



For Immediate Release

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Illinois Science and Technology Institute's R&D STEM Learning Exchange Hosts Showcase for Real-World STEM Challenges

More than 400 students from 12 high schools address real-world innovation challenges from leading Illinois businesses and research institutions

Chicago, Ill. – May 19, 2014 – The Illinois Science and Technology Institute (ISTI) today brought together students and teachers with industry, higher education and other key stakeholders at the Museum of Science and Industry to celebrate the conclusion of the R&D STEM Learning Exchange Challenge's pilot year. More than 400 students and 20 teachers in 12 Illinois high schools partnered with experts at Motorola Solutions, Baxter International, The Greatest Good (TGG Group), IIT's Institute for Food Safety and Health, and Northrop Grumman throughout the semester to solve complex real-world, problem-based STEM Challenges.

"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 in Illinois. This program has greatly enhanced the work we perform with our partner high schools and our strong public-private coalition to increase applied learning opportunities and career exploration for more Illinois students," said Mark Harris, president & CEO of the ISTI, an affiliate of the Illinois Science & Technology Coalition.

Students have been gathering data, conducting experiments and working with industry professionals throughout the spring semester. Today, they shared their solutions to challenges ranging from conducting a trade study for a missile defense system and using behavioral economics to encourage better environmental practices, to developing an app for first responders in emergency situations.

"This project benefits students because they are able to see the real issues that our partner companies encounter. It helps students to get beyond the scope of high school and see what their future could be like," said Don Bibly, biology teacher at Instituto Health Sciences Career Academy in Chicago's Pilsen neighborhood.

"We are so honored to partner with organizations like the Illinois Science and Technology Institute, which is helping to inspire the world's future innovators and technology professionals," said Matt Blakely, director, Motorola Solutions Foundation. "As a company dedicated to helping people be their best in the moments that matter, Motorola Solutions could not be more honored to support programs like the R&D STEM Learning Exchange."



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. In addition to support from the state, the STEM Challenge was made possible with funding support from Baxter, Motorola Solutions, Northrop Grumman and AT&T, as well as implementation support from the iBio Institute's EDUCATE Center. 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 has impacted more than 500 students and their teachers through three key initiatives. In addition to the STEM Challenge, students are also engaged with industry and university mentors through a new virtual platform, the [Mentor Matching Engine](#), around authentic research experiences. Teachers and students can also connect with partners through the [R&D STEM Resource Repository](#), a curated collection of STEM programs and resources in Illinois.

The following video provides additional information about the STEM Challenge:
(<http://youtu.be/ZaDaSDQZX4s>)

Challenge Partner High Schools include:

Chicago Vocational Career Academy
Instituto Health Sciences Career Academy (IHSCA)
Lindblom Math and Science Academy
Niles North High School
Palatine High School
Waukegan High School

Hinsdale Central High School
Lane Tech College Prep
Muchin College Prep
Oak Park and River Forest High School
Thornton High School
Wheeling High School

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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.

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