



Personal Reflections

8/20/2018

Dear IMSA Community,

Welcome to the 2018-2019 academic year!

We begin the year with great energy fresh from a summer hosting the 14th Annual International Student Science Fair (ISSF 2018), Alumni Weekend, and youth camps on our campus in Aurora, as well as across Illinois in Belleville, Chicago, Springfield and South Holland.

Our hosting of ISSF 2018 was the jewel in our crown this year, it being the first time the annual international event was held in the US. ISSF 2018 was a great success for all involved. We hosted over 90 students, educators and school leaders from over 30 schools who traveled thousands of miles to IMSA from approximately 20 countries for the event. During the five-day program, delegates participated in a music-inspired opening ceremony and visited world-class research labs and facilities, science museums and attractions in the Chicagoland area. Student delegates shared their research posters and research presentations and all delegates enjoyed three days of programming dedicated to discussion and ideation on three of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals: Zero Hunger, Clean Water and Sanitation and Affordable and Clean Energy. This provided attendees with the opportunity to collaborate on possible ideas for solutions and to inspire continuation of the discussion in their home countries. Our sharing of the events and activities through social media reached well over 100,000 people internationally, showing IMSA to be a world leading learning Academy at the forefront of international conversations on STEM teaching and learning.

Everything we do at IMSA is focused on exploring new and different ways of leading, ideating and solving problems through critical thinking skills. From our dedication to learning the Humanities, English and History, to World Languages, and the Visual and Performing Arts and Wellness, to excellence in Mathematics, Science and Computer Science, and our focus on independent research, innovation and cultivation of leadership skills through student life, IMSA fosters collaboration and creativity inspired by our mission of igniting and nurturing creative, ethical, scientific minds that advance the human condition.

As we make continuous progress toward accomplishing our 2022 Impact and Outcomes, as evidenced by our June 2018 Dashboard, we have established four priorities for the 2018-2019 academic year. One priority is to continue integration of the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals into our curricular, activities and learning experiences as well as our research programs (SIR), leadership programs (LEAD) and innovation efforts (IN2) across the Academy.

Another priority relates to our foundational philosophy of Equity and Excellence that guides all our efforts. While we continue to seek and support talented students throughout Illinois with a



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passion and interest in Mathematics and Science, we are making a concerted effort to recruit and support high ability, low income students.

A third priority is to develop and implement an International Strategy that will assist us in meeting our Impact and Outcomes. This may include building on ISSF to bolster IMSA's reputation globally, determining which international invitations to accept and pursue, and preparing IMSA's infrastructure and processes to enroll non-Illinois students.

A final priority, IMSA Innovation Campus, Phase 1 is to engage our IMSA community in dreaming a new residential complex, including thinking about its design, and identifying and securing financial resources to make this dream a reality.

As I begin my fifth year as President of the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy, I consider it not only a privilege to serve, but also a responsibility to lead. I'm so proud of being a member of IMSA! Outside recognition, such as being ranked as the #1 Public High in America by niche.com, together with the momentum and energy derived from hosting the ISSF, positions us to continue to succeed. Yet, sustaining excellence and making inroads into equity has never been more challenging and complicated given our national landscape and budget limitations.

I know that you share my commitment to this vision, which is essential to our future and I invite you to join us in this worthwhile effort.

Respectfully,

Jose M. Torres, PhD

President