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The Illinois Science and Technology Institute Celebrates Record Partners for 2017-2018

1,500 students at 40 Illinois high schools tackle real-world STEM challenges with 16 corporate partners

CHICAGO – October 11, 2017 – 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 2017-18 school year. This year's program includes more than 1,500 students at 40 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 2017, students will work alongside their mentors to move through the research and design cycle, culminating in a statewide showcase on April 26, 2018 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 2016-17, just over half of ISTI's participating students were female and half were students of color.

Industry partners for 2017-2018 include: AbbVie Foundation, Baxter International Inc., Caterpillar, Horizon Pharma, Illinois State University's Center for Renewable Energy, Lenovo Foundation, Microsoft, Molex, Motorola Solutions Foundation, Northrop Grumman, State Farm, and Takeda Pharmaceuticals.

Partner high schools for 2017-2018 include: Bartlett High School, Bloomington High School, Chicago School for Agricultural Sciences, Chicago Tech Academy, Corliss High School, Deerfield High School, Downers Grove North High School, East St. Louis Senior High School, Elk Grove High School, Evanston Township High School, Foreman College and Career Academy, Glenbard West High School, Grayslake Central High School, Grayslake North High School, Gwendolyn Brooks College Preparatory Academy, Highland Park High School, Instituto Health Sciences Career Academy, ITW David Speer Academy, Jones College Prep, Lake Zurich High School, Lake View High School, Lindblom Math and Science Academy, Muchin College Prep, Mundelein High School, Naperville Central 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, Perspectives Math & Science Academy, Prospect High School, Solorio Academy High School, Von Steuben Metropolitan Science Center, Washington Community High School, Wheeling High School, Whitney Young Magnet 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 our 2016-17 Annual Report](#). This report provides an overview of the 2016-17 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.

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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. For more information, visit [istcoalition.org/illinois-science-and-technology-institute](http://istcoalition.org/illinois-science-and-technology-institute)*

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