology, and finding other engaging strategies that will help our students succeed.

Getting Involved

It is also important for students to get involved in activities outside of the classroom. Research shows that students who are involved in extra-curricular activities tend to have better grades, better attendance, and a closer connection to school. We have a wide variety of opportunities for students to get involved at QJHS. These include athletics as well as other clubs and groups. These groups appeal to a wide variety of interests and include math, debate, books, the environment, other cultures, art, and many more. Please encourage your child to explore all of the options we have here at QJHS.

Finally, I would like to encourage you to get involved in school as well. You can get involved in a number of ways, including joining PTA, attending parent teacher conferences, going to an athletic event, or calling and setting up a tour of the building. Further, please do not hesitate to call your child's teachers, counselor, dean or administrator if you have a question. The more communication that we have going back and forth between school and home, the better we will all be able to ensure the success of each of our students.

Sincerely,

Mr. Steinke

Counselors Corner

Meet the QJHS Counseling Office Staff

Ms. West - 9th grade

Ms. West was born and raised in Wisconsin. She earned an A.A. from FVTC in Wisconsin in Retail Management/Marketing and as an Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Counselor, B.S. from UW-Oshkosh in Human Services, and Masters in K-12 School Counseling from Lakeland College in Wisconsin. She has experience in all areas of her degree.

Mrs. Heck - 8th grade

Mrs. Heck is a Quincy native. She earned a BA from the University of Missouri and has Master's degrees in Education and School Counseling from Quincy University. Prior to joining QJHS, she worked as an advisor for Educational Talent Search. Mrs. Heck is married and has 3 children.

Ms. Martin - 7th grade

Ms. Martin is a Quincy native. She earned a B.S. degree in Elementary Education from Culver-Stockton College, a Master of Education degree from University of Central Oklahoma. She is a licensed professional counselor and has worked with children and families in a variety of settings for over 12 years.

Mrs. Yates - Director

Mrs. Yates is a Quincy native. She earned a B.A. in Psychology from Illinois State, a M.A. in Counseling from the University of Illinois, and a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology from SIU-C. She is also an Adjunct Faculty member at Quincy University teaching graduate courses in Education and Counseling. Mrs. Yates is married and has 3 dogs and 5 cats.

Mrs. Stotts - Secretary

Mrs. Stotts is a Quincy native and attended John Wood Community College. She is married and has three children.

Director: Mrs. Yates

Office: 213C Ext: 1262 Voicemail: 1050

E-Mail: yatesre@qps.org

Secretary: Mrs. Stotts

Office: 213 Ext: 1261 Voicemail: 2200

E-Mail: mummeyle@qps.org

9th grade counselor: Ms. West

Office: 213N Ext: 1213 Voicemail: 2900

E-Mail: westsu@qps.org

8th grade counselor: Mrs. Heck

Office: 213S Ext: 1207 Voicemail: 1940

E-Mail: heckgr@qps.org

7th grade counselor: Ms. Martin

Office: 335 Ext: 1335 Voicemail: 1570

E-Mail: martinja@qps.org

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Counselors will be available during the Parent/Teacher Conference times: Tuesday, Nov. 3 from 3:00-5:00 p.m.; Thursday, Nov. 5 from 11:15 a.m.-1:15 p.m. and 4:00-7:00 p.m.; and on Friday, Nov. 6 from 7:30-10:00 a.m. Availability is first come, first serve. If you would like set up a meeting with your student's counselor during the conference ahead of time, please call the Guidance Office at 222-4334 and Mrs. Stotts would be happy to make the appointments.

Important Upcoming Dates

Math / Language Arts Finals: December 15

Math / Social Studies Finals: December 16

Science / Electives Finals: December 17

End of 2nd Quarter / 1st Semester: December 18

Check Your Student's Grades

Both parents and students can access current academic progress via the internet – <http://esp.qps.org/homeaccess>.

For more information about parental **Home Access**, contact Kathy Peters in the Attendance Office.



WHAT'S HAPPENING AT JUNIOR HIGH?

HAVE YOU ORDERED YOUR YEARBOOK?

2009 yearbooks may be paid in full by cash or check (payable to QJHS) or in two installments (with the balance due by March 29, 2010). Personalization and other options noted will be available only until January 15, 2010. Orders will not be taken after March 29, 2010. Costs for the yearbook are:

Yearbook + supplement (All Color).....	\$30.00 thru 3/29/10	
* Hear the Year CD (music and news of 2009-2010)	\$12.99	
Personalization:	1 line	\$5.45
.....	2 lines	\$7.60
* Icon (you must buy Personalization first) – maximum of 4 icons	\$3.40 each	
Autograph Page Section.....	\$2.25	
Photo Pocket	\$2.05	
Clear Plastic Cover	\$2.30	
* Basic Package: Includes Hear the Year CD, one line personalization, color autograph section, and free icon (does not include yearbook).....	\$20.69	
* Deluxe Package: Includes Hear the Year CD, two lines of personalization, cover, autograph pages, one icon, and photo pocket (does not include yearbook)	\$24.94	

Please note that package prices do not include the yearbook, but are in addition to the cost of the yearbook.

* Hear the Year CD, Icons, and Packages are available only until January 15, 2010.

If you have questions, contact Mrs. Dewell, Room 331, or voicemail 222-3073, press star key, ext. 1270.

DELIVERIES

The QJHS Main Office has been overwhelmed this year with non-emergency deliveries for students. If possible, please plan the night before for things such as lunch money, school books, homework, athletic equipment, and gym clothes. We truly appreciate your help with reducing deliveries for students.

INKJET CARTRIDGES AND USED CELL PHONES



QJHS collects empty inkjet cartridges and used cell phones. Just bring your empty inkjet cartridges and used cell phones to the QJHS Main Office. Thank you for supporting our cause and the environment!



MENUS AND CALENDARS

In order to reduce paper waste, monthly menus and calendars will not be sent home with students. Copies of the menus and calendars are located on the bulletin board in Connections teachers' classrooms and the main lobby bulletin board.

The menu and calendar can be found by going on the Quincy Public Schools website: qps.org. For the menu, click on Breakfast/Lunch Menu. For the calendar, click on QJHS Calendar. It takes about ten seconds for the calendar to appear. If you do not have a computer at home, students may pick up a copy in the Main Office.



ON THE FRESHMEN SCIENCE SCENE...

Unlike the previous two years, freshmen have books that are supposed to go home and come back after using them for homework. Students have been introduced to Q-notes as a way to take notes on what they read. They may not like the work, but the comprehension of material is much improved. The district policy allows students to use up to two second attempts at mastery (retakes) per quarter. Several students have taken advantage of this opportunity and have improved their grade. Please check your student's grades online and encourage them to take their learning seriously. Studying for the first attempt may prevent having to take advantage of the retake. We thank you for entrusting your student's learning to us and please feel free to contact us with questions about your student's learning. -Freshman Science Teachers

2009 – 2010 GRADING POLICY



District Grading Scale

A = 90 – 100%

B = 80 – 89%

C = 70 – 79%

D = 60 – 69%

F = < 60%

What is in a grade?

The purposes of a grade are to document student and class progress; to provide feedback to the student, the parent/guardian, and the teacher; and, to inform instructional decisions.

Performance (80%) (90% for grade-weighted courses at QHS)

Assessments of learning (e.g., tests, quizzes, projects, labs, presentations, speeches, papers, essays)

Practice (20%) (10% for grade-weighted courses at QHS)

Assessments for learning (e.g., daily homework, quizzes to gauge understanding)

- ✓ Ongoing formative assessment, information gathered **during** the instructional process, will be used by both the teacher and the student to make decisions about what actions to take to promote further learning. Teachers will adapt instruction on the basis of evidence, while students will be taught to use the information to actively manage, reflect on and adjust their own learning.
- ✓ All class assignments will be meaningful and relevant—and, whenever possible, they will involve authentic applications and activities. The primary purpose of homework is to allow a student to appropriately practice, reinforce, and/or extend learning.
- ✓ Attendance, attitude, and effort are important factors which impact a student's achievement; however, these will not be **explicitly** calculated into a student's letter grade. A teacher will make the appropriate contact or referral (e.g., parent/guardian, counselor, dean, administrator, TAOEP personnel and/or the HELP/Intervention team) when a student's attendance, attitude and/or behavior are negatively impacting academic performance.
- ✓ Extra credit work, if assigned/allowed, will be of a nature that requires a student to demonstrate mastery of essential skills.
- ✓ Grading on a curve will not occur.

Multiple Attempts at Mastery

In order to differentiate instruction and to ensure learning, a student may be allowed to retake two (2) performance-based assessments per quarter per course, provided that the following conditions have been met:

1. Student is responsible for making arrangements with teacher for the retake—including determination by teacher of the required relearning activity(ies), appointment(s), Extended Day instruction and/or tutoring session(s) in which the student will engage to increase his/her understanding or skill—within two days of receiving the graded performance assessment.
2. Student has demonstrated a good faith effort that warrants being allowed the retake opportunity. In this context, the term “good faith effort” means that the student: (a) If applicable, completed any required practice assessments/ assignments that were not completed prior to the original performance assessment;

(b) Completed the required relearning activity(ies) designated in number 1 above; and, (c) Made a genuine attempt on the original assessment.

NOTE:

- No penalty will occur for the performance retake; the grade awarded will be the higher of the two grades.
- At the teacher's discretion and depending upon the needs of the student, the retake opportunity **may** involve only the portion of the performance assessment that the student has not mastered.
- The alternate performance assessment opportunity will be consistent with the first—not necessarily the same activity or assessment format, but it will measure the same learning goal(s). If the format of the original assessment was forced-choice (e.g., multiple choice, True/False, matching, fill-in-the-blank), the retake assessment will **not** be the identical task.
- A performance assessment completed during class time with teacher support and guidance (e.g., project, process writing piece) is not eligible for a retake opportunity.
- Depending upon a student's individual needs and extenuating circumstances, a teacher—following consultation with administration and the HELP/Intervention team—*may* allow an additional opportunity(ies) for a retake.

Semester Exams: Semester exams will assess student mastery of the major course learning targets (i.e., the “8-10 Big Ideas”). The semester exam will comprise 15% of the semester grade.

MEALPAY PLUS

MealpayPlus is a prepayment system that allows parents to use their credit card to make payments for their child's lunch, either online or by phone. How do I get started?

By Phone: 1-866-724-5791 or 1-877-237-0946

Online: www.mealpayplus.com

- Get your student's ID number, which is located on his/her schedule, or you can obtain this by calling 222-3073.
- When you enter your student's ID number, it needs to be six digits. Example: If your child's number is 54, you need to put in 000054; if your child's number is 99956, you need to put in 099956. **If you forget the zeros, MealPayPlus will not recognize your student number.**
- Make payments to your student's meal accounts. Payments take affect the day after you make an online payment.
- View what your child has bought with his/her lunch money.
- View account balances, payments, and account activity at no cost.
- Set up free email reminders to let you know when your student's balance is low.
- Create settings to automatically replenish your student's account.
- A 4.75% charge is added when making deposits on MealpayPlus.

PTA NEWS



Hello everyone and welcome back! Our school year is off to a great start with QJHS students and staff settling smoothly into their new routine which includes the new Freshman Academy on the 4th floor. It's a promising time for Quincy Junior High and the Quincy Junior High PTA. There has never been a better time to become an involved member of PTA and an active partner

in your student's education experience. It really does make a difference. As PTA president, I would like to encourage each of you to join our PTA. Membership dues are \$5.00, and information is available in the Main Office.

It is important that we come together as a group of individuals, parents, volunteers, teachers, and administrators whose goal is to make the education, health, and welfare of our students top priority. We encourage everyone, from parents to grandparents, to get involved in their student's activities. Please consider becoming active in your PTA. We need your ideas and concerns to advocate on behalf of our children. PTA can accomplish more things when it has a strong membership.

Thanks to all of you who have helped and to those of you who plan to help in the future. We are grateful for the generosity of your spirit, ideas, expertise, and support. Please let me know how I can assist you.

Just a few short notes...

- A huge thanks to all the families who have participated in our NO FUNDRAISER FUNDRAISER and a very special "THANK YOU" to Mrs. Susan Todd and her volunteers for their diligence during this period...you have helped us get closer to our financial goals this year!
- Also, thank you to everyone who helped during registration and open house. You are greatly appreciated!!!
- The "Reflections" Contest has kicked off here at QJHS. We are looking forward to many talented entrants. Please encourage your student to get involved. This year's theme is **Beauty is...** and the contest has many interesting categories in which to compete, including Literature, Music Composition, Dance/Choreography, Photography, Visual Arts, and Film/Videography. To get the rules and official entry form, students should ask their Literacy teachers, or stop by the Main Office or Mrs. Fleer's room (314). The deadline to turn in entries to the Main Office is 3:00 p.m. on Friday, November 20, 2009.

Mark your calendars! QJHS annual fall book fair will be held in December. Start making your wish list and get ready to Christmas shop now!

We hope to see all of you at future meetings and events. Please join us the first Tuesday of every month at 11:30 in room 340 to find out what is happening at QJHS!

Sincerely,
Molly Cory
QJHS PTA President

ILLINOIS MATH AND SCIENCE ACADEMY

Each year, Illinois students who are talented in and passionate about mathematics, science, and technology are invited to apply for admissions to the sophomore class at the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy (IMSA) in Aurora, Illinois. An informational meeting will be held on November 19, from 6:00-8:00 p.m., in Room 215 at Quincy Junior High.

ALL KIDS – OPTIONAL HEALTH CARE COVERAGE

We all know that healthier students are happier students who perform better in school. ALL KIDS is a state program that offers health care coverage to children or helps in paying premiums of employer or private health insurance plans. Children, through age 18 and who meet income requirements, are eligible. Income requirements vary by All Kids Plan and are based on family size. Services are available at no cost or at low cost. If you are interested, please call their toll-free number, 1-866-255-5437, to request an application, or visit the All Kids web site: www.allkids.com.



Give your child the gift of a mentor – and a new friend. As an established youth organization for more than 100 years, Big Brothers Big Sisters have worked to develop youth mentoring programs that work. Their experienced approach to recruiting, screening, matching and support their mentoring relationships has resulted in thousands of lasting relationships, and helped change the lives of young people across the country.

Who is eligible? Youth aged 5-13 are matched with adult mentors. Once in the program, your child can continue in the match until the age of 18. Big Brothers Big Sisters will work closely with parents to get input about your child's strengths and needs, and you approve the selection of the Big Brother or Big Sister. Once the match is made, parents remain closely involved in several key ways. Big Brothers Big Sisters conducts a thorough background check on every volunteer in their mentoring programs, and every match is regularly reviewed by a professional trained match coordinator.

To set up an interview for your child, call 223-5452.



HELP GET FREE MERCHANDISE!

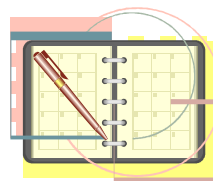
For over 36 years, Campbell's **Labels for Education** program has supported schools across the country by providing more than \$110 million in FREE merchandise in exchange for proof of purchase from Campbell products. This year, the program is getting even better with a new look and focus on supporting the Arts, Athletics and Academic enrichment programs that can spark children's successes. **Labels for Education** is also adding new partnerships, programs, resources and incentives to help generate more support for our school.

You can help Junior High earn free merchandise such as computers, audio/visual equipment, physical education equipment, reference books, musical instruments or even a mini-van, simply by collecting Campbell UPCs. Help multiply our efforts by asking your friends and family to collect UPC's on behalf of our school. It's easy to pitch in. Simply save product UPCs from any of the following eligible Campbell products and send them to the Main Office:

- * Campbell's® soups
- * Campbell's® *Select Harvest*® soups
- * *SpaghettiOs*® Pasta (Original and Meatball)
- * Campbell's® beans, gravies, and canned pasta
- * *Prego*® Italian sauces
- * *Swanson*® stocks, broths and canned poultry
- * V8® vegetable juices
- * V8 *Splash*® juice drinks
- * V8 *Fusion*® juice
- * V8® soups
- * Campbell's® tomato juice
- * *Pepperidge Farm*® breads, cookies, and frozen products
- * *Pepperidge Farm*® *Goldfish*® crackers
- * Campbell® Foodservice products

Visit labelsforeducation.com for a complete list of eligible products. For more information, contact the JH Main Office, 222-3073, ext. 4. The 2009-2010 program runs until June 1, 2010.

IMPORTANT DATES



- October 22 – Picture Retakes – picture forms available in Main Office; students who were absent on picture day in September will have pictures taken, and students who need their picture retaken will need to turn in their original picture packet to the photographer.
- October 23 – Group Pictures
- October 23 - Report cards and parent-teacher conference information mailed home
- November 13 – Wrestling and volleyball packets available in the Main Office

Parent Teacher Conferences:

- November 3, 3:00-5:00 p.m.
- November 5, 11:15 a.m.-1:15 p.m. and 4:00-7:00 p.m.
- November 6, 7:30-10:00 a.m.

First Semester Finals:

- December 15 –Math / Language Arts
- December 16 –Math / Social Studies
- December 17 – Science / Electives

SCHOOL WILL NOT BE IN SESSION ON THE FOLLOWING DAYS:

- Thu., November 5—Early dismissal @ 11:00 for Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Fri., November 6—Parent Teacher Conferences
- Wed., November 11 – Veteran’s Day
- Wed., November 25—Early dismissal @ 1:40 p.m. for Thanksgiving Vacation
- Thu., November 26—Thanksgiving Day
- Fri., November 27—Thanksgiving Vacation
- Fri., December 18—Early dismissal @ 1:40 p.m. for Winter Vacation
- Mon., December 21 through Fri., January 1 — Winter Vacation
- Mon., January 4 – Teacher Institute Day; no school for students