



For Immediate Release

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**Illinois Science and Technology Institute Receives
AT&T Contribution**

*Funding supports R&D STEM Learning Exchange's real-world Challenges initiative
In 12 Illinois high schools*

CHICAGO – March 12, 2014 – The Illinois Science and Technology Institute (ISTI) today announced it has received \$50,000 from AT&T. Through this contribution, the ISTI will implement and grow its Research and Development (R&D) STEM Learning Exchange, a public-private collaboration which offers learning tools to students in Illinois high schools that will increase student-driven research and R&D career exploration. Specifically, the contribution will support the R&D STEM Learning Exchange Challenges initiative, which connects high school students with external corporate and university partners to solve complex, real-world problems. Students will work in teams on a variety of topics, including food safety, aerospace and defense, environmental sustainability and behavioral economics.

“The goal of the R&D STEM Learning Exchange is to better connect students to careers in STEM fields in order to help address talent pipeline needs in critical industry sectors,” said Mark Harris, president & CEO of the ISTI, an affiliate of the Illinois Science & Technology Coalition. “By examining real-world industry problems and networking with outside professionals through the R&D STEM Learning Exchange Challenges, students are able to experience firsthand a variety of career opportunities. This generous contribution from AT&T will greatly enhance the work we perform with our partner high schools and our strong public-private coalition.”

The R&D STEM Learning Exchange is part of Illinois Pathways, a \$10.3 million initiative launched last year by Governor Quinn to better prepare students to compete in the global economy. Initially funded through federal Race to the Top (RTTT) funds, which leveraged significant private investment, the STEM Learning Exchanges are designed to coordinate investments, resources and planning for programs that empower youth and adults to explore academic and career interests in STEM fields.

In its pilot year, the R&D STEM Learning Exchange is impacting more than 400 students and their teachers. In addition to Challenges, the Exchange will also implement a virtual [mentor matching platform](#) for students to engage with an industry or university mentor around an authentic research experience. Students will also be able to connect with local programs through the [R&D STEM Resource Repository](#) enabling greater impact of existing STEM learning tools.

About The Illinois Science and Technology Institute

The [Illinois Science & Technology Institute \(ISTI\)](#) is a 501(c)(3) public charity and an affiliated, complementary effort to the [Illinois Science & Technology Coalition](#). The mission of the ISTI is to advance scientific understanding and technological innovation in Illinois through discovery, education, invention, and partnership.

About Philanthropy at AT&T



AT&T Inc. is committed to advancing education, strengthening communities and improving lives. Through its philanthropic initiatives, AT&T has a long history of supporting projects that create learning opportunities; promote academic and economic achievement; and address community needs. In 2012, more than \$131 million was contributed through corporate-, employee- and AT&T Foundation-giving programs. © 2014 AT&T Intellectual Property. All rights reserved. AT&T, the AT&T logo and all other marks contained herein are trademarks of AT&T Intellectual Property and/or AT&T affiliated companies.

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