

### Watch Us Grow!

IMSA Excellence 2000+ is alive and well and growing like crazy! We now have 67 individual late elementary and/or middle level programs going on in 60 different locations all over Illinois! Some schools offer both the elementary and the middle level programs to their students. Check out all the locations on the map at our Website, [www.imsa.edu/program/e2k/partners](http://www.imsa.edu/program/e2k/partners).

We are very pleased to welcome these new schools to our growing E2K+ network:

- Ana Roque de Duprey Elementary School, Chicago (6-8)
- Carroll-Rosenwald Specialty School, Chicago (6-8)
- Crete-Monee Sixth Grade Center, Crete (6-8)
- Crete-Monee Middle School, Crete (6-8)
- Daniel Webster Middle School, Waukegan (6-8)
- Fearn Elementary School, Aurora (4-5)
- Iles Elementary School, Springfield (4-5)
- Jane Addams Elementary, Maywood (6-8)
- Jefferson Middle School, Springfield (6-8)
- Lincoln Middle School, Schiller Park (6-8)
- Lindsay Elementary School, Springfield (4-5)
- Marsh Elementary School, Springfield (4-5)
- Sandburg Elementary School, Springfield (4-5)
- Springfield Ball Charter School, Springfield (6-8)
- Unity Point Elementary/Carbondale Middle School Consortium, Carbondale (6-8)
- Washington Middle School, Springfield (6-8)



*Dr. Roberta Taylor, Superintendent of Schiller Park District 81, Brian Amsler, Dean of Students, and Constance Stavrou, Principal of Lincoln Middle School accept the E2K+ banner from Dr. Susan Bisinger at their first Parent Night.*

And welcome to the 4-5 late elementary program which was added at Stevenson Elementary School in Melrose Park.

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## Keep an eye on our Web site!

The E2K+ Web site is always being updated. Check it out for new information about the Problem of the Month, new units, opportunities to register for programs, and the on-line version of **E2K+ News and Notes**.

**[http://  
www.imsa.edu/  
programs/e2k](http://www.imsa.edu/programs/e2k)**

## Become an HFS Chicago Scholar

Eighth grade students who participate in the Excellence 2000+ program at Chicago schools are eligible to apply to participate in the **HFS Chicago Scholars** program, thanks to a partnership between IMSA and that organization.

Scholars are students who show academic and leadership promise, and are committed to excellence. Eighth graders must complete an application, submit letters of recommendation, and be interviewed by HFS Board members.

Those accepted to the program are matched with award-winning academic directors and one-on-one mentors throughout their high school career, and are given college selection and admissions support when they are seniors. In turn, scholars must agree to maintain good grades and participate in a variety of academic and social activities throughout their four years of high school.

For more information about nomination to the HFS Scholars program, E2K+ eighth graders from Chicago should see their Excellence 2000+ teacher or coordinator.



## E2K+ Alumni Attend IMSA

The Excellence 2000+ team at IMSA and at our partner schools are proud enough to bust our buttons when the invited class is announced each spring. This year 16 E2K+ alumni entered the Academy as sophomores! They are: **Grace Beauban**, **Tania Cardenas** and **Sarah Malik** of **Lincoln Middle School** in Berwyn; **David Chatman** of **Prairie Hills Middle School** in Markham; **Evren Dogan**, **Ashwin Nair**, and **Brittany Taylor** of **Franklin Middle School** in Springfield; **Mykhail Doss** and **Christopher Wallis** of **Heritage Middle School** in Lansing; **Shawon Jackson** of **Coretta Scott King Magnet School** in University Park; **Cai O'Connell** of **Yorkville Middle School** in Yorkville; **Adriana Perez** and **Saniya Rattan** of **Cowherd Middle School** in Aurora; **Tasha Rice** and **Si Si** of **Grant Middle School** in Fairview Heights; and **Anjali Shekar** of **Vanderpoel Elementary Academy** in Chicago.

They join 16 juniors and two seniors who are also graduates of the IMSA E2K+ program. Welcome!!

*Correction: E2K+ alum Sarah Johnson was incorrectly identified in a photo in the last issue of News & Notes. We apologize for the error.*

## Meet the Excellence 2000+ Staff...

IMSA Excellence 2000+ has grown from serving seven schools to more than 60 in eight years! The staff that supports teachers and schools has also grown. The Excellence 2000+ team now has three specialists who write curriculum and provide professional development to program teachers, five individuals who visit schools to provide support and feedback to site staff, a curriculum materials clerk who makes sure all the kits and equipment is stocked and ready to go for the students, and a project director and secretary who work to keep everything running smoothly.



**Susan Bisinger**, Project Director, is a graduate of Illinois Institute of Technology and earned Master and Doctoral degrees in Educational Administration from Loyola University of Chicago. She had been a teacher, curriculum director, director of instruction, student teaching supervisor, and publisher for 32 years before joining IMSA in 1999.



**Ray Dagenais**, Curriculum and Professional Development Specialist, marks his 40th year in education and 20th year at IMSA. Ray earned his Bachelor and Master's degrees in physics, and his doctorate in curriculum and supervision. He has taught calculus-based physics and mathematics at the Academy, and is involved in Aurora University's Teacher Leader Program.



**Lucinda Dittmer**, Curriculum & Professional Development Specialist, is a Doctoral Candidate at Northern Illinois University. She holds a certificate of graduate study in problem-based learning and gifted verification from the Illinois State Board of Education. Lucinda worked in the public schools and in corporate finance before joining E2K+.



**Jean Gotkowski**, Site Support Specialist, previously served E2K+ as a Curriculum Specialist. Her background includes Bachelor and Master's degrees in Science Education, and 33 years of teaching experience. She serves on the State committee charged with evaluating Illinois Science Standards, and was recognized for Elementary Science Teaching in 2004.



**Loretta Gustello**, Site Support Specialist, was a teacher, principal, director of curriculum, and assistant superintendent in District 89-Maywood, Melrose Park, Broadview for 34 years. She has a Bachelor degree in Education, a Master's in Curriculum and Administration, and Superintendent Endorsement. Loretta joined IMSA upon her retirement from administration.



**Wendy Habel**, Site Support Specialist, taught seventh and eighth grade science for 34 years. She worked with the E2K+ program at Stevenson Elementary School in Melrose Park for two years as the coordinator and science teacher. In 2008, Wendy accepted the opportunity to continue to work with IMSA Excellence 2000+.



**Amanda Lee** is the Curriculum Materials Clerk for Excellence 2000+. Before coming to work at IMSA she spent a great deal of her time working at a school for special needs children. Her current goal is to soon finish college with a degree in graphic design.



**Mary Lou Lipscomb**, a Curriculum and Professional Development Specialist for the 6<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> grade part of the program, has been with IMSA Excellence 2000+ since it began in 2000. She holds a Bachelor's degree in biology and a Master of Education in science education. Before working with IMSA E2K+ she taught for many years at the middle level.



**Linda Malone**, Site Support Specialist, taught special and regular education for 34 years before joining IMSA. Linda holds Bachelor and Master's degrees from Southern Illinois University, and is a recipient of both *Excellence in Teaching* and *Those Who Excel* awards. She served for four years on the Illinois State Teacher Certification Board and as an Education Issues panelist.



**Cindy McGrail** is the Secretary for the Excellence 2000+ program. She has been with the program since it started in September, 2000. In the last 9 years Cindy has seen the program grow from serving 7 schools to now serving 62 schools. Cindy was formerly an elementary school teacher.



**Sharon Poynter** joined IMSA as a Site Support Specialist upon her retirement from teaching. She was the coordinator at Grant Middle School in Springfield as part of the very first E2K+ cohort of schools in 2000. A former gifted department chair, Sharon holds a Bachelor's degree from the University of Illinois and a Master's from Western Illinois University.

# More Mathematical Inquiry Sessions

As in the past several years, IMSA E2K+ students and their teachers have the opportunity to visit IMSA and take part in a Mathematics Inquiry session led by IMSA mathematics faculty. Presenters include Drs. Steve Condie, Ruth Dover, Micah Fogel, Michael Keyton, Janice Krouse, Vince Matsko, Namrata Pandya, Pat Patankar, Don Porzio, Noah Prince, and Richard Stalmack. In addition to the challenges and conundrums explored during the session, participants tour the campus, are given information about IMSA programs, and are treated to lunch before heading for home.

## Stowe Earns National Recognition

Congratulations to **Stowe Fine Arts Academy**, a four-year Excellence 2000+ school, for being one of three schools recognized by McGraw-Hill Companies for its double digit gains on ISAT reading scores! Located in Chicago's Humboldt Park neighborhood, Stowe serves a population that is 92% Hispanic. It was one of just 48 schools in the city that showed test score gains for six years straight! Principal **Dr. Charles Kyle** accepted the award in Atlanta last May, and noted the connection of themes in the reading program to science.



**EXTRA! EXTRA!!  
Solve all about it!!**

## Prize-winning Problem Solving Opportunities

Beginning in September 2008, students in the IMSA E2K+ 4-5 program have a new problem solving opportunity! The 4-5 Problem of the Month (POM) was added to the POM for 6-7-8. The problems can be accessed from the **Students** link on the E2K+ Website. Only students participating in IMSA Excellence 2000+ in Illinois may respond. Solutions should be submitted by individual students (not teams) and should be the student's original work. Answers must be received by the last day of the month in which the problem is posted. We gather all the correct responses and explanations and randomly select one student's submission, and award a nice prize. So... Go for it! - maybe you'll be our next prize winner!

### Don't miss this: IMSA Preview Days

IMSA Preview Days are an opportunity for students and their parents and teachers interested in learning more about the Academy's academic and residential life programs. Come meet with current IMSA students, their parents, IMSA staff, and get a first hand look at what our programs are about! Several discussion panels and tours of our facilities will be held on these afternoons. Program begins at 10:30 am. Please arrive on time. We respectfully request student guests attend Preview Day with at least one adult. Reservations are not required.

Preview Day Dates for the 2008-2009 Academic Year:

- Saturday  
November 15th, 2008
- Sunday  
January 25th, 2009



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*IMSA Excellence 2000+ is modeled  
after the highly successful Mitchell  
Excellence 2000 program for junior high  
students in Israel.*

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## A Blue Ribbon for Robert A. Black

Congratulations to **Robert A. Black Magnet School** on its recognition as a No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon School for 2008! Black, a five-year participant in the IMSA Excellence 2000+ program, is the only K-8 school in Chicago and one of just 21 schools throughout Illinois to be so honored! **Mr. Thomas Little**, Principal of Black, was honored at a ceremony in Washington, DC on October 20-21, where he received a plaque and flag signifying Blue Ribbon status.

The No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon Schools Program honors public and private elementary, middle and high schools that have at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds and are either academically superior or that demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement to high levels. These schools serve as models for other schools throughout the nation.

