



OFFICE OF GOVERNOR PAT QUINN

NEWS

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Governor Quinn Launches New Education Initiative to Support Economic Growth

Public-Private Partnership with Business and Education Communities to Focus on STEM Learning and Provide Students with College and Career Readiness

BLOOMINGTON – February 9, 2012. Governor Pat Quinn today joined business and education leaders to launch the Illinois Pathways Initiative, an innovative public-private partnership between Illinois' public education institutions and the business community to foster Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) learning. Funded through the state's secured Race to the Top funds, Illinois Pathways will help prepare students for college and careers in new and growing fields. As part of Governor Quinn's agenda to reform and improve education in Illinois, this initiative will provide for strong collaboration in Illinois' business and education communities to prepare students for the jobs of today and tomorrow.

"We have a mission in Illinois to ensure that at least 60 percent of adults have either a college degree or a career certificate by 2025," Governor Quinn said. "Through this initiative, our state agencies will partner with the education community and our business leaders to better support students and prepare them to graduate and get a good job in the 21st century economy."

Illinois Pathways is a STEM initiative that will help students pursue their academic and career interests through STEM Learning Exchanges. The Learning Exchanges work to increase student enrollment in STEM programs by forming public-private statewide networks in specific career areas. Networks will include PreK-12 and higher education institutions working together with employers, industry associations, labor organizations and other education partners.

During his State of the State address last week, Governor Quinn laid out a proposal to prepare students for jobs in the 21st century by implementing more reforms and investing in early childhood education, college scholarships and 21st century classrooms. The Governor will also work with Lieutenant Governor Sheila Simon to achieve the goal of ensuring at least 60 percent of adults in Illinois have a college degree, an associate's degree or a career certificate by 2025.

"Across Illinois, we can find individual examples of school-to-work success. We need to build a statewide system of school-to-work success," said Lt. Governor Simon, the Governor's point person on education reform. "STEM Learning Exchanges can get us there by instilling a love of science and technology in middle school and keeping lessons relevant and connected to the job market as students become working age."

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The STEM Learning Exchanges will focus on educating and training students in nine key career fields, including:

- Health Science
- Agriculture, Food and Natural Resources
- Information Technology
- Finance
- Architecture and Construction
- Transportation, Distribution and Logistics
- Manufacturing
- Research and Development
- Energy

“We need to reach students early; tap their innate energy, curiosity and love of learning and show them the real world relevance of what they’re learning in the classroom,” said Rick Stephens, a senior vice president of Human Resources and Administration for The Boeing Company and chairman of the Illinois Business Roundtable. “Illinois Pathways is one way to help more students find their way from the classroom to the labs, drafting tables and board rooms of more Illinois businesses in the future.”

The STEM Learning Exchanges will feature strong collaboration between PreK-12 schools, colleges and professionals in each of the nine STEM fields. The STEM Learning Exchanges will provide targeted resources that provide students with internships and other work-based learning opportunities. The Exchanges connect students with adult mentors and offer a clear path from school to work.

An interagency team, consisting of representatives from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the Illinois State Board of Education, the Illinois Community College Board, the Illinois Board of Higher Education, the Illinois Student Assistance Commission and the Illinois Department of Employment Security, will set priorities and identify the first public-private STEM Learning Exchanges to launch in fall of 2012. The initiative is funded through \$3.2 million in federal Race to the Top education funds.

Governor Quinn and Lt. Gov. Sheila Simon made the announcement today at an Illinois Pathways conference hosted by State Farm and the Illinois Business Roundtable, a business association consisting of 63 chief executive officers of Illinois' leading businesses.

For more information about Illinois Pathways, visit: www.illinoisworknet.com/ilpathways.

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