



## Personal Reflections

8/24/2016

Dear IMSA Community,

Over the past few weeks, IMSA's summer camps and outreach programs have been in full swing. Last week, we hosted over 300 students and educators on campus for Summer@IMSA day camps, PROMISE SEAMS classes, the Student Inquiry and Research (SIR) program, Golden Apple and Fusion POP. The excitement and engagement from these students and educators is palpable and spreads across our entire Academy in Aurora. Outside of the Academy, our programs with partner schools in Chicago and Belleville are in full swing. We're excited to maintain and spread the momentum for quality Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) programs throughout the state.

IMSA begins the 2017 fiscal year with good news! On June 30, the Legislature and Governor Rauner approved a six-month stop gap state budget. This is great news for IMSA as we are able to advance our mission of "*igniting and nurturing creative, ethical, scientific minds that advance the human condition*" and provide inquiry-based STEM education initiatives to the entire state. The six month budget is proof positive of the difficult work our elected officials have done so far and I remain optimistic that we will have more good news for the second half of the year.

With the stability created by the six month budget, we're excited to open the newly renovated A-Wing science labs and IN2: The Steve and Jamie Center for Innovation & Inquiry, our newest entrepreneurial space. This fall, students will learn in new educational settings that model real-world research laboratories and idea incubators. These spaces are where science, research, collaboration and innovation are accomplished, rather than merely reading about these topics, we engage hands-on in solving real-world problems.

As we celebrate our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the programs, renovations of the science labs and construction of IN2 launch us for a highly successful next 30 years. Even with the challenges of the past year, IMSA continues to exemplify excellence in STEM education. I am so thankful to you, members of our IMSA community, and reiterate a sincere thank you to each and every staff member, including faculty who weathered the uncertainty of the past year while maintaining the high level of educational excellence that IMSA represents.

Excitement for this fall continues to build as we welcome our incoming Class of 2019 at our second Orientation this morning.

I hope that you're enjoying your summer!

Warm regards,

José M. Torres, Ph.D.