



For Immediate Release

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38 Illinois High Schools Team Up with Leading Corporations and Universities to Innovate Beyond the Classroom

Illinois Science & Technology Institute Celebrates 50 Percent Growth from 2015-16

Chicago, Ill. – October 6, 2016 – The [Illinois Science & Technology Institute \(ISTI\)](#), a STEM education-focused nonprofit that connects companies with classrooms, today announced its participating high schools and industry and academic partners for the 2016-17 school year. This year’s program includes more than 2,000 students at 38 Illinois high schools, who will be paired with professionals working in STEM-related fields to collaborate on industry-focused problems and independent research projects.

“ISTI takes students beyond the classroom walls through problem-based learning, hands-on project design, and active mentorship,” says Mark Harris, president and chief executive officer of ISTI. “We are thrilled by the growing engagement from our high school partners across the state, and to be working with some of the most innovative companies in the world. Ultimately, these partnerships are helping to drive the Illinois STEM talent pipeline by preparing the next generation of problem solvers and innovators.”

ISTI programs provide authentic challenge topics and mentoring to prepare students for future STEM careers. This includes [STEM Challenges](#), a customized, interdisciplinary, problem-based learning program that offers high school students the opportunity to investigate and provide innovative solutions to problems relevant to Illinois industry, while being supported by STEM professionals. Illinois high schools are matched with leading companies and universities to work together over the course of the academic year.

Beginning in October 2016, students will work alongside their mentors to move through the research and design cycle, culminating in a statewide showcase on April 27, 2017 downtown Chicago at Motorola Mobility.

Students also work with a network of industry and academic mentors on independent research projects through the [Mentor Matching Engine \(MME\)](#). The Mentor Matching Engine is a custom-built, online platform that connects high school students and teachers virtually to STEM professionals through curated matchmaking around research interests.

ISTI’s expanded reach includes Chicago, suburban and Central Illinois high schools, with an interest in engaging more students traditionally under-represented in STEM fields. In 2015-16, just over half of ISTI’s participating students were female and half were students of color.

Industry partners for 2016-2017 include: AbbVie Foundation, ADM, Baxter International Inc., Horizon Pharma, Illinois State University’s Center for Renewable Energy, Loyola University Chicago, Microsoft,



Motorola Mobility, Motorola Solutions Foundation, Northrop Grumman, State Farm, and Takeda Pharmaceuticals.

Partner high schools for 2016-2017 include: Bloomington High School, Chicago Vocational Career Academy, CICS Longwood, Corliss High School, Downers Grove North High School, Eisenhower High School, Elk Grove High School, Evanston Township High School, Gwendolyn Brooks College Preparatory Academy, Highland Park High School, Illinois Math and Science Academy, Instituto Health Sciences Career Academy, ITW David Speer Academy, Lake View High School, Lindblom Math and Science Academy, MacArthur High School, Muchin College Prep, Naperville Central High School, Naperville North High School, Niles North High School, Niles West High School, Normal Community High School, Normal West High School, North Chicago Community High School, Oak Park and River Forest High School, Palatine High School, Phoenix Military Academy, Prospect High School, Proviso East High School, Proviso Math and Science Academy, Proviso West High School, Senn High School, Solorio Academy High School, Saint Viator High School, Von Steuben Metropolitan Science Center, Washington Community High School, Wheeling High School, and Williamsfield High School.

These programs were initiated as part of the R&D STEM Learning Exchange, supported by the Illinois State Board of Education. Learn more about [STEM Challenges](#) and the [Mentor Matching Engine](#), as well as program impact in the new [2015-16 Annual Report](#). This report provides an overview of the 2015-16 school year, detailing growth, key metrics, successes, and learnings from the third year of implementation.

Interested in mentoring or getting involved? Contact us at: info@istcoalition.org.

About the Illinois Science & 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 Illinois Science & Technology Institute (ISTI) is a STEM-focused nonprofit that provides programs and partnerships to connect companies with classrooms. ISTI supports schools, companies, and universities who want to impact the next generation of innovators. It is a bridge between the classroom and real world that facilitates collaboration between students and industry mentors.

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