



Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy®

igniting and nurturing creative, ethical, scientific minds that advance the human condition

REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT

José M. Torres, Ph.D.

January 21, 2015

LEADERSHIP MATTERS

As I introduced in November, I am using this section of my report to address the following six broad areas, articulated by the Board in 2013 as “strategic needs and priorities near-and longer-term for IMSA” and used to ground the Presidential Search:

- Institutional Planning
- Financial/Business Model
- Innovations in Teaching and Learning and in STEM Talent Development
- Institutional Research and Scholarship on Program Effectiveness and ROI
- Thought Leadership in STEM Education Policy
- Stakeholders’ Positive Action(s) for IMSA

Today’s meeting will highlight insights from my Listening and Learning Plan (institutional planning) and plans for our Innovation Hub (innovations in teaching and learning/STEM talent development). Additional information is included below, items 12B. and 12C.

Regarding stakeholders’ positive actions for IMSA, in December I visited with six legislators and one Senate staffer at their offices in Springfield, met with Senate President Cullerton and Representative Cynthia Soto in their district offices in Chicago, and traveled to Macomb, IL, where I visited with Representative Norine Hammond. While in Macomb, I met with Regional Superintendent of Schools John Meixner, several parents of current students and alumni, and Superintendent Kathy Dinger, who oversees the Bushnell-Prairie City High School, sending school of one of our students. I also was scheduled to meet with Chicago Public Schools CEO Barbara Byrd Bennett, but because of an urgent matter on her end, met with Sherry J. Ulrey, her Chief of Staff for Academics. Following the CPS meeting, we received a “Request for Quote” to support 5 STEM high schools and 12 elementary schools in CPS. We responded to CPS’ request and hope to hear a positive response shortly.

Regarding thought leadership in STEM education policy, I have been asked and have agreed to serve on the Illinois Association for Gifted Children Board of Directors. I also am bringing IMSA’s expertise and voice to the table as a member of the Illinois P-20 Council which was established by the General Assembly in 2009 to improve alignment of all the State’s education systems and to foster collaboration among multiple stakeholders. The Council’s overarching goal is to increase the proportion of Illinoisans with high-quality degrees and credentials to 60% by 2025; today, we are at 41%. On January 20, several students and I will make welcoming remarks at the P-20 Council meeting which IMSA is hosting for the first time. We look forward to welcoming leaders of educational, government, business and non-profit entities to our campus.

In addition to several local speaking engagements, on February 5 and 6 I will serve as an invited plenary panel presenter for a summit convened by the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation, the nation’s largest scholarship foundation focused on advancing the education of exceptionally high-performing students with financial need. According to JKCF: “For the first time ever, the principals of all 227

selective public high schools in the country are being convened for the purpose of identifying best practices, reviewing the cutting edge research on high-achieving, low-income students, and forming a continuing organization." The summit is titled **Closing the Excellence Gap: Nurturing Talent of High-Achieving, Low-Income Students**; my topic is "Reaching Talented Young Low Income Students."

I close this section on a sobering note, and one which reinforces IMSA leadership's growing sense that we likely will need a different financial/business model for the institution's longer-term future. Over the past several weeks, I have held strategic budget meetings with my Cabinet to respond to a request from the Governor's Office of Management and Budget for state agencies to detail how we would reduce our FY16 EAF budget by 20%. While it may not come to that, and we will work hard to make our best case that it should not, if this is the eventual decision for IMSA, this would require significant reductions in staff, programs and services, and would undermine our ability to carry out our two legislative mandates: "*offer a uniquely challenging education for students talented in the areas of mathematics and science*" and "*stimulate further excellence for all Illinois schools in mathematics and science*." In addition, on January 15, we were asked to determine where we can cut FY15 spending to help the State deal with its current fiscal year shortfall of \$1.5 billion.

Planning for these potential scenarios while also planning for our hopes, dreams and aspirations is a test not for the faint of heart; this is where *Leadership Matters*, leadership at all levels of the organization.

ACTION ITEMS

12A. Consent Agenda

I recommend approval of the items on the Consent Agenda as presented.

In accordance with Board Policy, "Consent Agenda items will be voted on in the aggregate, in one resolution without questions or discussion. Any item may be removed from the Consent Agenda and placed on the regular agenda for questions and discussion by any Trustee in one of three ways. If possible, Trustees shall notify the Secretary of the Board at least 24 hours in advance of the Board Meeting. If this is not possible, Trustees shall notify the Chairman or Secretary of the Board immediately preceding the Board Meeting or shall indicate their request during the Board Meeting at the time the Consent Agenda is presented."

INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

12B. President's 90-Day Listening and Learning Plan Results

On January 8, I led an administrative retreat that allowed 30 staff to hear and respond to my "findings." Our agenda is included in the Appendix. On January 14, I held an all-staff meeting to share with all employees my learnings and to solicit their feedback.

At our meeting today, I will present to the Board the results of my 90-Day Listening and Learning Plan, identify implications and recommend priorities for the next several years. No action is needed at this time.

Grounded in our work that begins this year and extends through year four (2018), I envision our work initially occurring under three broad pillars: STEM Teaching and Learning, Operational Excellence, and Stakeholder Engagement. A snapshot of recommended priorities follows:

STEM Teaching and Learning	Operational Excellence	Stakeholder Engagement
Recalibrate legislative charge #1	Publish IMSA's expected outcomes	Ensure effective governance
Recalibrate legislative charge #2	Publicize results of economic impact study	Strengthen relationships w/ legislators and local communities
Conceive an international strategy	Design and implement a sustainable fiscal model	Engage and partner w/ alumni and parents
	Execute on the Facilities Master Plan creatively	

As a result of our work and our successes, and I am confident we will have many, I also will share some thoughts on what I hope IMSA will be recognized for in years 5-7.

I look forward to your questions and feedback.

12C. IMSA's Innovation Hub

In November, we learned about two capital projects, A-wing Science Labs and Residence Halls. Today we will look at a third, our Innovation Hub.

Proposed in 2008 as part of IMSA's last Strategic Plan, this idea began to come to life in earnest last fall when Alumnus Steve Chen, now a member of the IMSA Fund Board, made a \$1 million lead commitment: <https://www.imsa.edu/content/youtube-co-founder-steve-chen-designates-1-million-gift-imsa-innovation-hub>

Since then, IMSA staff, students, alumni, board members and external advisers have engaged in a design charrette with our architects, naming and branding sessions with expert counsel, and pilots of program offerings (3-D printing sessions as one example).

At today's meeting, Chief Innovation Officer Britta McKenna will present the hub's name, logo and branded one-page summary as well as facility renderings, and you will learn more about program plans, connections with other innovation hubs, and our hub's distinctive niche. We will also take a field trip down to the area where the hub will be located. After our meeting, I encourage you to stay for our mid-day public announcement with students, staff, business and community partners, and media.

In accordance with our communications plan and PR counsel, to help build buzz and reduce the risk of word leaking out accidentally, we are not posting materials in advance; these will be added to the online Board packet after our meeting. In the Appendix now are two background pieces, the original action plan (Strategic Planning Team-endorsed, Board-approved) and a June 2014 summary that we used with internal and external stakeholders prior to our naming and branding sessions.

This is new territory for IMSA and not without start-up challenges. That said, we are very excited about this trailblazing venture, and we look forward to the catalytic force our Innovation Hub can and I believe will become. I also want to recognize and thank Chairman Griffin and Trustee Juby for their participation in our recent planning sessions.