



Quest Academy

Head of School

Palatine, IL

## Introduction

Founded as the Creative Children's Academy in 1982, with 11 students and two faculty members, Quest Academy is now celebrating 40 years of providing a dynamic learning environment for gifted children. The Academy, fully accredited by the Independent Schools Association of the Central States (ISACS), now serves 260 boys and girls in grades PS-8.

Quest Academy employs a "no-ceiling" approach to learning, encouraging students to excel without being restricted to grade-level curriculum. This approach becomes apparent immediately when watching students at work throughout the campus with multiple activities, both group and individual, taking place at once. One comes away deeply impressed by the personalization and differentiation created by Quest educators. And these educators are held in high esteem by students and parents.

Meeting the needs of gifted students at Quest includes a significant commitment to building character in students and meeting their social and emotional needs. The SPARC (Service, Pageants, Assembly, Relationships, Character) program emphasizes this, along with the Knight's Way, a student leadership program that contributes to Quest's overall culture.



Interviewing faculty, staff, and parents, it quickly becomes apparent that Quest is a supportive and collaborative community. The near-unanimous expression of this by community members was striking, as was the communal sense of humor that quickly revealed itself. The administrative team, with leaders in finance, academic affairs, marketing, development, and technology, is collaborative as well. The team is led by Head of School, Brian Frank. An indication of Quest's attractiveness is that Mr.

Frank's decision to step down from his headship came from a desire to return to the classroom and student work at Quest, where he established an outstanding reputation earlier in his career.

Given the clarity of Quest's mission, and its success in achieving it, this is a compelling position for a leader committed to meeting the needs of gifted students, supporting a healthy school community, and building the brand and resources of Quest Academy as it grows.

## Mission

Quest Academy provides gifted children with a challenging curriculum and a nurturing environment. Quest Academy emphasizes sound character along with scholarship and creativity in both academics and the arts. The Quest community values the individuality of each child and encourages each to strive for personal excellence.

## Diversity Statement

Quest Academy is committed to fostering a community of empowered learners who feel they belong.

- We define diversity as encompassing people of all abilities, ages, appearances, beliefs, countries of origin, cultures, diversity of thought, ethnicities, genders, gender identities, races, religions, sexual orientations socio-economic backgrounds, and values.
- We recognize the dignity and uniqueness of everyone – faculty, staff, administration, board, students, families, and the greater community – thereby cultivating respect for one another.
- We strive to create a deeply inclusive community where all members can contribute meaningfully and are embraced as their authentic selves.
- We nurture growth in a welcoming environment by embracing diversity, cultivating inclusion, and promoting fair treatment.

Quest Academy holds to these values because they serve our mission and strengthen our students' ability to thrive in a diverse world.

## School and Local Community

Quest's students and parent body are enthusiastic about the school – they express high levels of satisfaction across grade levels. 71 Quest families have multiple children at the school, year-to-year retention is at 90%, and enrollment has grown from 219 to 260 over the past three years. There is a strong fundraising base.

There are always lots of things happening at school, and 100% of the people help each other! – Quest student

Quest is located in Palatine, Illinois, 30 miles from downtown Chicago, with a Metra train station available downtown. It has a small-town feel, but it is just five miles from the bustling business hub of Schaumburg. And with the anticipated move of the Chicago Bears to nearby Arlington Heights, the area shows great promise for expanded economic and lifestyle opportunities.

## The Campus

The Quest Academy campus consists of a large main building with over 42,000 square feet of learning space; extension classrooms for the youngest learners; music studio; and a 2-acre West Campus featuring athletic and outdoor classroom facilities, including raised gardens maintained by the students, soccer field, basketball court, amphitheater, nature walking path, and an environmental science study section.



One unusual feature of the campus complex is that it is part of a business plaza, with school space interspersed with retail businesses. Quest owns these spaces and leases them to the businesses, allowing growth, as needed when leases expire and the businesses depart. The contrast of the campus exterior with the ingenious use of the internal spaces is striking, as is the ability to “think big” about Quest’s future use of the complex.

You come up to this strange set-up, and then amazing things happen! – Quest Parent

## Program

The faculty and administration are like the 90’s Bulls – they are loaded! – Quest Parent

First and foremost, Quest Academy is filled with educators whose professional development, experience, and interests all center around gifted education. Candidates are encouraged to read Quest’s website description of gifted education and gifted students.

Supporting gifted students demands both individualization and a wide range of programs that bring students together in shared work and purpose. A partial listing of these programs includes:

- A core academic program that introduces students to skills, habits of mind, and social skills from the earliest grades, moving towards middle school offerings in art, computer science/artificial intelligence, design tech, language arts, social studies, math, music, physical education, science, and Spanish. Of note: the computer science/artificial intelligence offerings were created after Quest was chosen to partner with Microsoft to create the curriculum.
- “Specials” programs in art, drama, music, Spanish, physical education, the library, and innovative exposure to Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence.

- Student character development is reinforced through SPARC programming, which integrates character education, SEL, and service learning concepts.
  - A no-cut competitive athletic program along with fitness-related engaging activities for students who don't choose a competitive option
  - My Museum -- created "By Kids, for Kids," this interactive museum, with its dedicated space on campus, welcomes younger students to interact with student-developed exhibits that inspire



imagination and creativity.

- An impressive list of academic competitions, where Quest students regularly excel
- Technology incubation, resulting in eight patents Quest students have recently earned



## Challenges and Opportunities

- Quest has both a need for more educational space and interesting possibilities to consider among the buildings it owns in the campus complex.
- Increasing revenue, through enrollment, fundraising, and other sources is necessary for Quest to fully benefit from the campus complex and to increase its impact.
- Quest competes with numerous public, private, and independent schools for students.
- Many in the Quest community feel strongly about not expanding the definition of a gifted student eligible for enrollment. The new head will need to navigate this alongside the desire to increase enrollment in the years ahead.
- Unlike many schools these days, the collaborative and supportive culture at Quest truly stands out. Quest's new leader will benefit from this culture while working steadily to maintain it.
- There is a calm and caring resolve behind Quest's thoughtful diversity statement but, as in all schools these days, some in the community have questions about how this plays out in the day-to-day life of the school. Local public schools near Quest have been hotbeds for these concerns. Like all school leaders at the moment, Quest's new head will need to lead amidst the polarized elements of today's society.

The Quest Community is ready to support the next Head of School in learning about the community and working with its strengths, challenges, and opportunities. From survey respondents:

"We will be ready to demonstrate what makes our school special and welcome the new HOS with our core traits, including joy."

"We will welcome the new head, let them know they belong, help them understand Quest culture, and become part of it."

## Job Description, Competencies, and Qualifications

This is an opportunity for an experienced educator passionate about gifted education. He/she will be an advocate for Quest Academy working collaboratively across the academy and the community at large. The Head of School will:

- Champion Quest's mission to provide gifted children with a challenging curriculum and a nurturing environment, emphasizing character as well as scholarship.
- Facilitate consistent, proactive communication across the Quest community of teachers, parents, and students.
- Embrace full accountability for leading Quest Academy and work to broaden enrollment among mission-appropriate students.
- Bring external perspectives into the organization, ensuring an understanding of industry trends and exposure to new ways of thinking.

The next Head of School will be an engaged, kind, and high-energy individual with considerable financial acumen and a strategic vision to shepherd Quest Academy during his/her tenure. This is a role for a charismatic leader and experienced administrator who can effectively leverage and develop the talents and passions of community members while maintaining a practical approach to opportunities and challenges. The Head of School will serve as the face of Quest Academy to the community at large and personify what makes Quest so exceptional.

## Ideal Candidate Profile

The ideal candidate will have most, if not all, of the following experience and skills:

- Prior professional experience working within a gifted school
- Prior experience as an administrator, preferably with an independent school
- Classroom experience (preferably within the last 10 years) and experience with innovative curriculum design
- Bachelor's Degree required - advanced degree preferred

In addition, the ideal candidate will demonstrate the following abilities:

- Collaborating across and managing diverse stakeholder relationships with powerful communications to all stakeholders, getting the desired message across while adjusting fit to audience
- Managing and developing talent, such that individual staff and faculty members reach their highest potential and their skills are recognized as a competitive advantage for the school



- Strategically creating the new and different, identifying areas for improvement, and envisioning a future full of possibilities
- Making high-quality decisions
- Focusing on action and results, with a sense of accountability to the customer



Exercising these abilities will sustain the high degree of trust within the Quest Academy community. As interviews begin, candidates will be asked for specific examples of these experiences, skills, and abilities in their work.

Compensation: Competitive salary and benefit package

## Anticipated Search Calendar and Requirements

The application process is currently underway, with a deadline of January 16, 2023.

The Committee anticipates Zoom interviews with semifinalist candidates from January 27 – 31 and in-person campus visits and interviews for finalists from February 6 – 14, with the completion of the search soon thereafter.

Candidates should submit, as soon as possible, materials including the following:

- A cover letter indicating why they are particularly interested in and qualified for the position
- A current resume
- A statement of leadership/educational philosophy
- The names, email addresses, and telephone numbers of five references, to include the relationship with the references (We will obtain permission from candidates before contacting references at the finalist stage of the search.)
- Optional: other supporting material (articles, speeches, videos, or letters of recommendation) that would be useful to the Search Committee

All materials should be uploaded directly on the DRG website by visiting the Quest Academy listing at [DRG \(drgtalent.com\)](https://www.drgtalent.com).

DRG Talent is conducting this search on behalf of Quest Academy. To discuss this opportunity in more detail, contact our lead consultant:

Andrew Watson  
Senior Talent Consultant  
[awatson@drgtalent.com](mailto:awatson@drgtalent.com)

This position description is based upon material provided by Quest Academy, an equal opportunity employer.

To apply for this position, please click [HERE](#).

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