



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Students Step up with STEM Solutions**

*Illinois Science & Technology Institute Challenges 600 Illinois High School Students*

**Chicago, Ill. – May 18, 2015** – What happens when 600 innovative students come together in one room? STEM challenges get solved! Students from 17 Illinois high schools were tasked by the Illinois Science & Technology Institute (ISTI; [www.istcoalition.org](http://www.istcoalition.org)) to solve real-world problems in partnership with nine industry and academic partners. The goal: to get them excited about research and development (R&D) and inspire them into careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. Their efforts culminate in the Second Annual R&D STEM Learning Challenges Student Showcase to be held May 20, 2015 at Motorola Mobility’s downtown Chicago office in the Merchandise Mart.

“Our goal is to better connect students to careers in STEM fields, allowing them to see themselves working in a research and development environment. The R&D STEM Learning Exchange invites students to explore their ideas, conduct their own hands-on research, and find mentors in STEM fields, ultimately helping to spur interest and skills in critical industry sectors in our state,” said Mark Harris, president & CEO of the ISTI, an affiliate of the Illinois Science & Technology Coalition.

Since early this year, students at participating schools have been matched with an industry partner/topic, and have been collecting data, conducting experiments, and working side-by-side with industry leaders to develop ideas to address specific challenges from those partners. This included finding a way to provide power during disasters or conducting a trade study for a missile defense system. At the Student Showcase, one student team from each high school will share the team’s results.

ISTI is grateful for the partnership of Baxter International Inc., ComEd, Illinois State University’s Center for Renewable Energy, Microsoft, Motorola Mobility, Motorola Solutions, Northrop Grumman Corporation, Takeda Pharmaceuticals, and TGG Group.

“Microsoft is committed to helping young people capture opportunity through STEM initiatives not only in Chicago, but across the globe,” says Shelley Stern Grach, Director of Civic Engagement at Microsoft. “Our STEM Challenge partnership with ISTI and Lake View High School is a shining example of the commitment Illinois is making to its students and we are proud to be a part of it.”

“These students are our future. If we can help inspire them to pursue a career in science, they may go on to do something of tremendous value,” says Olivier Visa, vice president, global



compounding at Baxter regarding the company’s involvement with students at Instituto Health Sciences Career Academy, Lindblom Math and Science Academy, and Muchin College Prep.

“The R&D STEM Learning Exchange has provided the students at Washington Community High School the opportunity to expand and improve our inquiry-based research projects by allowing a group of students to work on solving a STEM Challenge posed by our industry partner, Illinois State University’s Center for Renewable Energy. Through these programs offered by the R&D STEM Learning Exchange, the students of Washington are practicing and learning skills that will be required of them by future employers” says Jennifer Miller, teacher at Washington Community High School.

The R&D STEM Learning Exchange is part of Illinois Pathways, a public-private \$10.3 million initiative launched in 2012 to better prepare students to compete in the global economy.

Since inception, the R&D STEM Learning Exchange has involved more than 1,500 students and their teachers through three key initiatives: 1:1 student/university mentor collaboration on research projects through a new virtual platform, the [Mentor Matching Engine](#), around authentic research experiences; the [R&D STEM Resource Repository](#), a curated collection of STEM programs and resources in Illinois; and these STEM Challenges.

Check out the following video for more information about the STEM Challenges:  
(<https://youtu.be/AiyEZGoQZwU>)

**Challenge Partner High Schools include:**

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|--|---------------------------------------|
| Chicago Vocational Career Academy        | Oak Park and River Forest High School |
| DePaul College Prep                      | Palatine High School                  |
| Glenbrook South High School              | Urbana High School                    |
| Instituto Health Sciences Career Academy | Von Steuben Metro Science Center      |
| Lake View High School                    | Washington Community High School      |
| Lindblom Math and Science Academy        | Waukegan High School                  |
| Maine South High School                  | Wheeling High School                  |
| Muchin College Prep                      | Williamsfield High School             |
| Niles North High School                  |                                       |

**IN DEPTH: 2014-15 Challenges and Partnerships**

**Baxter International Inc.** Innovative, effective, feasible solutions for decreasing illnesses and the spread of infections in schools. *Instituto Health Sciences Career Academy, Lindblom Math & Science Academy, Muchin College Prep*

**Illinois State University’s Center for Renewable Energy.** How can we evaluate our critical

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energy needs and develop a prototype or plan for an energy-efficient system that can provide reliable power for the community in the midst or aftermath of a weather-related power outage. *Glenbrook South High School, Urbana High School, Washington High School, Williamsfield High School*

**Microsoft.** Use tools like sensors and analytics to diagnose and ultimately solve the water management issues in your community, which will help provide solutions for the greater Chicago region. *Lake View High School*

**Motorola Mobility.** How might we use mobile phones to investigate and solve a current problem for people in our local or, possibly, global community? *Niles North High School*

**Motorola Solutions.** What new mobile technology applications and tools might you develop to help save lives and keep people safe in emergency and disaster situations? *Chicago Vocational Career Academy*

**Northrop Grumman Corporation.** Perform a trade study on a missile defense system that can detect and destroy hostile missiles before they can enter our country. *Palatine High School, Oak Park and River Forest High School*

**TGG Group.** Identify how individuals systematically deviate from rational decision-making in a harmful way. Develop a recommendation based on behavioral economics for reducing the harmful behavior. *Von Steuben High School, Wheeling High School*

**Takeda Pharmaceuticals.** Address the problem of low participation in pediatric studies in one of Takeda's therapeutic areas and recommend solutions for increasing participation, which might specifically target compliance and diversity. *Maine South High School, Waukegan High School*

**ComEd (completing summer 2015).** How can we best help communities such as yours work together to leverage and build awareness of existing and new opportunities to increase energy efficiency and the reliability of their power supplies? *DePaul College Prep*

#### **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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