



For Immediate Release

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1200+ High Schoolers to Participate in Innovative Problem Solving Program *Academic-Corporate Partnerships Grow to Bolster Illinois STEM Talent Pipeline*

Chicago, Ill. – November 9, 2015 – The [Illinois Science and Technology Institute \(ISTI\)](#) announces the expansion of its Research & Development (R&D) STEM Learning Exchange.

Now in its third year, this trailblazing, public-private effort connects students to future STEM careers. This school year, through STEM Challenges and the Mentor Matching Engine (MME), the R&D STEM Learning Exchange will reach more than 1,200 students at 29 Illinois high schools. The Exchange promotes inquiry-based learning, builds critical thinking skills and provides perspective on R&D applications for participating students. This ultimately helps strengthen Illinois' industry by enriching its talent pipeline.

"The mission is to spark interest, preparing students for R&D careers here in Illinois. When we build a pipeline of young professionals, we invest in Illinois' future innovators. The continued growth of this program and our strong public-private coalition of committed high schools, industry and academic partners demonstrates the deep need for and interest in these learning opportunities," says Mark Harris, President & CEO of ISTI.

The STEM Challenge program matches participating schools with leading corporations and research institutions. From January through May 2016, students will work alongside experts from Illinois' top companies and together spur real-world innovation. Their work will be showcased May 19, 2016. Industry partners include AbbVie, Argonne National Laboratory, Baxter International Inc., Illinois State University's Center for Renewable Energy, Microsoft, Motorola Mobility, Motorola Solutions, Northrop Grumman, TGG Group and Takeda Pharmaceuticals.

Students will also work with a broad network of industry and academic mentors on research projects through the [Mentor Matching Engine \(MME\)](#). This is an invitation-only, web-based platform developed in partnership with the Illinois Math & Science Academy (IMSA). The MME connects Illinois high school students and teachers to STEM professionals who serve as online mentors.

R&D STEM Learning Exchange partner high schools for 2015-2016 include: Amboy High School, Chicago Vocational Career Academy, Downers Grove North High School, Downers Grove South High School, Evanston Township High School, Gwendolyn Brooks College Preparatory Academy, IMSA, Instituto Health Science Career Academy, ITW David Speer Academy, Julian High School, Lake View High School, Lindblom Math and Science Academy, Maine South High School, Muchin College Prep, Mundelein High School, New Trier High School, North Lawndale College Prep, North Chicago Community High School, Oak Park and River Forest High School, Palatine High School, Prospect High School, Rich East High School, Schurz High School, South Shore International College Prep, Taft High School, Von Steuben Metropolitan Science Center, Washington Community High School, Wheeling High School and Williamsfield High School.

The R&D STEM Learning Exchange is part of Illinois Pathways, an initiative launched in 2012 to better prepare students to compete in the global economy. The initiative is designed to coordinate investments,



resources and planning for programs that empower youth and adults to explore academic and career interests in STEM fields.

In three years, the R&D STEM Learning Exchange has reached more than 1,500 students, 60 teachers, and more than doubled its industry partners. Learn more here about [STEM Challenges](#) and the [Mentor Matching Engine](#).

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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