

Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy®
IMSA Bill SB2939
President José M. Torres, Ph.D. President
Prepared Remarks
March 13, 2018

Good morning and thank you, Chairperson Bertino-Tarrant and members of the Committee.

My name is Dr. José M. Torres. I have the privilege and responsibility of serving as President of the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy – IMSA.

I joined IMSA in September 2014.

For 30 years, IMSA has pioneered the future of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) through its two legislative charges: 1) to provide a uniquely challenging education for students talented in the areas of mathematics and science and 2) to stimulate further excellence for all Illinois schools in mathematics and science.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify before the Senate Education Committee in support of SB 2939.

Staff with me this morning includes:

Dr. Robert Hernandez, Interim Principal

Mr. Lawrence “Bud” Bergie, Chief Operations Officer

I want to begin by thanking each of you for your service to the people of Illinois and for considering this change to the IMSA law.

In summary, SB 2939 amends the IMSA law in two ways:

1. Provides that tuition, fees, and room and board costs be charged for students of IMSA who are not IL residents
2. Provides that IMSA may admit IL residents and non-residents who have completed the academic equivalent of the 8th (rather than 9th) grade

The **first change** proposed in this bill allows IMSA to enroll non-IL students (national and international students).

IMSA’s funding directly impacts our 650 IMSA residential students from throughout Illinois, along with the approximately 8,700 student participants and approximately 2,600 educators that we serve through our Professional Field Services (PFS) initiatives and outreach programs.

Over the past 30+ years, the General Assembly has appropriated funds to IMSA, but these have fallen short with the increases in cost of living expenses, and frankly, if I may be so bold, have not kept up with our need to ensure that IMSA keeps its leading role in educating the next generation of scientists, mathematicians, and innovators.

See Exhibit A—Actual Appropriations vs. Appropriations with COLA

From its inception, IMSA has studied how to ensure its financial certainty, including exploring educating non-IL students at IMSA.

Over the past 10 years, it has become clearer that we must act.

Now is the time for action.

SB 2939 is an opportunity for IMSA to creatively increase revenues to, for example:

- Build new residence halls. The lifespan of the residence halls is overdue (over 30 years old). The halls need to be replaced. The cost to update the current facilities to meet current code compliance as well as current needs is substantial.
- Modernize our campus infrastructure and scientific equipment.
 - Infrastructure: our Grainger lab where IMSA students perform on-campus research and investigations needs to be updated. Also, we would like to update our fine arts classrooms to accommodate larger classes (currently they can only accommodate fewer than 18 students) and to offer CAD (computer aided design) courses.
 - Examples of Scientific equipment: Gel Documentation system, Flow Cytometer, Green house and associated equipment, solar telescope, and NIM (Nuclear Instrumentation Module) Crate
- Maintain Illinois' competitive advantage—IMSA has successfully helped other schools in STEM education throughout the state of IL such that many of these schools have or are catching up with IMSA in terms of STEM education nationwide

At the end of the day, IMSA cannot make up the 80% of its budget that comes from the State with alternative revenues because we have:

- NO taxing authority (no property taxes)
- NO ability to carry-over appropriations for the Education Assistance Fund (EAF)
- NO bond issuing authority
- NO research dollars
- NO authorization to charge tuition and room and board fees
- NO operations endowment funding
- Restrictions on major gifts and grants from the private sector

IMSA's existing brand and international reputation lead us to believe that we can recruit non-IL students to IL, many who will remain in IL to pursue a university education. I received a text (3/8/18) message from an IMSA alumnus living out of state who graduated with the Charter Class in 1989 asking about his daughter coming back to IMSA.

Adding to our brand and international renown will be our hosting of the 14th annual international students science fair (ISSF) for the first time on American soil June 27-July1, 2018. Over 30 schools and 20 countries are coming to IL. ISSF is also a designated bicentennial event!

Today, over 40% of IMSA graduates attend IL universities, with over 30% attending public IL universities.

We would expect that many non-IL students will do the same.

IMSA's current annual cost per student, including the residential component, is approximately \$28,000.

Our research indicates that IMSA will be able to charge approximately \$50,000 per non-IL student, subtracting cost of acquiring students (roughly 10%), and costs of educating the student, our margin may be approximately 25%, or approximately \$12,000 per student.

We've already had preliminary discussions with several developers who tell us that if IMSA is able to charge tuition, room and board IMSA will be able to cover the full cost of new residence halls and any associated increases in faculty, residential counselors, and other support staff.

The current market value to build new residential halls is approximately \$250 per square foot; in other words, a new residential hall would cost approximately \$105M. Given the state of our current halls, and the desired ability to accommodate approximately 150-200 new students, we propose a new residence structure that would contain two halls to replace the existing structures of 7 residence halls.

IMSA is committed to continuing to educate 630-650 IL students every academic year, as it has done historically. Evidence of a commitment of this kind is borne out in our undertaking to ensure gender equality in student representation. IMSA has always reserved 50% of its bed for male students and 50% for female students, and we have abided by this commitment for years. In the same manner, we are committed to serving IL students, and will reserve 650 beds for IL students, again, like we have done historically.

The **second change** in this bill is allowing IMSA to enroll students who have completed the equivalent of the 8th grade.

Our data show that 39% of the students who applied to attend IMSA, reconsidered it because a 9th grade program is not offered.

In conclusion, IMSA's focus on science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and innovation are core to making Illinois' economy competitive.

We exist to serve Illinois and the world. Carl Sagan exclaimed IMSA is a "gift from the people of Illinois to the human future."

We respectfully request your support for Senate Bill 2939.

Thank you for your continuous support for IMSA and our students.

This concludes my formal remarks. I would be glad to answer questions that you may have.