

Additional School Information

If your school is selected to receive a site visit, the review panel members will need directions to your school and will need to know dates that will present potential conflicts. Please complete the following:

<u>Queen Creek High School</u>	<u>22149 E. Ocotillo Rd.</u>	<u>Queen Creek, AZ 85242</u>
School Name	Address	City & Zip
<u>Dr. Angela Chomokos</u>	<u>480-987-5971</u>	<u>achomokos@qcusd.org</u>
Principal's Name	Phone	Email

Detailed travel directions indicating surface streets that lead to your school:

From the north: Take I-10 to the 202 Red Mountain freeway (north loop) to Elliot Rd.
Exit and go left (east) on Elliot to Ellsworth Rd.
Turn right (south) on Ellsworth Rd. and continue to Ocotillo Rd. (downtown QC area)
Turn left on Ocotillo Rd. (east) and proceed about 1 ½ miles. The school is on the right.

From the south: Take I-10 to Riggs Rd.
Exit and go right on Riggs Rd. (east) to Ellsworth Rd.
Turn left on Ellsworth Rd. (north) to Ocotillo Rd.
Turn right on Ocotillo Rd. (east) and proceed about 1 ½ miles. The school is on the right.

Calendar information:

Time school buses begin arriving in the morning: between 6:50 a.m. – 7:15 a.m.

Time classes begin: ”0” hour begins @ 6:30 a.m.; 1st hour begins @ 7:30 a.m.

Time classes dismiss: 2:10 p.m.

Spring break dates: March 9 - 20

Standardized testing dates: February 24 - 25; March 3 - 4 & 13

Early release, overnight or all-day field trips or other out-of-the-ordinary activities planned for the period February 2 through April 17, 2009; indicate grade level(s) affected:

½ day in-service days: February 11 and April 29

Preparation of School Self-Assessment

Representatives of all relevant stakeholder groups (including administrators, teachers, other school staff, students, parents, and community representatives) should be involved in the preparation of the School Self-Assessment. List the individuals **actively** involved in preparation (you may insert an additional page(s) here, if necessary).

Name	Position/Title
<u>Dr. John Owens</u> (List Primary author/editor here)	<u>Performing Arts Department Chair</u>
<u>Dr. Angela Chomokos</u> (List Primary author/editor here)	<u>Principal Queen Creek High School</u>
<u>Ms. Marisol Lechner</u> (List Primary author/editor here)	<u>Teacher—English Department Chair</u>
<u>Dr. James Murlless</u>	<u>Superintendent of QCUSD</u>
<u>Mr. Derek Petersen</u>	<u>Teacher-Student Council Sponsor</u>
<u>Ms. Kathy Sucher</u>	<u>Parent-President of Advisory Council</u>
<u>Ms. Sandi Cummark</u>	<u>Principal’s Secretary QCHS</u>
<u>Ms. Ester Vance</u>	<u>Attendance Clerk QCHS</u>
<u>Ms. Indika Morris</u>	<u>Teacher-Math Department Chair</u>
<u>Ms. Kylee Bean</u>	<u>Teacher-Social Studies</u>
<u>Ms. Carolyn Vail</u>	<u>Teacher-Social Studies</u>
<u>Ms. Nonda Brown</u>	<u>Teacher-English/CSI Chair</u>
<u>Chris Moore</u>	<u>Site Technology Assistant-QCHS</u>
<u>Mr. Troy Gibson</u>	<u>QCeAcademy Teacher/Coordinator</u>
<u>Ms. Lisa Doll</u>	<u>QCHS CTE Director</u>
<u>Sam Calhoun</u>	<u>Student-Secretary of Student Council</u>
<u>Ms. Stacey Bowser</u>	<u>Teacher-Freshman Academy Chair</u>
<u>Mr. Tony Mlazgar</u>	<u>Teacher-Science Department Chair</u>
<u>Ms. Diane Kopp</u>	<u>Teacher-PE Department Chair</u>
<u>Ms. Elizabeth Reynolds</u>	<u>Teacher-Performing Arts</u>
<u>Mr. Fred Clare</u>	<u>Teacher-Mathematics Department</u>

PART I - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

DISTRICT (To be completed by all schools)

1. Total number of students (pre K-12) enrolled in the district: 5271

2. Number of schools in the district:

<u>4</u>	Elementary schools
<u>2</u>	Middle schools
<u>0</u>	Junior high schools
<u>1</u>	High schools
<u>7</u>	TOTAL

3. District Per Pupil Expenditure:

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

4. Category that best describes the area where the school is located:
 - Urban or large central city
 - Suburban school with characteristics typical of an urban area
 - Suburban
 - Small city or town in a rural area
 - Rural

5. 4 1/2 Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school.
 _____ If less than three years, how long was the previous principal at this school?

6. Number of students enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school building:

Pre-K _____	5 th _____	10 th <u>520</u>
1 st _____	6 th _____	11 th <u>463</u>
2 nd _____	7 th _____	12 th <u>372</u>
3 rd _____	8 th _____	
4 th _____	9 th <u>426</u>	TOTAL: <u>1781</u>

7. Racial/ethnic composition of the students in the school:

>1%	American Indian or Alaska Native
<u>3%</u>	Asian, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
<u>4%</u>	Black or African American
<u>26%</u>	Hispanic or Latino
<u>67%</u>	White

100% Total

8. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the past year: 2.5 %
 (This rate should include the total number of students who transferred to or from different schools between October 1 and the end of the school year, divided by the total number of students in the school as of October 1, multiplied by 100.)

9. Limited English proficient students in the school: $\frac{2\%}{35 \text{ Total Number}}$

Number of languages represented: 1
 Specify languages: Spanish

10. Students who participate in free/reduced-priced meals: $\frac{26\%}{465 \text{ Total Number}}$
 Does your school qualify as a Title I school? Yes No

11. Students receiving special education services: $\frac{10\%}{182 \text{ Number Served}}$

Indicate below the number of students:

141 Specific Learning Disability
41 All others

Indicate if your school is the district site for any specific special education magnet program(s); if so, include student enrollment for program(s).

12. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below.

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>4</u>	<u> </u>
Classroom teachers	<u>85</u>	<u>2</u>
Special resource teachers/specialists	<u>3</u>	<u> </u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>11</u>	<u> </u>
Support staff	<u>10</u>	<u> </u>
Total number	<u>113</u>	<u>2</u>

13. Describe any significant changes in the data reported in items 1-12 that have occurred during the past five years and explain why the changes occurred (use additional page if necessary).

Due to the fast growing nature of the Queen Creek community, the data reported in items 1-12 has continued to change on a yearly and sometimes monthly basis. The student population has nearly tripled, with the faculty size more than doubling. The administrative positions, both at the site and district level, have been realigned twice in the past five years.

Along with the growth issues, the District has also experienced a large budget shortfall that directly affected teachers' salaries and programs. A few of the teachers moved to surrounding districts following the request for pay incentives and higher pay. The District administrative team has worked diligently to correct this budget problem and is working hard to minimize the impact to the campuses. All of these challenges have occurred because Queen Creek High School was at the time one of the fastest growing high schools in the southeast valley.

PART II: SUMMARY

Queen Creek High School, Queen Creek, Arizona, in partnership with its parents and community, is actively preparing all of its students today for tomorrow by fostering measurable high achievement in a caring environment. This mission statement is honored and openly used throughout the QCHS campus. It is the train track that guides every decision, curriculum alignment, and innovated program that is used at the high school. The mission is proudly posted throughout the campus in every classroom as well as the cafeteria, office, and library.

The high school is located in the southeast Phoenix valley, in a rapidly growing suburban area. The population of the school is supported by approximately 66% in-district students and approximately 34% open-enrollment students. Due to the continual student success, QCHS often has a waiting list for students to attend.

Queen Creek has recently been awarded the “Highly Performing” label and is committed to reaching the “Excelling” status. The school has grown from a one-building middle/high school to a 53-acre facility, which includes a performing arts center, career and technological education (CTE) labs, a comprehensive library, state-of-the-art athletic facilities, and a computer lab in every building. The new building opened in the fall of 2002, with the second phase of construction completed in 2005, and yet another phase completed as recently as December 2008. On-site construction has become a way of life for the students of QCHS.

QCHS has been recognized for its educational programs, competitive athletic and club teams, as well as its extensive CTE curriculum. The faculty, staff, and administration are dedicated to providing students with a rigorous, relevant, and enriching educational experience that will prepare them for life after high school. As stated by a QCHS parent in the parent satisfaction survey: *“Our school sets high standards for our students and expects them to excel and achieve.”*

The positive interaction of our dynamic and diverse student body helps to create a school climate that embraces the contributions of all groups. QCHS is dedicated to hiring and retaining highly qualified teachers who will challenge our students in rigorous academic settings. We use a continual school improvement model where data is used to evaluate our curriculum, instruction, and program effectiveness. Parents, students, teachers, staff, administration, and community members are all part of our decision-making process.

The commitment and hard work of the staff and faculty has brought state and national recognition to the school. In 2008, the National Association of Secondary School Principals named Principal Dr. Angela Chomokos the Arizona High School Principal of the Year. In the summer of 2008, Lisa Doll, QCHS CTE Director was named the CTE Administrator of the Year; and Mr. Reynolds, assistant principal/athletic director, was awarded the distinction of National Athletic Director certification. In 2007, Mr. Matt Chicci, science teacher, was awarded KZZP teacher of the month.

Principal Dr. Angela Chomokos said, *“Each school year brings with it new challenges and fresh opportunities to grow as persons. If our students work through the year with confidence and a sense of purpose, they will accomplish a great deal of success in our school filled with expectations of high achievement in a caring environment.”*

PART III: VISION/MISSION STATEMENT

At Queen Creek High School, the shared vision of supplying students with high achievement in a caring environment is embedded in the day-to-day interactions with students and faculty. High achievement in thinking and reasoning skills is taught and demonstrated through written assessment and oral presentations of students as they display their ability to interpret and analyze textual materials in all curricular areas. Students regularly demonstrate continual improvement in their writing skills and written expression through written assessment across the spectrum of curriculum. QCHS students utilize the ability to analyze, interpret, and solve problems that involve real numbers in the real world. The scope of this skill spans over the entire campus as students practice their math in a variety of settings.

The venue is designed to be a safe learning environment where students can display their ability to be responsible and take advantage of the opportunities afforded them at QCHS. The goal of providing a “sense of community” where teachers and staff are able and willing to be a positive part of the team is accomplished through the curriculum and department teams as well as the school improvement committees.

The mission statement of “high achievement in a caring environment” is for all students, faculty, and staff. We have designed and implemented a variety of programs and strategies to assist all students in their personal and educational endeavors at QCHS.

Our counseling department diligently works toward the goal of providing all students the opportunity to make connections between their academic success in high school and their post-secondary choices. The mission of the QCHS guidance counseling department is to enable all students, regardless of individual differences, to acquire the educational, occupational, and social competencies necessary to function and contribute in a changing society. The counseling department regularly provides advisement for students and parents on academic, career, educational, post-secondary, and social concerns. They assist with the at-risk and special-needs student population by helping them create and maintain academic and social-behavioral plans. Queen Creek High School provides student access to AZCIS and KUDOR. These are on-line student planning systems designed to aid the students with their four-year plans. Career days, elective fairs, and speakers are also regular strategies that are used to promote student success at QCHS.

School, department, and individual teacher action plans are developed and implemented on an annual basis to ensure a campus alignment through all areas of the organizational structure. The campus and district 301 pay-for-performance monies are tied to the success of our school goals in addition to parent surveys, and lesson plans, with supporting data and staff development that align to the school goals. Our school goals are also our NCA and 301 goals. They center on improved student achievement in writing, reading, and mathematics as well as the advancement of student social-behavioral skills.

PART IV: LEARNING-CENTERED SCHOOL CRITERIA

A. Student Focus and Support

Queen Creek High School has experienced phenomenal growth within the last six years. It opened its current facility in the fall of 2002, with barely 600 students. This year the school began the school year with over 1800 students. It has successfully made the transition from a small, rural, class 1-A high school to a suburban, class 4-A athletic and learning powerhouse, all the while maintaining the small school feel. As stated by Tod Workman, long-time teacher and coach, *"I have never seen a school this size still have the air of a small school environment."* The small school environment can be observed by the number of students that readily participate in multiple activities. Sam Calhoun is an example of the dedication and commitment of the student population. Sam is a junior and has been involved in student council since she was a freshman; she is currently the secretary of student council. She plays basketball and volleyball, all the while maintaining a 3.8 G.P.A. She says, *"Queen Creek High School, like most high schools, is where students are being built to become the leaders and examples of the future. My experience is no different. Queen Creek High School is building my character so I can try and better the future."* Jeff Taylor, former QCHS parent stated, *"The Queen Creek school/community feeling is powerful."*

The high school maintains official charters and rosters for all of the clubs and athletic teams. Currently, approximately 44% of the students participate in our 22 sports, and approximately 66% of the students are involved in one or more of the 43 clubs on campus. It is difficult to measure the total number of involved students because their involvement is far reaching. As a school community, QCHS students and faculty have participated in the blanket drive for the Children's Hospital; biannual blood drives for United Blood Services; a coin drive for the Cancer Society; and regularly support the local Family Resource Center with clothing and food drives.

In the spring of 2008, the NCA/AdvancEd visitation team lauded the extracurricular programs available at Queen Creek High School. They stated, *"A variety of innovative extracurricular programs have been implemented to promote a positive level of student involvement...a strong student council works with all clubs...students reported appreciation of the comprehensive number of opportunities to become involved in an activity on campus. A high percentage of the student population is active in an extracurricular club."* The visitation team reminds us, *"Research indicates that student involvement in activities increases student achievement, and students are less likely to drop out of school prior to graduation."*

Every day QCHS currently welcomes over 1750 students through its portals of learning. We actively support and embrace all of our students. Every student has equal access to clubs and activities. One can see Ms. Rice, QCHS special education teacher, at football games, dances, and other school activities with her students. She sponsors the "Bulldog Buddies" club. The purpose of the Bulldog Buddies is to raise awareness of students with special needs through interaction

with club members. They go to the football games together and cheer on our team. This fall 19 members of the club went to the homecoming dance; this was the first time many of these students ever attended a high school dance. Ms. Rice states, *"We are excited about going to the girls' and boys' basketball games, as we love to cheer. We are now looking forward to attending our prom and track/field events."* Ms. Rice's devotion to her students is an example of the commitment many QCHS teachers have to our student body. This caring environment is felt by faculty as well as students: *"After 20 years in Mesa and as a reasonably new teacher to QCHS, I can say that I love it here. It is so much more personable: a community and school. It is exciting to be a part of the growth and to establish and build the campus and its traditions and atmosphere here,"* stated Tony Mlazgar, science teacher.

Students at QCHS believe in their teachers and school. They feel that the school develops classes, programs, and activities to help them succeed. *"Queen Creek works hard to make sure their students know what it expected of them and aids them in succeeding their goals,"* stated Lyndsey Davis, junior class

The Unity Club at QCHS was established in the fall of 2006 to help in the recognition of the students' unique individualities. They have started such activities as Mix-It-Up Day, where students are asked to sit with a different group of students during their lunchtime; Standing-Tall-for-Peace Day, sponsoring underprivileged children for Christmas; helping train students for Special Olympics; doing presentations and activities about holiday traditions from diverse groups; and this year, doing a book drive for the Guabuliga Development project. Their mission is to encourage unity in the school community through activities while teaching acceptance of all people's individual differences. Their goal is to promote tolerance through community service projects and activities. The club was formed by students who recognized that there had been an influx of new families to the Queen Creek community, creating a student population with a variety of backgrounds and values. Our student population of 67% Caucasian, 26% Hispanic, 4% African American and 3% Asian/Pacific Islander represents an interesting mix of socioeconomic, ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity.

Throughout the growth and cultural changes in the high school, we have advanced our standing as a quality, student-focused learning institution, continuing to supply support to our ever-improving group of student citizens. The school proactively promotes students as community stakeholders through a number of programs, with the primary focus remaining the improvement of student overall academic achievement.

Academically, Queen Creek High School has gone from a school label of "Performing" in 2004 through "Performing Plus" in 2006 to "Highly Performing" in the 2007-2008 school year. This accomplishment has been achieved by expanding the role of students, teachers, community stakeholders, and administration in realigning Queen Creek High School's focus on "high achievement in a caring environment."

In 2004 the administration and teachers implemented a new school improvement model based on the *Breaking Ranks II* strategic realignment policy. The focus of this shift in strategy was to establish a structure to accommodate

growth, along with a collaborative school improvement model. The structure includes a four-pronged leadership team approach: 1) an advisory council comprised of students, parents, teachers, principal, community members, and classified personnel; 2) department chairs; 3) Committee for School Improvement chairs (CSI); and 4) the administrative Bulldog team. The inception of this plan was implemented by establishing a yearly summer retreat for all school department chairs. The focus of the retreat is on establishing methods for improving student academics, school climate, parent satisfaction, personal and professional growth for staff, and professional updates on best practices.

In order to obtain data from which to base strategy implementation at the now annual retreats, the following resources are used to determine areas of improvement: student, parent, and teacher survey results; student grades; AIMS and final exam scores; and current research. From this data, department and individual teacher action plans and goals are devised and committed to in writing for every teacher in each department. The success of this school improvement model can be seen not only in improved student test scores but graduation increases across a four-year period from 77% in 2004 to 91% in 2007.

An initial point of attack for student academic achievement was identified in the areas of both writing and mathematics. The school improvement group recommended a school-wide enhanced writing and math across-the-curriculum program. The writing portion of this strategy requires all teachers to provide individual writing prompts for each student during their advisory time and then to utilize this advisory time to instruct and grade student writing samples twice a year. AIMS reading and writing classes were developed to address the Arizona academic standards for those students who have been unable to meet the standards. The impact of these strategies has been recognized by an increase in student scores on the AIMS writing exam from 75% in 2004 to 87% in 2007 and on the reading exam from 72% in 2004 to 80% in 2007.

Additionally, students are required to participate in various math across-the-curriculum activities during their biweekly advisory periods. Many students found these activities both stimulating and fun. The activities were real-life problems dealing with actual events that can be solved using mathematics. As marked improvements in the writing scores were evident, improvement in math scores lagged behind the writing gains. To address this issue, more opportunities for math tutoring were provided during advisory time and after school using AIMS math review questions; these questions were also used as class warm-ups. Every department was assigned a math teacher liaison to assist teachers in using math within their respective curriculums. The counselors, teachers, and administrators held a meeting for the parents of sophomore students. The meeting focused on academic testing and the need for improvement in mathematics. The students and parents were also informed of recommended testing strategies for successful student testing. Through the use of these strategies, the 2008 mathematics AIMS results indicated an upward trend in student test scores, as the scores increased 19% from the 2006 results.

Throughout the past three years, the course objectives and curriculum for the mathematics, science, social studies, and English classes have been aligned to

the Arizona academic standards by individual course. The final exams for these courses are now strictly in line with the state standards. As of 2006, all core area teachers run test analyses of their final exams. These results are submitted to their respective department chairs and the administrative team to identify areas for improvement. Using this data and AIMS results, it was discovered that the students need extra assistance in their mathematics *number sense and measurement*, which is now being addressed in the AIMS math class.

QCHS has also begun a new math lab class designed to be taken concurrently with Algebra I. and an algebra readiness class for those students that continue to struggle with their math skills. The math lab gives students additional tutoring and time on their Algebra I objectives as well as assists students with the math standards that they have not yet mastered. The algebra readiness course uses the computer program "Study Island" to assist students with mastering the academic standards, not just at the high school level, but also at the eighth-grade level. Results of this strategy will be determined in 2009.

In 2004 data and feedback from the initial department chair retreat indicated that the freshman failure rate was at unacceptable levels. Utilizing the "school within a school" model, the Freshman Academy was established, which would serve as a small learning community for struggling freshman. The mission of the Freshman Academy is *"Easing the transition from middle school to high school in order to provide the best possible nurturing and structure environment for students to learn and teachers to teach."* This support program strives to improve academic performance, decrease failure rates, and reduce discipline problems for ninth-grade students.

The Freshman Academy consists of three or four teachers, depending on the year. The courses consist of English, math, science, and freshman focus for high school success. The students move among these teachers during the morning classes. They utilize a modified *Pride Program* where they are required to use a daily monitoring sheet to record assignment completion, activities, preparedness, and participation. The freshman focus class and the high school success classes are designed to teach students teambuilding, study skills, social and decision-making skills, and to help students transition from middle school to the freedoms of a large high school. Freshman Academy has shown success through the continuing success of students as they progress at the subsequent grade levels. Harrison, a current eleventh-grade student at QCHS, was in the Freshman Academy. He once stated, *"Dr. C., Mrs. Bowser and the other teachers worked hard to prepare us for the next year, and I felt ready, but I'd like to know if we can we develop an academy for all grades; I really liked the extra help."*

Although the school had progressed to the "Performing Plus" label in 2006, there still was insufficient support in the z-score to move the school into either the "Highly Performing" or "Excelling" range. Data indicated that improvement in the students' motivation to move from "Meets" to "Exceeds" was needed in order to have an increase on the school z-scores. To address issues in student motivation, the *Bulldogs Scholars* program was initiated. This student award/reward program provides an opportunity for every student, from incoming freshmen through seniors, to receive acknowledgement and awards for accomplishments; and more

importantly, the program encourages improvement in both their GPA's and test scores. The initial level of "purple" can be accomplished by any student who improves their GPA by 0.5 between any two semesters. Additionally, incoming freshmen can immediately become *Purple Scholars* by having "Exceeds" in all the areas of their eighth-grade AIMS test. *Purple Scholars* are invited to lunchtime ice-cream parties in the cafeteria, hosted by the principal. Students who have a semester GPA between 2.75 and 3.24 and have achieved "Meets" or "Exceeds" on all three sections of the AIMS test are *Bronze Scholars*. The students receive an "Excused from Final Exam" voucher for every "Exceeds" score they have earned on the AIMS test. *Silver Scholars* are students who have a semester GPA of 3.25 to 3.74 and have achieved "Meets" or "Exceeds" on all three AIMS tests or have "Exceeds" on two of their AIMS tests and "Meets" on the third. These students receive a *Silver Scholars* pin, an "Excused from Final Exam" voucher for every "Exceeds" score earned on the AIMS test, and a Bulldog punch card with various discounts and coupons. Students who have a semester GPA of 3.75 with no grade lower than a B or have "Exceeds" on all three AIMS tests are *Gold Bulldog Scholars*. They receive a *Gold Scholars* pin, a Bulldog punch card, and one "Excused from Final Exam" voucher for every "Exceeds" they have on the AIMS test. Finally, all junior and senior students that hold a GPA of 3.75 or higher with no grade lower than a B and have "Exceeds" on all three AIMS tests are *Platinum Bulldog Scholars*. *Platinum Scholars* receive the same rewards as the *Gold Scholars*, as well as having their names added to the *Bulldog Scholars Scroll of Fame* located on the wall in the front office.

In addition to this program, QCHS decided to provide more opportunities for good students to demonstrate outstanding ability. These opportunities come in the form of enhancements to the small honors program that existed at the high school in 2004. The honors program has been expanded from core area courses to elective courses, with over 500 students currently enrolled in these courses. The opportunity for dual enrollment with local community colleges has enhanced opportunities in English, mathematics, CTE, and theater departments. QCHS has 208 students currently enrolled in dual-enrollment classes.

An additional strategy to enhance student z-scores has been the recent move to incorporate AP teaching methodologies into teachers' pedagogy. The school has brought a representative from the college board for an initial school site visit. QCHS is also sending multiple teachers from different departments to concentrated training in teaching AP. The focus on this in-service training was to make every teacher think like a pre-AP teacher and to train teachers on the concept of relationship, relevance, and rigor as they apply to student achievement. High-achieving schools like QCHS supply students with support, connect the content to real-life application, and teach students a rigorous academic curriculum.

All of these efforts have borne fruit in the improvement of z-scores and the move in the school designation as "Performing Plus" to "Highly Performing." Additionally the previous four years have seen increases in student completion of college credit for dual enrollment and enhancement of their GPA's through the expanded traditional honors program. The pro-student climate and academic opportunities provided to students were both noted as exceptional strengths that

led QCHS to their continued accreditation in the spring of 2008. The visitation team from the North Central Association Commission on Accreditation and School Improvement stated: *“The school climate is student friendly. Teachers work hard to provide added tutoring for students. The curriculum has been aligned to state academics standards. Academic departments are using curriculum mapping as well as scope and sequence to align their instruction. A school-wide effort to implement writing across the curriculum using the Six Traits Assessment rubric has been successful.”*

The staff at Queen Creek also recognizes that not all students are successful in a traditional setting or that they have made a bad choice in their behavioral judgment. These students may need additional assistance to reach the goal of acquiring their high school diploma. We have created the QCeAcademy for students to work on their courses through self-paced on-line curriculum. This program is coordinated by one very dedicated teacher, with part-time assistance from two additional teachers and a paraprofessional. Students that attend the QCeAcademy are those who are struggling to meet the graduation requirements and who would have chosen to drop out of high school without this opportunity. As of the spring of 2008 we have had 37 students graduate through this program.

Students at QCHS participate in school governance and the continuous improvement model. Four students sit on the School Advisory Council, with equal voices in the Advisory Council decision-making process. The Council gives input on such topics as textbooks, new courses, campus concerns, and student issues. Students have direct access to the principal with biweekly “Pizza with the Principal” luncheons, as well as the senior morning donut gatherings. The senior class kicked off the school year with a sunrise donut event; then every two weeks a group of seniors are invited to have donuts with Dr. Chomokos. By the end of the school year, every senior will have received an invitation to the breakfast. During this time senior students are given an opportunity to have an informal exit interview with Dr. Chomokos. Students have stated such things as: *“Queen Creek has great teachers who are friendly...the cafeteria food is just okay ...I feel safe so why wear ID’s...teachers and administrators have high standards...Queen Creek is a good educational environment...I am afraid to graduate.”* The culminating activity for the senior class will be the Sunset Banquet during the last week of school.

Graduation at Queen Creek is the largest town event of the year. Our seniors always demonstrate a high level of dignity and respect as their names are called and they cross the stage. The ceremony is one of high standards and is quite impressive with the video screens and a football stadium filled to standing room only. At the completion of the ceremony, fireworks erupt, and the music of celebration begins as family and friends enter the field to find their graduate. “High achievement in a caring environment” is what characterizes Queen Creek High School from the start of the year to the ending ceremony.

B. School Organization and Culture

At the first faculty meeting in 2004, in order to determine the effectiveness of teachers in delivering support, the names of all returning students were placed on small pieces of paper and taped to the walls of the meeting room. Teachers were asked to take the names of the students they felt they had established a connection with; sadly only about 25% of the students' names were taken. This activity precipitated the establishment of an advisory period. The advisory time is used to connect with students, club activities, teambuilding activities, tutoring, and use of curriculums such as *Too Good for Drug/Alcohols and Violence* and *Seven Habits for Highly Effective Teens*. This process requires a great deal of commitment from our teachers and involves much monitoring and adjusting to make it work. It was, however, a key component to the NCA recognition that "*the school climate is student friendly*" and recognizes the importance of informing students as stakeholders in "... *advisory class, which is used for tutoring, disseminating daily information and liaison meetings to gather and report information to the student body about the school.*"

Queen Creek High School operates under the structure of the Continuous Improvement Accreditation. The NCA/AdvancEd visitation team concluded "*Queen Creek High School has engaged in an ongoing process of improvement that articulates the vision and purpose of the school. Teachers have been actively engaged in the process. The adopted school-wide goals in reading, writing, and math demonstrated commitment to continued improvement. The Committee for School Improvement (CSI) meets monthly to review progress made in each committee area. Queen Creek has designated courses (dual enrollment, ELL, AIMS reading and math, math tutoring, Freshman Academy and eAcademy) to meet the needs of the diverse student population...they continue to encourage all students to become active in the total school program.*"

As noted by the visitation team, every teacher at QCHS is involved in school improvement on a number of levels. Each teacher is part of one school improvement committee, as well as a department and content team. Additionally, each teacher is responsible for developing their own personal action plan and assisting their department chair in developing the department's action plan. The principal meets with each teacher every semester in what she calls her "Chomokos Chats" in which teachers provide her direct feedback on their personal and professional goals and the state of the school improvement within the organization.

Queen Creek continues to enhance its status as a data driven school. In the past three years, they have begun to utilize: Galileo benchmark testing, Study Island, AIMS and TerraNova results, course grades, monthly discipline trends, surveys from teachers, parents and students, a drug and violence prevention curriculum, and final exam data analysis reports. The data generated through these strategies is distributed to the school improvement committees for evaluation in strategy improvement.

The school improvement committees were developed through surveys, student data, and organizational needs. The school-wide committees were

established by dividing the faculty into cross-curricular representation in all committees. The committees consist of: Readers Improve with Practice (RIP), Committee for Improving Student Writing (CISW), committee for Improving Math Skills (CIMS), Community & Individual Responsibility-Students (CIRS), Community Links & Recreation-Faculty (CLRF), Career & Academic Development (CAD), Committee for Professional Development (CPD), Data Management Committee (DMC), and Committee for Improving Science Skills (CISS). Every committee has a mission statement that aligns to the school-wide goals; their purpose is to continually use data to monitor the needs in their designated areas. The monitoring and adjusting of the advisory time has been an ongoing topic for the CIRS, who recently gave the Bulldog administrative and department chair teams some suggestions for change. The suggested changes have been modified and will be implemented during the spring semester of 2009.

Student recognition is a key component to the positive school climate at Queen Creek. In addition to the Bulldog Scholar program, the school holds an academic achievement night every spring. Those who have been on the principal's list for three quarters are awarded academic letters, and those who are on the honor roll for three quarters are given a certificate. Further, three different awards for Student of the Month are presented monthly to different students. These awards are given to recognize student that display a high level of citizenship and academic effort. Additionally, beginning with the 2008-2009 school year, school letters are being awarded to not just athletes but students in the performing arts department and competitive clubs such as ACDEC and Robotics. Teachers are supplied with Queen Creek postcards that can be used to mail positive information home to parents. These cards are readily available throughout the year.

Communications with all stakeholders is top priority at Queen Creek High School. Each week there is a *Bulldog Bulletin* that is sent to all teachers and staff. In the bulletin, upcoming activities and athletic events are given as well as teaching suggestions, advisory activities, field trips, fundraisers, and program updates. In order to reach out to stakeholders in the community, QCHS utilizes a quarterly school newsletter, a school website, the marquee, mass E-mails, a school caller system, parent letters, and meetings to communicate upcoming events as well as to highlight students and program successes.

To demonstrate appreciation for teachers and staff, there are three teachers and one staff of the month awards as well as a teacher recognition box in the employee mailroom. The administrative team mails a personalized birthday card to every faculty/staff member during the month of their birthday. In order to encourage perfect attendance, Dr. Chomokos provides gift certificates for a teacher and staff drawing. Those who have perfect attendance for the quarter are able to put their name in the drawing. It has become an exciting moment during the faculty meetings.

Another area that was commended by the NCA visitation team was the area of school safety. The team stated that Queen Creek High School provides "a positive, safe, and friendly learning environment...student indicate a high level of respect for their teachers. The campus is clean, and students move about campus

in an orderly manner. Administrators are highly visible and interact with student. Students are interacting positively with their teachers and with each other.”

In order to enhance overall student safety, a policy requiring students to wear their ID's at all times has been implemented. This was a difficult implementation that initially was met by resistance from some students. However, the leadership teams obtained teacher buy-in, and enforcement has made this requirement a reality.

Additionally, funding was obtained from the Arizona Department of Education to provide a School Resource Officer (SRO) on the campus. This enables a dedicated sheriff's deputy to be on site during regular school hours. The deputy provides training for teachers in the area of security and safety issues. The deputy also provides dedicated classroom programming to support both safety education classes and the career and technical education department's law enforcement classes. He has created approximately fifteen lesson plans to present to variety of classes. During the fall semester he spent numerous hours in our government classes.

School safety is always at the center of our administrative focus, we utilize the SRO, administrative team, security guards, counselors, teachers, social worker, and school psychologist on our school crisis team. Fire and lock-down drills are practiced on a routine basis throughout the year. Last spring during a regular systems check, it was discovered that not all of the intercom speakers were working properly. Through further investigation, it was discovered that the high school was in need of a new system. The District Facilities and Maintenance Director agreed and pursued the acquisition of a new intercom system at the high school. The system is scheduled to be completed by the end of February.

Queen Creek is committed to implementing and consistently enforcing Arizona state statutes and governing board policies. Security guards, administrators, and teachers all contribute to the supervision of students both in and out of the classroom. Students are supplied with a student day-planner that contains copies of policies and procedures as well as the student code of conduct and the district discipline chart. Students are also required to attend a student orientation every year to review the campus expectations and consequences. Students, faculty, and staff are required to wear ID's while on campus. To maintain a closed campus, students are not allowed to leave without parent permission, and visitors are required to enter through the front office and sign in when coming to campus. Gates and exterior doors are locked during the regular school day. Security guards are circulating throughout the campus before, during, and after school hours. The entire facility is equipped with a number of active security cameras.

When an incident does occur on campus, parents are notified through E-mail, parent letters, and the high school website. Both parents at the high school and the other Queen Creek Unified School District sites are kept in the information loop. Students, parents, and staff are encouraged to contact an administrator, counselor, or social worker if additional assistance is needed. According to the current parent satisfaction survey currently being implemented, approximately 87% of the parents have indicated that their son/daughter feels safe at school.

When an incident happens while we are not in session, Dr. Chomokos initiates the campus phone tree. This past winter break, we lost one of our employees to cancer; therefore, the phone-tree was implemented for the first time. During our post-incident debriefing, the team strategized on methods to more successfully contact the faculty and staff in this mobile environment. Through investigation, we discovered that it is possible to use the student caller system to also call the faculty and staff, and we will be implementing this change during the spring semester.

C. Challenging Standards and Curriculum

“As I look back on my past four years at QCHS, I feel like a snowflake, which started small as a freshman but began to snowball; and now as a senior, I am a large boulder of snow, rolling on the way to success” Canyon Shirley, QCHS senior. Each of the departments at Queen Creek offers a series of courses that is progressive in difficulty level and expectations. This allows students the ability to pursue courses that align to a set of standards that promote scholarly academic growth. We offer 216 courses, which includes both SEI and special education courses. The curriculum for these courses is very dynamic and offers students a wide range of interesting and exciting topics to choose from.

Each department at QCHS has developed course objectives and expectations that are aligned to either the Arizona state academic standards or to work-place standards. This task has been done during release time on ½ day in-service days or during the summer break. Continuous improvement and review of curriculum is an ongoing process due to changes in standards, textbooks, and student graduation requirements. The dialogue about content scope and sequence of objectives is strong among the high school teachers. Teachers utilize monthly department and course team meetings to work both horizontally and vertically, ensuring consistency amongst teachers who teach the same course as well as those who teach the courses above and below in sequence.

Departments use curriculum mapping along with scope and sequence to align lesson plans. Daily objectives are posted in each classroom; and department chairs together with administrators, review lesson plans and evaluate teachers and students regularly. Curriculum mapping has allowed common content areas to articulate the core criteria to be taught in a logical sequence that remains consistent across subject and grade levels.

The department chairs from the middle school and high school correspond throughout the school year to ensure that students are offered a smooth transition from middle school to high school curriculum. Historically, students have found success in the transition; however, Queen Creek needs to continue to improve upon its curriculum alignment from elementary school through high school.

The mission of the QCHS **mathematics department** is to facilitate the growth and development of each student as a responsible, independent learner of mathematics, and the applications thereof. Their goal is to offer courses rich in curriculum that will support student success on the required objectives as well as the state-mandated AIMS test. Throughout the year, teachers use data generated

from Accelerated Math, Study Island, AIMS practice tests and materials generated from both the textbook company and the teachers to measure student success.

Itinerant sections for various courses are created to assist our special education students in their least restrictive environment. An itinerant special education teacher or paraprofessional assists within these classrooms. This gives our students on an Individual Education Plan (IEP) the support needed to be successful.

At the end of each semester, teachers administer a comprehensive final exam. The results of the exam are then analyzed and evaluated to track the success of individual objectives across the course. This information contributes to the adjustment of exam, teaching methodologies, and curriculum.

Technology is readily used in the math classrooms. The math teachers have Proxima projectors for presentations and animations, along with a number of them having SmartBoards. They are just tapping into the exciting interactive uses of the SmartBoard technology. Students are also encouraged to use graphing calculators in many of the courses.

Due to math being an area with which many students struggle, the math department has developed a number of courses to assist with this challenge. Junior and senior student who have not passed AIMS are required to take an AIMS/Practical Math class. This course is individually paced, and the curriculum varies from student to student depending on the ability and placement of the student.

Math Lab 9 is an elective class that students may take concurrently with their Algebra I class. The course emphasizes the prerequisite skills as well as the current skills needed for success in Algebra I. Because the math lab is a fairly new course, its success has not fully been felt; however, when evaluating student grade distribution at the nine-week grading period, 35% of these students had D's or F's as opposed to the 44% the previous year. Algebra Readiness is a course designed for those students who have not mastered the objectives for Algebra I. The curriculum emphasis is on assisting students with the academic standards at their individual mastery level.

The mathematics department has also expanded their offerings for the high-aptitude math student, offering three dual-enrollment courses, three honors pre-AP courses, and an honors calculus course. Many of our students seek college entrance after high school. Our algebra I, geometry, Algebra II, pre-calculus, and calculus series of courses is rigorous and yet student oriented.

The English curriculum is concisely aligned to address the language arts skills needed for student success. Reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, and listening and speaking are just a few of these skills. These skills directly align with the state standards and course objectives. The mission of the QCHS **English Department** is to offer students the opportunity to develop critical thinking and communication skills in the areas of reading and writing that will facilitate the pursuit of lifelong goals. Students are expected to utilize the "Six Traits of Writing" across course spectrum, using a variety of genres, including persuasive, analysis, narrative, formal communications, and research. Students study a variety of literature genres based on the level of the course and the student's abilities. At the senior level, the

literary focus is on novels, short stories, and poetry with emphasis on the critical analysis of the various types of literature.

The department offers a wide range of courses, ranging from AIMS Reading/Writing to AP English Literature. The AIMS classes are for students who have not yet reached “Meets” according to the Arizona academic standards either at the eighth- or tenth-grade level. Students who are seeking a scholarly challenge may enroll in the honors pre-AP or, starting in 2009, AP courses. The English department also offers dual-enrollment courses. These courses target those students who want to put in the extra time and effort needed to perform at a college level. Senior Kylie Johnson states, “*The pursuit of knowledge is perhaps the only ambition allowed to be greedy and never ending.*”

Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses offer students the opportunity to explore and prepare for post-secondary education and/or the workforce. CTE programs are designed to contribute to the broad educational achievement of all students. The department mission is to prepare all students to successfully compete in the global workplace by providing rigorous and relevant learning for all students.

At Queen Creek there are 16 different programs which include, health occupations, agriscience, fashion and interior design, marketing, education professions, early childhood education, culinary, construction, cabinetry, law, drafting, digital imaging, audio/visual, graphic design, business management, and information technology. This broad spectrum of courses allows students the opportunity to explore various career options. With the implementation of the new on-line career planning system, KUDOR, students will now be able to identify their own strengths, weaknesses, and work values which in turn will help them make better choices in their high school course selection and better prepare them for the future. This program will certainly help with identifying post high school goals for our special needs students.

The CTE department, like all of our departments, provides accommodations for all identified 504 or special education student. The challenges for students with disabilities are sometimes compounded in these courses as compared to a traditional classroom setting. Our CTE department is committed to assist these students, even if it requires spending monies to help facilitate student success. For example, if a culinary student had Muscular Dystrophy and his/her hands shake, we could use money to buy special flexible metal gloves to allow the student to do the task but prevent injury.

The **science department** is a lab and "hands on" based curriculum in all subjects. We rely heavily on a student perspective of investigation/exploration while providing an outline throughout the semester of the subject. Material is presented through lecture and the use of multi-media presentations during class. The curriculum is based on current science trends and accepted theory and law. The science department incorporates reading, writing, and math within all of the course objectives. The students utilize these skills on a daily basis throughout the department.

Grade level within each subject is not fully relevant. We do offer more basic material in earth science and biology classes, which are therefore geared to be

taken first with freshmen and sophomores, but there is a mixture of all grade levels in most classes. The science department has developed a variety of ways for students to enjoy science and to fulfill their science graduation requirements. Whether a student is interested in the earth and its attributes in earth science; the chemical and physical make-up of the world in chemistry; applied math through physics; or the study of the human body in biology, human biology, or anatomy and physiology, there is definitely a course to be found. We offer a variety of general education courses as well as honors pre-AP courses and starting in 2009 an AP Biology course. The science department has developed a curriculum that is in line with the academic standards and is both rigorous and fun.

The **social studies department** meets at least once a month to discuss unit instruction, projects, and course successes. The department is broken into teams based on the content that is taught. The teachers have gone above and beyond the expected academic standards and drive their curriculum with a real-life application concept. Students are doing activities such as the “Ellis Island Project,” where the students take on the identity of an immigrant leaving their country and coming to America. Students use their writing and research skills to create a journal as they make a number of entries describing their perception of the experience. Within the customary social studies course line-up sits our leadership class. This is the course that the student council students take; it is centered on learning the qualities of leadership and service.

Students at QCHS take world studies as a sophomore unless they take honors pre-AP world studies as a freshman. We currently require three years of social studies to fulfill graduation requirements. These courses must include world studies, American/Arizona history, economics, and US/AZ government. The hallways in the social studies building are always full of student work displayed with pride.

The **physical education department** at Queen Creek is very comprehensive. Their mission is to empower the students for the choices and challenges concerning wellness behaviors that will last them forever and to promote self-responsibility toward living a healthful lifestyle while incorporating an integrated curriculum with the primary focus on the student’s social, physical, and mental well-being. Students pushing trucks, pumping weights, shooting hoops, slamming the badminton birdie, running the track, dancing the classics and hip-hop, kicking and stretching in Tai Bo, yoga, and Pilates, are all examples of the vast aura of activities offered through the physical education department at QCHS. Team sports as well as individual lifetime sports are taught throughout the curriculum. We offer both single-gender and mixed-gender classes. The physical education department has done a wonderful job of offering something for everyone. Our facilities are unmatched, better than some of the private gyms. We also offer cheer/stunt, wellness and nutrition, and athletic training-prevention and care of athletic injuries.

Physical activity and wellness is not the only emphasis that our PE department stresses; they also spend time working on character and discipline. After working with her students throughout the year, Ms. Kopp, PE teacher and coach, states, “I believe our student population is respectful and courteous and wants to graduate

and lead a successful life.” The students’ ability to make appropriate choices is a major component of their mission.

The **arts** at Queen Creek are divided between two departments: the performing arts and the visual arts. The performing arts department consists of beginning and advanced theatre arts, directing for the stage/acting for the camera, women’s vocal ensemble, chorale, Piano I & II, marching and concert band, jazz band, Guitar I & II, concert orchestra, symphonic string orchestra, music theory, and Cinema I & II. We are proud to offer nontraditional high school instrument courses such as guitar and piano. These are high-demand courses and are often the first classes to fill prior to the start of the school year. Our performing arts students have achieved high-ranking status in every area. In April, the choir will be taking a trip to New York to perform and train with a group of Broadway actors and actresses. Two of our thespian students were voted as state officers. Walking through the school breeze-way is an entertaining experience, full of music and “drama.”

The visual arts area consists of ceramics/sculpture, art survey, Drawing I & II, and Painting I & II. Students display their works in the front office in trophy cases. These courses give students an opportunity to show personal expression and emotion through 3-D forms, texture, origami, pencil, pen, paint, and collage. Diversity is emphasized through art history and different cultural art projects.

The **modern language** department offers Japanese, French, and Spanish. Every year for the past four years we have also offered sign language; however, due to our inability to secure a sign-language teacher we have been forced to cancel the class. Approximately 1/3 of our students take a foreign language. When building the master schedule, it feels as if the foreign language requests are ongoing; no matter how many sections we have, they are always full. We offer Spanish I, II, III, & IV as well as Spanish for the Spanish Speaker I & II, French I, II & III, and Japanese I, II & III. Mr. Mabb, assistant principal and former Spanish teacher, has been working with the foreign language teachers about the “total physical response and storytelling” approach for teaching language. This method enhances the classroom instruction by providing students with opportunities to experience authentic material and giving them a true connection between culture and language. It is our goal to complete the implementation of this method during the 2009-2010 school year.

Queen Creek offers a plethora of **elective courses** outside of the regular academic and CTE departments. Academic Decathlon which prepares student to compete in the United States Academic Decathlon event is one such course. The competitions are focused on ten academic and communication events which provide opportunities for student to earn awards and scholarships. Academic Decathlon is fairly new to QCHS, and yet this year our students consistently are finishing in the top half of teams in the meets. The course offers academic and social rigor and relevance, which aligns academic standards as well as the workplace standards.

In 2009 we are expanding our course offerings to include an engineering course. This dual-enrollment course introduces the students to the fundamentals of design process, engineering model, communication, and problem solving in a

team environment. The goals of this exciting new course align with our well-established, awarding-winning robotics team.

“Team 1013 The Phoenix” is the name of our **robotics team**. In 2005 a combined team of students from Highland, Desert Ridge, and Queen Creek High Schools, competed at the national competition in Atlanta, Georgia, under the sponsorship of General Motors. To everyone’s wonderment, the team came in second in the nation. Due to the reorganization of GM, the schools split teams, and Queen Creek establish the current “Team 1013 The Phoenix” team charter. In 2007 the team competed in the Northwest and the Arizona Regional, winning the Arizona competition and yet another berth to Atlanta. 2008 was both a disappointing and yet surprising year. After a great deal of hardship with the robot, the students were forced to rebuild the transmission system, missing the Arizona regional competition. The repairs proved to be successful because the team had great success at the Las Vegas regional, taking second place and once again qualifying for Nationals. The students who are involved with this team are dedicated individuals who devote a great deal of time outside of school. They are truly learning about devotion, commitment, perseverance, presentation, and of course numerous math, science, and engineering skills. As the 2009 spring season begins, Mr. Chicci, science teacher and robotics coach, states, *“I have been very impressed this year how the students took the bull by the horn and started the building process. The amount of initiative I have seen and that has been reported by members of the mentoring staff have made me proud to be a Phoenix.”* This is truly an exemplary program at Queen Creek High School.

D. Active Teaching and Learning

At Queen Creek High School, we believe that if you have high expectations for the students, the same standard should hold true for the faculty, staff, and administrators. The department chairs in the core academic areas require that teachers plan together and develop thorough lesson plans that address student achievement. To assist teachers with their self-evaluation process, department chairs and administrators regularly visit classrooms. Department chairs at Queen Creek are certified evaluators and actively participate in the teacher evaluation process. Teachers who prefer to teach and work on the proverbial “island of their own” are not appropriately placed at QCHS, as we have an active staff of eager professionals who want to be involved.

In 2006 during the department head retreat, a school-wide discipline and consequence structure was established. Throughout the campus, posters with these expectations and consequences are displayed as a reminder to students. An orderly environment is necessary for students to achieve their full potential.

The faculty and staff are committed to improving instruction, which is evident in their willingness to try new programs, join book-reading clubs, implement new teaching methodologies, and to continue to stay committed to the school improvement process. Starting in 2007, Dr. Chomokos committed to purchasing books and establishing a teachers’ book-reading club. Last year teachers read two of Robert J. Marzano’s books, “The Art and Science of Teaching” and “Classroom

Instruction that Works: Research-Based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement.”

Teachers utilized the strategies from the book and then reported their successes and failures to the group during the next meeting. Lessons such as tic-tac-toe economics were implemented. In this lesson students have a tic-tac-toe board with each square representing a task to be completed; example, compare/contrast using a Venn Diagram, compare and contrast the oligopolist and the pure competitor. Once a student has completed the tasks either vertically, horizontally, or diagonally, they will receive credit for the activity. The students have the opportunity to evaluate the information in a fun and cooperative manner.

In the science department, one teacher is beginning a weather project that will include a weather reporting station from the news channels. Another science teacher is developing a cross-curricular activity where the science students will join forces with the agricultural science department to evaluate soils.

Teachers at Queen Creek are actively involved in creating lessons that engage their students in participatory lessons, whether it is in Mr. Glandon’s math class where the students and teacher utilize the SmartBoard to interact with graphing math data that moves or in the English classroom where students are making masks. This fall Mr. Jennings, our Careers in Law & Law Enforcement teacher, had a Maricopa County Sheriff’s helicopter land in the middle of the courtyard; the deputies on board then presented information to our law enforcement students.

Research-based strategies for student achievement are implemented on campus on a daily basis. Teachers have an active role in establishing the methods they use in their classrooms as long as they adhere to our campus expectation of posting the lesson objectives and working closely with their course team. Continuity from one class to the other is expected; however, the academic freedom to teach within their classroom is respected. Queen Creek teachers feel good about their role as an integral part of establishing and maintaining the curriculum as stated by one of QCHS new teachers, *“My experience is vastly different from the first school I taught at. QCHS has been absolutely wonderful and made my second year of teaching a smooth transition. Administration is always supportive and willing to help, and I could not have asked for a better English department to work with. Everyone has a positive attitude and is ready to assist with any curriculum or discipline questions I might have as a beginning teacher. The parent support at this school is phenomenal. So far, every phone call I've made home has turned out in the positive, and because of that, I see my students getting the support or discipline they need to succeed. QCHS also allows each teacher to actually teach the way that works best for them as long as the students are getting the information they need. I have the freedom to experiment with any teaching style I might want to try with different units and have the freedom to be creative”*- Ms. Julie Eilertson.

Teaching and instruction at Queen Creek is driven by data and best practices. Data such as the 4% increase in the number of students that qualified for the National Honors Society this fall serve to reinforce that our students are getting progressively stronger. The end-of-the-year data for the “Too Good for

Drugs/Alcohol and Violence” curriculum has shown an annual growth of approximately 2% a year on students’ choosing/making better choices.

The AIMS courses for both math and language arts were created through data analysis created by AIMS scores. On average over 50% of the students who take these courses only need to take one semester prior to passing their AIMS test. Math, particularly Algebra I, has been the “weeding out” course for students to stay on track for graduation. Research indicates that failing Algebra I as a freshman is a reliable predictor of future failures. The current math strategies of using math lab appear to be helping with this phenomenon: the first semester Algebra I failure rate dropped by approximately 15% over last year.

Every day students are reminded of our expectation of “high achievement in a caring environment.” It is painted on the wall above the front desk in the office, and it is posted throughout the building.

E. Professional Community

Queen Creek High School has created an environment of continual improvement for the school, students, and staff. The staff is valued and respected as professionals with a vast aura of knowledge. The campus climate is evidence of this trait; on any day you will see teachers and staff smiling and laughing as they steal a few minutes to spend together. Ms. Cami Wurtzbaugh describes her experience as a new teacher. *“I didn’t know what to expect. My experience here at QCHS has, by far, exceeded any expectations I had for my first year of teaching. QCHS faculty is so welcoming and made me feel right at home. It’s so important to be part of a team and work together-- that is what we do here at QCHS.”*

In the fall the new teachers are greeted with a “Where Do I find Stuff” handbook, as well as a book on effective classroom management. The department chairs assist the new teachers with teacher’s editions, curriculum, instructional materials, and teaching supplies. There are a series of in-service trainings that the teachers experience through the district office; however, at Queen Creek we also supply monthly on-site new teacher meetings. The meetings are conducted by Mr. Mabb, assistant principal. The purpose is two fold: 1) for the teachers to have a place to ask questions and bond with the other new teachers; 2) to discuss the classroom discipline book, all the while reviewing campus and district expectations. New teachers are also assigned a veteran mentor teacher who helps them with the day-to-day questions that may arise. The mentors receive a \$500 stipend for their extra time and assistance.

The book clubs have become a popular outlet for social-professional interactions among faculty members. This year the book is about diversity. Many teachers have read the book and have engaged in stimulating conversation about the topics. Ms. Savery, the fall book club leader has chosen to conduct the faculty dialogue through the computer as well as in person. The teachers’ computer postings have been very insightful and thought-provoking as they work through their own person belief systems as it pertains to the topic.

Due to small size of the district support personnel in Queen Creek, much of the secondary staff development is done on site. In the fall we had two guest speakers: one was from the College Board, and the other was from the Mesa Public School staff development department. The topic from the College Board representative was about research-based teaching strategies that align with pre-AP and AP courses. The other session was on how to achieve student success in the classroom. The evaluation results indicated that the teachers thought the in-service training was above average with both topics/presenters receiving a 3.4 on a 4-point scale.

When asked what other in-service training teachers would like to have, the answers ranged from more time to work on creative lessons to webpage design. Based on some of the input from the survey, we will have an in-service training in February on teen drug and alcohol awareness. The organization that will be presenting is "notMykid". They will be working with faculty, students and parents.

Our teachers have a plethora of knowledge to share with their colleagues; therefore, the high school teachers have also been offering in-service courses. The High School Math Project has been implemented. Through this course the math teachers are emphasizing the use of math across the curriculum. The math teachers are assisting other teachers on the development of math lessons within other classes, such as an English class that is graphing acquired information through reading one of the novels. Attending teachers will receive four hours of continuing education credit. Ms. McIver and Ms. Bean have also been teaching a variety of make-and- take classes based off of Marzano's work. The CTE department pays for their teachers to attend the professional development classes that occur at the summer conference. Over half of our CTE teachers attend the conference each summer.

Every year the leadership team adopts a theme. The theme is first introduced at the department chair retreat. During the initial meeting, Dr. Chomokos enters the room singing the corresponding song. In the past such songs as "Taking Care of Business"; "Something to Be Proud Of"; and this year, "We Are All in This Together." The department chairs are commissioned to learn the song for their big debut at the first faculty meeting in the summer. The kickoff for the year is done by the leadership group singing and dancing to the chosen song, and in some cases lip synching! Once the song is complete, shirts with the yearly motto are given out to the faculty and staff. The message for the year then becomes that motto. As one student states, "*Dr. C., this year's motto is very corny, but it is catchy.*" However, when asked if she remembered last year, it escaped her. On the review from the fall in-service training, one teacher wrote, "*We have faculty members that have skills, training and ideas that would benefit all of us in our classrooms -- it would be great to have them share what they know. 'We Are All In This Together!'*"

F. Leadership and Educational Vitality

In 2008, the Arizona School Administrators and MetLife named Principal Dr. Angela Chomokos the Arizona High School Principal of the Year.

Dr. Chomokos was one of 50 recognized high school principals who were honored in Washington DC at the Principal of The Year Summit. This group of 50 distinguished professionals shared leadership experiences and concerns as they related to not only their home states but the nation at large. *“It was a very humbling experience to sit amongst some of the nation’s best school administrators; I felt a sense of pride for all of our accomplishments at Queen Creek. This award does not really belong to me, but rather my nearly 110 faculty and staff. They are the true leaders; they are the ones that lead the charge with our students in and out of the classroom.”* When asked her favorite part of the day, she stated, *“... interacting with the kids either in a classroom or at lunch, and getting into classrooms to see the wonderful things that are going on at Queen Creek.”* Time management is an ongoing challenge for all school administrators: the balance of leading and managing.

With our four-pronged leadership structure, there exists numerous opportunities for faculty and staff to get involved in daily decisions regarding the school; some of these outlets include the school improvement committees, IEP, 504, student study team, parent-teacher conferences, Chomokos Chats, site council, department teams, and course content teams. Dr. Chomokos also promotes shared leadership by giving teachers the opportunity to become trained and coordinate various programs on campus. Queen Creek High School is a popular location for student interns, student teachers, and principal internships. Proven teachers and administrators are empowered to lead young professions through their first experience in the education setting.

Department chairs as well as administrators are sent to the evaluators’ workshop to become certified evaluators. The department chairs share in the observation and evaluation of the teachers and staff at QCHS, promoting a balanced approach with classroom management and organization, as well content- specific objectives, where the department chairs are deemed the expert. Bulldog Walk-Thru forms are used for quick observations. The administrative team has a walk-through schedule, designed so that every teacher has at least one administrator in the classroom once a week. Adhering to his schedule has proven to be a challenge for all of the administrative team.

With input from the assistant principal and department chairs, Dr. Chomokos develops an evaluation responsibility chart and supplies it to the administrative team and the department chairs prior to the start of school. Administrative team members are very visible on campus before school and at lunch. It is important that all members of the Queen Creek faculty and staff model a shared leadership structure.

The use of regularly scheduled meetings is done to minimize conflict meeting times. Monthly department meetings are on the first Monday of the month. The purpose of these meetings is disseminating information; building a community within every department; and supplying a forum for course and content articulation. Every department has an action plan that aligns to the school-wide goals. Within the action plan is a set of supporting data. Most departments divide the task of collecting this data amongst themselves, sharing the responsibility of completing the plan.

The efforts of the leadership team have led to changes in the organizational structure of “Bookstore Days” and student orientation. In 2005 Queen Creek High School instituted a mail-in Bookstore Days process. The intent of this process was to streamline the process for both the parents and the office staff. The mail-in process was utilized for three years, with marginal success. The extra strain on the office staff and the loss of revenue for missed student fees were overwhelming. Therefore, in the summer of 2008 we moved back to a more traditional bookstore setting. Students were assigned a morning or afternoon session to come and get their books and pay their fees. When asked, both parents’ and students’ opinions are mixed. Some preferred coming in so they could have everything prior to school, but yet others felt it was a “*waste of time.*” Using this information and input from the office staff, it has been decided to do a combination “Bookstore Days” next year. Parents will have the option to mail in their forms, or they can physically come to school and work through the stations.

Prior to the start of school this year, we held a freshman orientation day. We started with a pep assembly, where the cheerleaders and student council students directed cheers and activities. Every faculty member then formed a line, and all attending freshman students walked through the line receiving a “high-five” from each faculty member. To show unity amongst the faculty, everyone was required to wear their “All in This Together” t-shirt. The student council students took the freshman students on a campus tour, ending with a BBQ put on by our then governing board president, Mr. Craig Seymore.

This year we are adding another component to our freshman orientation. In February we will be hosting a “Runnin’ with the Big Dogs” activity for the incoming eighth-grade students. The event will span over two days with ½ of the students coming each day. The agenda consists of a student orientation assembly put on by the administration, scavenger hunt, lunch in the cafeteria, and closing activities where the students will receive a QCHS “Runnin’ with the Big Dogs” t-shirt.

Recognizing that freshmen have difficulty with their transition to high school, the counseling department in conjunction with the administrative team will be starting a Queen Creek LINKS program this spring and summer. The program is designed to not only teach freshman about their academic transition to high school but also reach them, helping them to find a connection to the school. With the Freshman Academy, “Runnin’ with the Big Dogs”, LINKS, and freshman orientation, High School Success and AIMS classes, we hope to see an even greater increase in our freshman achievement level. A counselor as well as a grade-level administrator will be assigned to the freshman class starting next year. With their leadership and guidance, along with the support of teachers, staff, and upper classmen, we anticipate a continued decrease in our freshman failure rate.

G. School, Family and Community Partnerships

“I love the atmosphere Queen Creek High has that no other school has-a feeling of family and togetherness. You can hang out with whoever you want to, no matter the stereotypes.” Keyla Rodriguez. A Highly Performing school does not

operate independently of the community and families it serves, therefore it stands to reason that the Queen Creek community is also Highly Performing. Our interaction as the hub of the community is very far reaching. Schools are but a reflection of the society that surrounds them. This gives credence to the fact that Queen Creek High School has a family feel to its environment.

Queen Creek is known for its high level of parent involvement. This can be seen in the number of parents that get involved in the athletic programs, the robotics team, the performing arts, and the other competitive clubs on campus. Through the CTE organizations parents and community members are required to serve on their Advisory Boards. Unlike other programs, our teachers have never had a problem getting active participants for their Boards.

Parent and community involvement is cherished at the high school level, this is due in part by the fact that historically once students get into the higher grades the parent involvement drops off. This year Queen Creek High School implemented their "Bulldog Education Partnership (BEP)" volunteer program. Research has indicated that across the nation, mothers, father, grandparents, business people, and senior citizens are finding that their involvement as school volunteers is having a positive influence on student achievement. Volunteers are making a difference in schools. Volunteers are taken through a brief training and given a BEP handbook. The purpose of the handbook is to supply the volunteer with basic techniques and strategies to help them work with children in a school setting. Volunteers are given an interest survey to determine their availability to assist at Queen Creek. They can sign up to help with tutoring, supervising computer labs, assisting with yearbook publication, chaperoning dances and school activities, supervising during lunch, assisting with Bilingual students, assisting in the office, working in classrooms, assisting students with special needs, giving support with instructional materials, copying, making bulletin boards, reading to students, and helping develop school and teacher web-pages.

Since the inception of BEP Queen Creek High School has successfully acquired a "Learn and Serve Grant". This is yet another opportunity for a faculty member to assist in a leadership role. Ms. Bean, social studies teacher has requested to coordinate the BEP program for the high school. Starting in January Ms. Bean will be hosting the BEP monthly meetings, giving guidance and direction to our volunteers. At the end of the semester, we will be hosting a BEP luncheon to recognize the hard work of our volunteers.

The "Learn and Serve Grant" also benefits our students at QCHS by promoting community service. We are currently establishing a school-wide effort to involve all students in the civic duty of community service. Ms. Bladt, CTE teacher, will have an hour a day to market, plan and implement the project. Students will receive prior approval and document the community service upon project completion. Parameters for the community service will be established. Each semester students will present and reflect on the service by celebrating their activity with a team of community members, staff members and/or peers. The community service will address our community needs in many ways. Students will have an interest in the organization they choose to volunteer in and the local organization will benefit from our student volunteers. The service students complete in high school will hopefully

encourage a life-time commitment to helping their community as adults. We will compile all hours volunteered throughout each student's high school experience and provide the student with final recognition at the conclusion of their senior year.

Ms. Bladt and a student have already attended the "Learn and Serve" workshop and leadership camp and are ready to begin. It is anticipated that by the middle of February we will have at least 10 students involved in our new exciting program.

Through years of parent satisfaction surveys, school communication always seems to be a concern with our parents/guardians. The use of newsletters, report cards, grade notices, marquees and websites never seems to fully correct this problem. This year the high school has implemented a two-way communication system through *SnapGrades*, which is an internet-based computer program. Over 70% of our parents have signed up and are receiving regular communications from the school. An estimated 60% of our parents check their son/daughter's grades on a weekly or biweekly basis. They now feel comfortable contacting their son/daughters' teachers and counselors because the information they have is current and correct.

Through SNAPGrades administrators have access to send mass emails to all participating parents and students. Parents are a priority to our administrative and office staff, this tool more readily enables us to assist a parent in need. As a result of this program and its regular usage over 75% of our current parents indicated that communication from the high school is above average, approximately a 3.3 on a 4.0 scale. Parents wrote the following comments, "*am really impressed with the SnapGrades program. It has really helped keep me abreast of my children's progress.... Communication between school staff and parents is great... I really enjoy the communication that is happening with SnapGrades... love the SnapGrades and that every teacher has been using it!*"

In conjunction with SNAPGrades, we will continue to use quarterly newsletters, report cards, parent letters, parent meetings, the marquee, the phone caller and student letters as modes of communication with the parents.

Dr. James Murlless often states, "*As the high school goes the District goes*-"in Queen Creek this statement is true. When the athletic teams are successful the enthusiasm is felt throughout the town, when we have high school events, they often look like family reunions filled with people from all ages.

Also, several non-school entities use the Queen Creek Performing Arts Center. They include a Baptist Church, Community Theater, various sport camps, Professional Shows, and the Arts in Education program. Due to the large number of activities that use this facility, there is a Performing Arts Director, Ms. Molly Jacobs who manages all of the activities. Molly is a theater person so this gives balance to all of the school structure.

H. Indicators of Success

"*Mrs. Vail inspires me to do better in class in order to further myself in life*" writes senior Craig Johnston. In the ongoing quest for data, student input ranks

toward the top of the list for the teachers and administrators at Queen Creek High School. Craig goes on further stating; *"This school has inspired me to pursue a career in the field of photography because of Mr. Ramirez's teachings."* These student affirmations are valuable data in our ongoing pursuit of high student achievement. The primary assessment instrument to measure student success is the AIMS test. Other instruments such as final exam scores, exam analyzes by question and objective, student discipline records, attendance and tardy records, text books, teachers' tests, parent and student surveys, teacher questionnaires, local assessments, student grades, the number of students qualifying for honors, the number of students to attend college, graduation and drop-out rate, and the list continues, are also used. The use of data is to identify areas of need, and then to develop corrective action plans to change the trend from positive to negative.

In 2004, while reviewing the 9 week grade reports, it became apparent that the freshman students were struggling in their World Studies classes, more exactly 44 % of them were receiving a "D" or an "F". The social studies department chair and Dr. Chomokos met and decided to further their research. It was discovered that most school districts were no longer having their 9th grade students take World Studies. Therefore it was recommended that the course be moved to the 10th grade year except for the honors students. This is the current structure and the data indicates that this was the correct move because on average the "D" or "F" rate at the 9 weeks has declined to about 30%.

Queen Creek High School with all of its continued construction has been the project of the community since its inception. It is the culmination of a group of Governing Board Members who had a vision of *their* high school. This ownership has stayed consistent throughout the past 6 years. The Governing Board members have played an active role in all aspects of the high school, from the over-seeding of the football field to the donation of the press box. One such member Mr. Monti Nevitt has personally been out on the athletic field in the middle of the night ensuring that the crown on the football field is just right. This kind of data is not measurable except through the heart. This past December was Mr. Nevitt's last Board meeting as he decided not to run again. It was decided by his fellow Board members that we should name the field house after him. So it was with great pleasure that we placed MONTI NEVITT FIELD HOUSE on the front and back of the building.

The positive example of the teachers, administrators, and Governing Board Members is used as a benchmark for our student expectations. Students are given a "Bulldog Pride" card when they are caught doing something good on campus. They drop the cards in the pride canister in the front office. Dr. Chomokos holds drawings on Fridays, giving out gift certificates for free meals to Taco Bell. Initially the canister only had less than 10 cards, and every student received an award. The last drawing there were over 100 cards that were given out in over a week, progress is evident.

Parents are informed of test results through newsletters, parent letters and the school report card. Every year we order enough report cards for all of our students. The School Report Card is distributed through the advisory classes.

When program and policy changes are proposed, parents are made aware through SnapGrades, parent letters and postings on the website. The results of our efforts have been impressive. In 2006 our students scored 55% on their math AIMS test, compared to the 74% achieved in 2008.

Queen Creek has many obstacles that must be addressed on a regular bases. The high school does not sit in a systemic system where there is continuity from Kindergarten through senior year. In fact, out of last years' sophomores that took AIMS, less than 50% had been in Queen Creek schools prior to 9th grade and out of these students approximately 25% had only been there for their 10th grade year. Of the students that graduated last year less than 10% attended Queen Creek since Kindergarten. As obstacles will continue to exist we have adopted the motto that there are "no excuses" these are our students and we need to educate them in an environment that expects "High Achievement in a Caring Environment".

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Daily student attendance	98%	98%	99%	97%	99%
Daily teacher attendance	97%	96%	96%	95%	Not available
Teacher turnover rate	24%	14%	12%	8%	Not available
Graduation rate (H.S. only)	Not Available	87%	91%	85%	77%
Promotion rate (K-8)					

Dr. Chomokos started in Queen Creek the spring of 2004, having her first year be the 2004-2005 school year. She does not have any data prior to this year. And due to the recent death of our school registrar we are unable to attain the missing data.

It is believed that the reason the teacher turn-over rate had an upward movement was due to the \$3.0 million District deficit.

AWARDS

Many awards and recognitions have been received by our school, staff and students. The following list of awards and recognitions represents an example of the awards and is not all inclusive.

In the past four years, Queen Creek High School students have earned in excess of \$8 million in scholarship money.

Thespians and DECA have both had State officers

Choir has acquired the honor of the highest rankings awarded

Orchestra has acquired the honor of the highest rankings awarded

In 2007 we had our first graduate to be accepted to an Ivy League school

2008 Dr. Angela Chomokos, High School Principal of the Year

2008 Ms. Lisa Doll, CTE Director of the Year in FACs and AG

2008 Mr. Paul Reynolds, Certified National Athletic Director

2007 Mr. Matt Chicci, KZZP Teacher of the Month

2005 Robotics 2nd in the Nation

2007 & 2008 Bike Club 1st in State

2009 Ms. Tammy Rice QCUSD Teacher of the Month

This is just a partial list of the athletic awards received at Queen Creek. We have had numerous all region players across the spectrum of sports. The reason these accomplishments are so significant is that it indicates the commitment of our students and coaches.

Keeping in mind that just a few short years ago Queen Creek was a small 1-A school.

2005 3A Varsity Show Cheer Team 1st in State

2006 4A Varsity Pom 1st in State

2008 4A JV Show Cheer 1st in State

2006 Spiritline Team was performed at the pre-game show at the Orange Bowl

5 of the last 7 years the Varsity Boys Soccer Team was in the State playoffs

2003 & 2008 Coach Ramirez named the Coach of the Year for Boys Soccer

2008 Boys Golf 5th in State (we have only had a team for 4 years)

2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 Girls Track Team 1st in State

2006 Boys track team 2nd in State

In the past 5 years, 5 All-State baseball players

“Queen Creek High School—the sound of the band playing and screaming at football games, the fun bus ride home from track and cross country meets, the silence of the classroom while taking a test, and the applause when you finally walk down in your cap and gown.”- Senior Laura Carroll