



OFFICE OF GOVERNOR PAT QUINN

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Friday, September 14, 2012

CONTACT: Brooke Anderson (o. 312-814-3158; c. 312-590-0195)
Annie Thompson (o. 217-782-7355; c. 217-720-1853)

Illinois launches new 'STEM' learning exchanges to prepare students for 21st Century workforce

\$10.3 million public-private partnership to boost careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)

CHICAGO – September 14, 2012. Governor Pat Quinn today unveiled a unique \$10.3 million public-private partnership that will better prepare thousands of Illinois students for careers in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) fields. Joined by Illinois business, high-tech and education leaders at the innovative "1871" digital start-up center in Chicago's Merchandise Mart, Governor Quinn announced that eight organizations will be awarded contracts to develop "STEM Learning Exchanges" that link educational opportunities with business resources to prepare students to compete in the global economy. The partnership is part the governor's commitment to improve education in Illinois.

"Our mission is to prepare our students for the 21st Century workforce," Governor Quinn said. "These new Learning Exchanges will provide students with real-world experience and advanced educational opportunities to ensure they are ready to compete for the jobs of tomorrow."

The funding package is comprised of \$2.3 million in federal Race to the Top (RTTT) funds, which leveraged another \$8 million in business resources. The eight STEM Learning Exchanges, coordinated through multiple state agencies in partnership with the Illinois Business Roundtable, will be established through contracts with the Illinois State Board of Education. Applicants were required to commit cash or in-kind donations, bringing more than \$10.3 million of business resources and cash to this unique public-private partnership.

The eight learning exchange organizations were selected by an expert review committee that considered each applicant's plan and experience in coordinating statewide public-private partnerships, and the matching or in-kind matching contribution. These statewide Learning Exchanges will work together with regional, educational and business networks to aggregate curricular resources, assessment tools, professional development systems, work-based learning opportunities and problem-based learning challenges. They will support performance evaluation across the P-20 education and workforce system, and result in better prepared students for a 21st century workforce. For the complete list, see attached document.

"This exemplifies a great public-private partnership as education and business forces work together to pave the way for a brighter future in Illinois," said State Superintendent of Education Christopher A. Koch. "Giving students access to professionals and showing them how knowledge can be applied on the job is a proven strategy for keeping students engaged in high school and mindful of their future."

-MORE-



A 2011 report from the Georgetown University Center on Education and the Workforce shows that Illinois will have an estimated 319,000 STEM-related job openings by 2018. About 93 percent of those jobs will require post-secondary education or training.

“The true wealth of our nation is produced by manufacturing things that people throughout the world wish to purchase because of our advanced technology and reputation for quality. That technology and quality can only be sustained with a pipeline of young people who are stimulated by such innovative approaches as these learning exchanges,” said Fred Young, CEO of Forest City Gears which made 75 gears for NASA’s Curiosity Rover mission to Mars.

“STEM occupations are critical to bolstering our state’s competitive edge and ability to be successful in the global economy,” said Jeff Mays, President of the Illinois Business Roundtable. “We not only need more professional scientists and mathematicians, but also qualified technicians and skilled workers in manufacturing and other technology-driven industries. By participating in the STEM Learning Exchanges, business is stepping up to better coordinate programs and investments that connect students to careers.”

The RTTT funds supporting the STEM Learning Exchanges are drawn from the nearly \$43 million awarded to Illinois last year to implement education reform initiatives across the state.

Last year, Gov. Quinn launched Illinois Pathways, an education initiative to support college and career readiness. Coordinated through a partnership between the State’s education and economic development agencies, Illinois Pathways supports local programs that empower youth and adults to explore academic and career interests in STEM fields while supporting Learning Exchanges that coordinate investments, resources and planning for those programs. To learn more about Illinois Pathways, please visit: www.illinoisworknet.com/ilpathways.

###

STEM Learning Exchanges

Five organizations will each be awarded \$430,000 to implement STEM Learning Exchanges under three-year contracts. Three more organizations will each receive \$50,000 to plan new Exchanges under one-year contracts.

The following STEM fields of study are to be implemented as exchanges beginning this year by the following organizations:

- **Manufacturing;** Illinois Manufacturers Association Education Foundation, based in Oak Brook and Springfield
- **Health Sciences;** University of Illinois at Chicago
- **Research & Development;** Illinois Science and Technology Institute in Chicago
- **Information Technology;** CompTIA Workforce Development in Chicago
- **Agriculture, Food & Natural Resources;** IFFA - formerly the Illinois Foundation for Future Farmers of America - based in Springfield

The following three organizations will receive planning contracts to develop exchanges by STEM fields of Study:

- **Energy;** Illinois State University, based in Normal
- **Finance;** Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce
- **Transportation, Distribution & Logistics;** Illinois Chamber of Commerce