1. Brief History

The idea grew out of the experience of Saturday Morning Physics at Fermilab where we recognized that the exceptionally bright high school student was not being challenged by the generally good schools in the affluent suburbs.

An important event was a design workshop held on December of 1983 in which all the educational constituencies were represented: high schools, experts in gifted education, seven Illinois universities, community colleges, industrial research scientists, Fermilab and Argonne.

The proposal was formulated as a result of the curriculum design and presented to the Governor's Commission on Science and Technology and the Task Force on Quality of Mathematics and Science Education in Illinois. It was discussed before the BHE and the SBE and approximately one million talks were given before meetings of PTA's, school superintendents, service clubs, etc., etc.

2. Current Status

Legislation was introduced in 1984 but action came in July of 1985 where the IMSA was officially created with a planning grant of $500,000 and the appointment of a 17 member Board of Trustees, under the initial chairmanship of Ted Sanders, State Superintendent of Education.

State officials selected as the site, the abandoned North Campus high school building of the Aurora West District, a 93 acre site with a 12 million dollar, hardly used, innovative structure, adequate for a school population of 2000 students.

Board committees were set up to study: Admissions, Staff Recruiting, Student Life, Curriculum, Buildings & Facilities, Computers, Fund Raising and Legislative/Finance. Each committee acquired consultants, acknowledged experts from across the national in the respective tasks.

A decision was made, probably foolhardy, to open in September of 1986. An architectural firm was engaged in close
association with the Capital Development Board of the State. Designs and cost estimates were obtained for dormitories and required building modifications.

The Board appointed F. Borden Mace, first Principal of the North Carolina School for Science & Mathematics, as interim Director of IMSA. A small staff of educational consultants is now working full-time with Mr. Mace and the various Board Committees.

A National Board of Advisors consisting of outstanding representatives of Industry, Academia, Government and the Public is being formed.

A "Fund for the IMSA" will be a not-for-profit corporation charged with long-term task of establishing an endowment and resources for the enhancement of the Academy.

The Finance Committee is in the process of refining the determination of initial and equilibrium operating costs of the Academy and the capital costs involved in taking over the Aurora school, in the construction of dormitories and the initial equipment.

In March, the Legislature voted the supplemental appropriation of $5.4 million for the initial set of dormitories and building renovations.

On March 7, student application packages were distributed to all high schools in Illinois. This begins the process, designed by the Student Selection Committee and its consultant, Dr. Clifford Wing of Duke University.

A Guiding Statement of Principles or Philosophy is being formulated with the purpose of creating the finest school in the nation charged with the awesome responsibility of nurturing the greatest treasure that this state owns: its most gifted and creative children.