

WHAT PARENTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE QUEST ENRICHMENT PULL OUT PROGRAM 2008-2009

Curriculum Night: October 8, 2008, 7:00 - 8:00 p.m. in your respective school libraries.

First Day of Quest Enrichment Pull Out: Classes begin on Monday, September 8, 2008.

Most children have to make some adjustments when they first enter the Quest Enrichment Pull Out Program. Following are some of the ways that parents can be supportive of their children in the program.

REGULAR ATTENDANCE

More than any other factor, regular attendance seems to contribute to a satisfactory adjustment to the Enrichment Pull Out program. Since the class meets just once a week, irregular attendance makes program continuity difficult. When students are absent they miss instruction, research, and guest speakers. Some of these cannot be duplicated later. Also, when students have a high absence rate, they don't form important friendships with classmates. They often feel unprepared for class activities. They lack the lead-up experiences for a project and feel uncomfortable in groups that have already met and chosen responsibilities. For these reasons, it is very important that children attend every class unless illness prevents coming to school.

MAKING CHOICES

Gifted children often have many different interests. Older children may belong to diverse groups such as scouts, the "Y" or clubs. They may also take music lessons or compete on athletic teams. These activities all contribute to the development of a well-rounded child. However, there are frequent scheduling conflicts and choices have to be made.

Meeting obligations is a part of growing up and becoming responsible. Playing on an athletic team, for example, sometimes means attending practice instead of going to a friend's birthday party. The same thing is true about Pull Out Quest. The program is an important one, designed to nurture and enrich the education of gifted children. Sometimes a special event at the home school is held on the child's Pull Out day. The Pull Out teachers are willing to take into account that some events require special consideration. In these cases, the child can be excused early or some other arrangement can be reached. But once the commitment is made to enter the Quest program, some responsibility is expected. Unless a competing event is very special, involving the child directly, we believe the child and the parent need to consider the commitment to Quest and the child's success in it.

MID-YEAR WITHDRAWALS...WHO DECIDES?

Your child will be adjusting to a challenging program soon. In many cases, students face keen competition from classmates for the first time. Higher level thinking skills are expected and students are meeting new classmates without the comfort of close friends. Sometimes these reasons - and others - will be expressed by the child as problems. Most children adjust quickly; others may take several months before they are comfortable in the new setting. The overwhelming majority of students who attend regularly for four to six months remain in the program and perform well. Those students who withdraw mid-year are typically those who attended infrequently and did not tell the teachers they were having difficulties. The Enrichment Pull Out teachers are eager to work with the child and the parents to make adjustments easier. The teachers will need to know soon if a child is not adjusting well. If you think your child is not looking forward to the Enrichment Pull Out day, contact the teachers. Encourage your child to talk to the teachers, too. Usually the teachers can reassure the child and they can also make accommodations in the classroom which aid the child's adjustment.

Remember that the long-range benefits of Quest can give your child a distinct advantage. As an adult, you have the experience and wisdom that help you understand the long-range value of programs such as this. Children on the other hand, tend to focus on immediate events. Just as you wouldn't cancel piano lessons after a few weeks, we urge you to look for solutions to problems rather than letting your child decide to drop Quest. Parents need to be sensitive to their child's needs...but not subservient to the point that the child is making important decisions having lasting consequences. Your child's adjustment will be enhanced if you work together to find solutions to any problems.

REGULAR CLASSROOM MAKE-UP WORK

Sometimes Enrichment Pull Out students comment about "make up" work required from the regular classroom teacher. This is especially true for grades four, five and six. The classroom teachers are concerned about students who miss important instruction. It is not common, but Quest teachers sometime ask students to complete some work outside of class. All of this requires coordination, understanding and flexibility on the part of the student, the Quest teacher and the home school teacher. Usually a satisfactory agreement is reached among the three parties and no unreasonable burdens are placed on the child.

Generally, Enrichment Pull Out Quest students are high-achieving students who are performing beyond their peers. Unless new material is introduced on their Enrichment Pull Out day, Quest students can miss a day a week without affecting their regular classroom progress. If the student is already demonstrating mastery, there is little value gained from producing even more evidence of mastery. However, new material will need to be introduced to the child upon return to class. We appreciate that this requires extra effort from regular classroom teachers. That is why we make every effort to schedule children from the same school/grade level/teacher on the same day. We also try to communicate with the homeroom teacher so that there is an understanding of the goals, purposes and units in the Enrichment Pull Out program.

If there are particular assignments due on Enrichment Pull Out day, it is the responsibility of the child to work out an accommodation with the regular classroom teacher. Among the most common assignments are such things as book reports, spelling tests or project notebooks. Usually students arrange to turn in these assignments the day before or the day after the Enrichment Pull Out day. Almost always, regular classroom teachers are accommodating to the child and are supportive of the Quest program. If your child is having difficulties in this area, please communicate with the regular classroom teacher, the Quest teachers, your building principal or the Quest administrator. We want to help you resolve this before it becomes an issue which affects the child's continuation in the Quest program.

CLASS HOURS **Mead - 8:30-2:30** **Rush & Sandburg - 9:00-3:00**

The Enrichment Pull Out class schedules vary from those of the regular classroom. All teachers are given a half hour of planning time each day. Adjusting the Enrichment Pull Out class starting and dismissal times provides for this planning period.

Because of teachers' school responsibilities and meetings, they cannot supervise students before or after school. If your child does not ride the bus please see that she/he arrives and departs from Pull Out in a timely manner.

We hope that you have found this information useful, and we know that you can appreciate that your child has some adjustments to make in the weeks and months ahead. Your support and understanding can contribute to a happy adjustment. If there are ways the Quest teachers can help you, please do not hesitate to call on them.