

Preview Day Opening remarks
Rob Sheinkopf, Director of Enrollment Management
January 29, 2006

Good morning and welcome to the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy. We welcome you to our campus, and we appreciate the commitment you have made to be here today... to parents, we appreciate the commitment you have made to your child's future—helping your child reach heights that are almost *unimaginable* at this point in his or her life... and to you, the students, we appreciate the commitment you have made to pursuing the most challenging (and rewarding) academic curriculum possible, leading to a fulfilling career in leadership in math and science, that can truly make a difference in our world. We have an exciting day planned for you... that is designed to allow you to see for yourself how IMSA is *decidedly different*...and to help you understand not only what is expected of you throughout the admissions process, but what you should expect of us and yourself, as a student. When you leave here today, you should have a clear understanding of who *we* are ...an Academy of innovative scholars and supportive staff, dedicated to helping you pursue your passion for math, science and technology ...to helping you become ethical leaders who can solve problems and make an impact on our society. We have full day ahead of us... and I'll take you through the program later -in this opening session. But first...

- Let me ask you this...
-
- Are you imaginative, curious, and creative?
 - Do you love the thrill and suspense of solving mysteries and problems?
 - Do you like winning valuable prizes?
 - If you answered yes to any of these questions, then you'll want to take the **IMSA-ComED Cyberquiz Challenge**.
 - Every month, you'll want to log on to our website to discover a new brainteaser, math or science-related, where those who answer correctly become eligible to win an I-POD, and the grand prize winners each May win will an IMAC Notebook...
 - Everyone who correctly answers the problem will be awarded a certificate of recognition, and their school will be notified of their accomplishment.
 - Please pick up this flier throughout the day to get a better description of this program
 - We are launching Cyberquiz today, it's a fun and challenging math and science enrichment activity for Illinois students in grades 6 through 9...thanks to the generous support of ComEd, one of the nation's largest electric utilities, a company that serves 70% of the state's population, and a company that gives back to the people of Illinois, improving the quality of life for all of its citizens. We are grateful to have Steve Solomon with us today... He is Director of Corporate Citizenship for Exelon Corporation, responsible for Exelon and ComEd's

corporate contributions, community sponsorships, and the employee volunteer program. Steve is a great friend of IMSA and we thank him for his vision and his guidance in helping IMSA receive a grant from ComEd to make Cyberquiz a reality.

Please help us kick off an exciting new program and welcome Mr. Steve Solomon. Thanks, Steve. And again, our sincere thanks to ComEd for their generosity and commitment to math and science, to the students of Illinois, and to the next generation of IMSA.

Just 20 years ago, the founders of IMSA had a dream of creating an unparalleled learning environment that would unleash the potential of talented youth, who, as future ethical leaders, would contribute to the sustainability of our planet.

That dream is now a reality, as IMSA graduates, the oldest of whom are still in their 30's, are forging new frontiers in science, technology and education at colleges and universities throughout the nation, school systems, corporations, national laboratories, professional associations and government agencies. Over the past 20 years, IMSA has become widely acclaimed for its leadership in innovative approaches to teaching and learning... and IMSA's instructional models are recognized and practiced throughout the world.

One of those founders was Dr. Stephanie Pace Marshall. Her dream of 20 years ago has become a reality for talented math and science students throughout Illinois. That dream was followed by a lot of hard work, and for the past two decades there have been many changes at IMSA, but one constant has been the leadership and vision our founding president and her inspiring journey to transform mathematics and science education. Please join me in welcoming our President, Dr. Stephanie Marshall.

- Before we talk about today's program, I want to...*briefly* take you through the Admissions process... you'll have a chance to go into more detail at both the 11:30 session and the 12:30 session, where you'll be able to ask questions, and get more details
- In order to ensure fairness, every file receives a thorough review, *every* document is read and carefully evaluated and considered. The Admissions Review Committee is comprised of between 80 and a hundred people from throughout the state of Illinois... from business & industry... ..technology and education...people who help us identify the most talented math and science students in Illinois,
- Students, who by applying for admission, have indicated their desire to be challenged, their seriousness and commitment to learning, their passion for math or science, and their willingness to work hard... probably harder than they have ever worked before. IMSA is clearly

not for everyone... but for those who enroll, it can certainly be the opportunity of a lifetime, as you will learn today.

- last year, we received almost 750 applications from throughout Illinois, we enrolled a sophomore class of 240 students, 40 of whom came directly from the 8th grade into the 10th grade here at IMSA....200 came out of 9th grade programs.

All of them were exceptionally talented, with high grade point averages and impressive SAT scores... but they also demonstrated they *love* math and science through outside activities, after school and during the summer, through community involvement and volunteerism their letters of recommendation spoke of their burning desire, not just a passing interest, in pursuing a career in math/science/and technology, and their essays gave specific examples of their dedication and commitment.

You'll get more details on the application process in the APPLYING YOURSELF session later on this morning, so again, there's no need to take notes now, but please feel free to write down your questions and ask them at that time... (now I see some of you in the Pearson lecture Hall are taking notes).

- We have a MARCH 1 deadline, by which date you must submit an application for admission along with the \$25 application processing fee. You can apply on-line if you wish. You must also submit a transcript showing your most recent 2½ years of academic coursework..... an SAT score -- and 4 letters of evaluation from a Math teacher, Science teacher, English teacher, and one from your Principal or Guidance Counselor, along with your personal statement or essay.
- You are notified in mid May....Decision letters are sent May 15, and a *short* Waiting List is maintained. We have a Very high yield rate (better than 90%)...
- Let's look at today's program... it was designed to allow everyone to take a campus tour, to learn about admissions and residence life, everyone to sit in on a panel that allows a first hand look at the IMSA experience through the eyes of our students ... and for everyone to see what an IMSA class is like, how teaching and learning is different here.
- If you would like to start your day off with a campus tour, please follow our student ambassadors when we break in a moment or two...
- If you'd like to take your tour after learning about living on campus and applying for admission, then stay in your seats after we break... And we invite you to take a look at the IMSA information videos set up

in the television pit ... This is also where we have computers set up, where you can be among the first to try out the Cyberquiz4Kids ... Also, you may want to visit the Parent's and Alumni Café ...coffee, punch and cookies are being served by representatives from the Parents' Association and the Alumni Association...just outside the cafeteria. And please help us improve this program to meet the needs of future generations of students and their parents by telling us what you thought of your visit, good or bad... a genuine ComED light bulb first day issue stressball... yours when you turn in your evaluation

- Our Student Ambassadors will guide you in the right direction. Follow the signs, ask the Admissions staff and the Ambassadors if you get lost..We hope today's schedule will help you learn first hand what IMSA is all about, and what an opportunity it is for you ...thanks for being here... and thanks for your interest in joining the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy.

**Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy
Preview Day**

January 29, 2006

SPM Comments

Thank you, Rob, and, good morning.

It is a pleasure to be able to welcome you to the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy.

As IMSA's founding President, I have had the privilege of serving this remarkable institution for the last 20 years. On behalf of our Board of Trustees and our founders, I welcome you to IMSA Preview Day.

My role in today's program is to introduce you to IMSA the institution, a very special enterprise that goes far beyond place because the power of IMSA is found in the power of its idea.

IMSA was established by the Illinois General Assembly to do two things:

- 1) Develop unique, innovative program of advanced study for students talented and motivated in mathematics and science – those who wish to pursue advanced study in mathematics and science and likely careers in mathematics, science, and technology.
- 2) Help improve mathematics, science teaching and learning in Illinois by sharing what we have learned as a laboratory.

We have been engaged in this work for 19 years: IMSA is a pioneering community and an educational laboratory with unparalleled academic excellence.

- 1) 3,179 graduates – distinguishing themselves in all fields and making a difference in the world.
- 2) 43,000 students served in unique outreach programs – one of which is run by IMSA students.
- 3) 19,000 teachers – served in our professional development programs.

IMSA's impact is not only in Illinois but manifests itself nationally and internationally.

- 1) 3 schools – one in Jordan, one in Israel, one in Australia are modeled after IMSA; IMSA is the only U. S. specialized school invited to join Sci-Mat International – a consortium of prestigious international schools in mathematics, science, and technology.
- 2) Served as advisers to educators in the United States and Singapore, Korea, Thailand, Australia, Greece, Russia, France (book).

So that's about IMSA – the enterprise. What about IMSA – the place – our students and our programs?

As you might expect, IMSA students hunger to learn enables them to continue to excel in:

- ACT's
- AP's
- SAT's
- National Merits
- Research Awards
- U.S. Math/Physics Olympiad
- AHSME

As a result, they and IMSA have received National and International recognition

Last year, three IMSA students were named among the 40 finalists in the Intel Science Talent Search. Three other IMSA students were among the semi-finalists; two were in the top ten.

This year, in the Siemens Westinghouse Competition in Math, Science and Technology IMSA had 7 out of the 11 semi-finalists from Illinois; now we have 2 finalists.

All this is as a result not only of the talents and motivation of our students, but also a very talented, caring staff and a uniquely and comprehensively designed program.

Every faculty member must have a Master's Degree and over 40% of the faculty have Ph. D.'s in their fields. IMSA now has 16 Nationally Board Certified teachers.

The IMSA curriculum is also constantly developing. Our innovative curriculum and pedagogy are based upon rigorous learning standards, and is inquiry-based, problem-centered, and integrative; our curriculum fosters collaboration, creative and critical problem finding and solving; there is no grade point average or class rank.

In today's program you will have a chance to be an IMSA student and see first hand what this means in practice when you attend IMSA 101.

Perhaps one of IMSA's most unique features is that IMSA's founder and resident scholar, Dr. Leon Lederman is on campus. Dr. Lederman hosts "Lunch with the Laureate" sessions with students and invites thought leaders from around the world to come to IMSA.

I can't think of another high school in America where you could bump into a Nobel Laureate on the way to class.

But this is not what truly distinguishes IMSA from any other place and it is the fundamental reason why I believe you should seriously think about applying.

And that is that IMSA is a place that focuses on the real joy of learning something deeply and well. IMSA is about learning, not schooling. Most of you have done "schooling" exceedingly well; you know how to "ace" the test and psyche-out the teachers, but IMSA challenges you to learn and to develop the habits of mind required to make significant contributions to the world.

We are seeking to develop students as **ethical leaders** and **thoughtful inquirers** in mathematics, science, and technology.

IMSA believes in the power of the imagination to change the world.

It encourages each student to dream and follow those big dreams worthy of their lives and to live into stories of possibility.

It does not laugh at or ridicule what others may view to be impossible dreams or causes.

It encourages "out-of-the box" thinking.

It believes as Einstein said that, "If at first an idea is not absurd, there is no hope for it."

IMSA asks – What is possible now?

It fosters a culture of inclusion and collaboration and commits to working with each child to help them realize their astonishing and unknowable potentials.

This commitment to develop intellectual autonomy, uncover possibilities, develop potential, and encourage “dreaming by day” is not accidental.

IMSA made a commitment to this from the very beginning. I spoke about the power of IMSA as an idea, but what are those ideas?

Board Philosophy: Treat each child as if they are capable of significantly influencing life on the planet.

Vision: Liberate the goodness and genius of each child and invite and nurture the power and creativity of the human spirit for the world.

Mission: Develop integrative thinkers and ethical leaders who understand the joy of forging and discovering connections within and among mathematics, science, art and the humanities.

I want to close with an entry – Sophomore:

That’s Not Too Much to Ask?

I wish I could still draw. When I was in grammar school I used to draw pretty decently. I love to draw in pencil and chalk. Art of all kinds intrigues me, but I also love music and painting, and carpentry and metal working, and dancing, and sewing and embroidery, and cooking.

I want to dance in my old ballet class, play my clarinet, draw thousands of pictures, really good ones, create beautiful poems and pieces of woodwork, cook and sew for my children, decorate my home, have a good marriage, be an active volunteer, go to church, be an astrophysicist, go to Mars, and understand all my questions about life.

That’s not too much to ask, is it?

IMSA says this is not too much to ask and we will do everything we can to not only keep your children safe, but to allow them to find and follow their passions in learning. We agree with Carl Sagan who was on our campus – “Dreams are maps” – the nature and quality of your dreams will chart the nature and quality of your life.

So, why consider coming to IMSA? If you’re a student – because you have no idea how smart you are; IMSA will help you discover your gifts and dream big dreams worthy of your life.

If you're a parent -- because the greatest legacy you can leave your children is to give them the wings they need to become pioneers in an unknown land. Mind-shaping is world-shaping. How minds are shaped really matters, and IMSA simply does it differently.

Copyright ©2006 by Stephanie Pace Marshall, Ph.D. All rights reserved. This speech, or any parts of it, may not be reproduced without the expressed written permission of the author.