



INSTITUTE FOR COLLABORATION

Summary of the Aurora University Institute for Collaboration's proposal to the Dunham Fund Challenge for Change

The Institute and its partners have brought together a collaborative coalition with the goal of developing an Aurora Mathematics and Science Education System. As a collaborative project, the System will consist of a number of programs that may be sponsored or managed by different members of the coalition, but which have a common goal of improving the science and mathematics abilities of students, teachers, parents, and the community.

1. The "need" in our community for this project.

While East Aurora District 131 and West Aurora District 129, both high needs school districts, have tried to provide a level of service for their populations of gifted and talented students, they find that other district needs are more imminent. The implementation of the Magnet Academy and related programs of the Aurora Mathematics and Science Education System will develop the unique gifts and talents of these young people and engage students in the learning process, leading to higher achievement.

Like many urban districts, Aurora's public schools are losing talented students of all races and ethnicities to private schools or to surrounding suburbs. The Aurora Mathematics and Science Education System has the potential to retain families that value their access to the System's programs, and to draw families to Aurora in order to have the opportunity to participate in the System.

In addition, well-funded collaborative after school and summertime programs will lead to enriching opportunities for students throughout the community to become engaged in learning that excites them and appeals to their interests. These programs will be available to all interested students including those who attend non-public schools. Children from low-income families who may not otherwise have such opportunities will be able to participate in new and interesting learning opportunities.

The Aurora Mathematics and Science Education System is also perfectly positioned to include opportunities for teachers to strengthen their professional skills, especially since Aurora University is the recent recipient of four *Illinois Mathematics and Science Partnership (IMSP)* grants which will support Master's Degrees in Teacher Leadership in mathematics and science content areas for more than fifty teachers in the East Aurora and West Aurora school districts.

2. A description of the program concept

The Aurora Mathematics and Science Education System's components may include:

- A Magnet Academy for East Aurora and West Aurora elementary and middle school students who are gifted and talented in math and science
- After school programming with an emphasis on math and science education, for students of all ability levels
- Saturday and summertime educational programs with mathematics and science content, also for students of all ability levels
- Pre-college programs to prepare high school students for continuing education
- Strengthening professional development in math and science for teachers
- Programs for parents to enable them to support and encourage their students' success in school, including their math and science proficiency
- Programs emphasizing preparation for the science, technology, and engineering workforce, including career exploration and internships
- Efforts to bring Challenger Center programs to the community

3. The “key players” in the program collaboration.

The organizational representatives who served on this coalition and were instrumental in the development of this highly collaborative proposal were:

Name	Title	Organization
Sherry Eagle	Executive Director	Aurora University Institute for Collaboration
Marin Gonzalez	Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Programs	East Aurora School District 131
Cynthia Latimer	Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning	West Aurora School District 129
Shawn Green	Director, Dunham School of Business	Aurora University
Kris Johnson	Director of Student Leadership	Aurora University
Don Wold	Dean, College of Education	Aurora University
Dan Barreiero	Director of Community Services	City of Aurora
Karen Harkness	Director of After School Programs	Communities In Schools
Tracy Griffin Collander and Jim Scarpace	Executive Director, Gateway Foundation Aurora Director of Residential Services	Gateway Foundation
Joe Henning	President and CEO	Greater Aurora Chamber of Commerce
Cathy Veal	Vice President for Strategy and Innovation	IMSA
Roger Schnorr	Senior Vice President	Old Second National Bank
Margaret Truax	Director	Packer Foundation Center for Applications Based Learning
Danata Andrews	Vice President	Quad County Urban League
Kathleen Burke and Catalina Ramos Hernandez	CEO Manager, Aurora Campus	Robert Crown Center for Health Education
Esther Allen	Staff member	SciTech Hands-On Museum

4. If the program were to be fully funded from a number of funding sources, could you give a time-frame for the implementation of each segment of the program, culminating in the development of a magnet school in Aurora.

We expect to begin the design process for the System immediately by creating four working groups among the collaborating partners, to be responsible for:

- Developing an organizational structure and designing programming for the System
- Seeking resources from private and public sources at the local, state, and national levels
- Investigating the opportunities for charter schools, including recently passed legislation
- Designing an evaluation model and assessment practices for each element of the System

The goal is to have several of the components of the Mathematics and Science Education System implemented by the fall of 2010. Some components, such as units of study in mathematics and science that could be incorporated into the after school program, may be ready to pilot earlier than that; programming for parents and units of study for teacher professional development may be able to start as soon as the fall of 2009.