



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

# NEWS

ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH - GOVERNOR

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## **Governor Blagojevich Announces Illinois Innovation Talent Program**

*New program partners state, business and high schools to promote innovation-centered education*

**CHICAGO** – Recognizing the need for students to become globally competitive, Governor Rod R. Blagojevich announced a public-private partnership to work with 23 Illinois high schools on a pilot project designed to promote innovation-centered education and to increase student achievement in math, science and engineering. Illinois Innovation Talent creates a unique learning environment where students work as teams alongside industry, government and community experts to solve real-world problems.

“We must prepare students today to ensure a strong workforce for tomorrow. Innovation Talent will challenge students to think innovatively and become problem-solvers at a young age, helping Illinois remain competitive in an increasingly global economy,” said Governor Blagojevich.

Illinois Innovation Talent seeks to build lasting relationships between schools and outside partners to generate a pipeline of future workers that are prepared to tackle the real life challenges facing today's communities and businesses. The program will promote career awareness and better prepare students with the skills they need to remain competitive in today's innovation and technology-based economy.

Illinois high schools and private partners will work together to design and implement curriculum that develops the critical skills needed before students enter the workforce. Twenty-three Illinois high schools and 29 professional organizations from across the state are participating in this unique pilot program. A full list of participants can be found in the attached fact sheet.

Innovation Talent's advisory board includes the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, iBIO, American Electronics Association (AeA), Motorola Foundation, DePaul University, University

of Illinois, Golden Apple Foundation, and Chicago LEADS. Government partners include Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE), Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy (IMSA), Illinois Community College Board (ICCB), and the Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE).

“The Illinois Biotechnology Industry Association believes that training the next generation is critical to ensuring the long-term success of our industry. We are excited to be a part of the Innovation Talent program and to have the opportunity to work with a group of students who will become the future leaders of Illinois,” said David Miller, iBIO President.

“This program is vital to developing the innovation talent that will be the foundation of our future workforce,” said Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce President Jerry Roper. “It is an innovative response to a critical problem facing Illinois businesses. It provides students with the opportunity to work in multidisciplinary teams on real world problems under the watchful eye of a real client. This experience gives students an authentic glimpse into how business is conducted and what skills are necessary to succeed.”

IMSA, a nationally recognized leader of problem-based learning, is providing ongoing professional development support services and workshops to educators directly involved in implementing and assessing problem-based learning. National scientific research indicates that problem-based learning is a highly effective teaching methodology for promoting student engagement in the learning process. Through problem-based learning students are better able to connect their work in the classroom to real world issues and problems. Problem-based learning moves students from merely developing basic skills to fostering transferable critical thinking skills, creativity and innovation. Students who engage in problem-based learning are more likely to have increased critical thinking, enhanced collaborative skills, increased content knowledge and increased achievement in all core subject areas.

The Innovation Talent Program was developed as part of a National Governor’s Association policy academy. The Innovation Talent advisory board developed the concept, reviewed all applications and selected schools based on the applicant school’s perceived ability to successfully implement the program.

“Innovation Talent is about promoting the next generation of talent in Illinois. This unique program partners students with industry leaders to tackle real-world problems. Students will graduate from this program with the skills they need to compete in today’s global economy,” Director of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Jack Lavin said.

“The Illinois State Board of Education is dedicated to preparing students to successfully transition from the classroom to the workforce,” Illinois State Board of Education Superintendent Dr. Christopher Koch said. “By partnering with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and many of the state’s leading organizations and corporations, we have developed a program that provides students opportunities to use innovation to solve real world problems, effectively preparing them for the rest of their lives.”

Illinois Innovation Talent builds on the success of Illinois' other state programs. The program will demonstrate how the updated National Education Technology Standards (NETS) can be implemented in an innovation-centered curriculum. Based on NETS, Innovation Talent will also incorporate the mission and objectives of the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills.

Schools and their partners have begun developing problem-based learning curriculums which will be implemented in classrooms in the spring of 2009. The Innovation Talent Advisory Board will provide recommendations to expand the scale of the program during the summer of 2009.

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# Illinois Innovation Talent Fact Sheet

As of September 26, 2008

## Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy's Role in Illinois Talent Innovation Project:

The Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy (IMSA) provides professional development in Problem-Based Learning (PBL) to educators and their partners from 23 schools throughout Illinois in one and two-day workshops, onsite mentoring with schools and partners and onsite visits to schools as they implement their projects. In PBL, students gather and apply knowledge from multiple disciplines in their quest for solutions or resolution to real-world problems. This process prepares students for the workplace by developing critical thinking and collaborative skills.

“IMSA is pleased to take an important role in the Illinois Innovation Talent Pilot Project by providing professional development in Problem-Based Learning for schools throughout Illinois,” said Dr. Max McGee, President of IMSA. “Our vision is for today’s learners to be tomorrow’s leaders and use their problem-solving skills to make our neighborhoods, communities and state even better places to live and work.”

## Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy:

The internationally recognized Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy (IMSA) develops creative, ethical leaders in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. As a teaching and learning laboratory created by the State of Illinois, IMSA enrolls academically talented Illinois students (grades 10-12) in its advanced, residential college preparatory program, and it serves thousands of educators and students in Illinois and beyond through innovative instructional programs that foster imagination and inquiry. IMSA also advances education through research, groundbreaking ventures and strategic partnerships.

## Illinois Innovation Talent Schools and Partners:

| School   | School District         | Business/Organization Partner   |
|--|-------------------------|---|
| Alton High School<br>(Lewis & Clark Community College)   | Alton CUSD 11           | Great Rivers Land Trust   |
| Astoria High School  | Astoria CUSD 1          | Chautauqua National Wildlife Refuge   |
| Casey-Westfield High School  | Casey-Westfield CUSD 4C | City of Casey<br>Illinois Environmental Protection Agency   |
| Christopher High School  | Christopher USD 99      | Illinois Historic Preservation Agency<br>Mulkeytown Area Historical Society<br>Carbondale Convention and Tourism Bureau |
| Glenbrook South High School  | Northfield Twp HSD 225  | Allstate Insurance  |
| Hyde Park Academy High School<br>(Roosevelt University – Gear Up)<br>(National Louis University) | City of Chicago SD 299  | City of Chicago, Department of the Environment  |
| Limestone Community High School<br>(Illinois Central College)                                    | Limestone CHSD 310      | Excel Foundry   |
| Marine Military Academy  | City of Chicago SD 299  | Argonne National Laboratory<br>NASA   |
| New Athens High School   | New Athens CUSD 60      | Broadband Deployment Council<br>Office of the Lt. Governor  |

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*As of September 26, 2008*

|   |                        |  |
|---|------------------------|--|
| Niles North High School                         | Niles Twp CHSD 219     | PCTEL, Inc.<br>American Electronics Association (AeA)                                |
| O'Fallon Township High School                   | O Fallon Twp HSD 203   | City of O'Fallon<br>Illinois Environmental Protection Agency<br>Karasek Architecture |
| Rochelle Township High School                   | Rochelle Twp HSD 212   | Nestle   |
| Rolling Meadows High School                     | Township HSD 214       | Illinois Department of Transportation  |
| Senn High School                                | City of Chicago SD 299 | TEC Services Consulting, Inc.  |
| Thornridge High School                          | Thornton Twp HSD 205   | NOW Foods  |
| United Township High School                     | United Twp HSD 30      | John Deere   |
| Williams Medical Preparatory School of Medicine | City of Chicago SD 299 | Illinois Department of Public Health<br>Office of Health Promotion                   |

| <b>iBio Sponsored School</b>                           | <b>School District</b> | <b>Business/Organization Partner</b> |
|--|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Chicago High School for Agricultural Sciences          | City of Chicago SD 299 | Valent Biosciences                   |
| Eisenhower High School<br>(Richland Community College) | Decatur SD 61          | Tate & Lyle                          |
| MacArthur High School<br>(Richland Community College)  | Decatur SD 61          | Tate & Lyle                          |
| Lindblom Mathematics & Science Academy                 | City of Chicago SD 299 | Baxter International Healthcare      |
| Maine East High School                                 | Maine Township HSD 207 | Astellas                             |
| Niles West High School                                 | Niles Twp CHSD 219     | Abbott Laboratories                  |

## Legend

CUSD: Community Unit School District

USD: Unit School District

HSD: High School District

SD: School District

CHSD: Community High School District