

ILLINOIS STATE UNIVERSITY NEWS

MEDIA RELATIONS—NEWS SERVICE

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Infinity HS Computer Lab Dedication to Illinois State's Chicago Teacher Education Pipeline, May 5
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Students at Infinity High School, along with their parents and surrounding community, will have access to a state-of-the-art computer laboratory thanks to a gift from the Chicago Teacher Education Pipeline at Illinois State University.

The Chicago Teacher Education Pipeline/Illinois State University College of Education Lab at Infinity High School at the Little Village Lawndale High School campus will be dedicated on Monday, May 5, at 10 a.m., a date that celebrates Infinity High's third year of operation and Illinois State University's third year of partnering with the school. Representatives from Infinity High School, Illinois State University and the Chicago Teacher Education Pipeline will speak at the dedication at 3120 South Kostner in Chicago.

"Infinity faculty and staff have worked very hard to assist our students—next year we will have our first graduating class and it will be a challenging year with the need for scholarships, dual credit courses and internships," said Martha Irizarry, principal of Infinity Math Science and Technology High School. "There is still a lot of work to do to make sure we guide all of our students through a path towards success. However, our partnership with Illinois State University has led us to a great start and we look forward to continuing our work with them because they have really taken the time to work with us based on our needs and probably know us better than we do."

More than 200 students will use the lab daily to create multimedia art, digital photography and digital portfolios along with their normal school work. Community members will have the opportunity to use the lab in after school programs.

"This computer lab is evidence of the kind of collaboration we value so much in our partnership with Chicago Public Schools and the Little Village community," said Deborah Curtis, dean of the College of Education at Illinois State. "This type of connection between community schools and the university is the best example of how together we can accomplish great things."

"The partnership between ISU and the CPS is perhaps the most innovative, creative, and productive collaboration in the field of education today," said Ascencion Juarez, chief human resources officer, Chicago Public Schools. "Both parties work together to provide mutually beneficial, dynamic learning opportunities for their respective students. These opportunities come in such forms as college education courses that meet the needs of urban schools, extensive

after-school and summer programs that provide additional instruction to students and living arrangements for pre-service teachers doing their student teaching. The end result is an education pipeline that replenishes itself. CPS grads attend ISU, do their student teaching here and find employment with CPS after graduation. The students they teach receive an excellent education and, in turn, are drawn to the field of education when they graduate from high school.”

Through a Teacher Quality Enhancement grant from the U.S. Department of Education, Illinois State donated the 23 minitower Celeron computers with flat panel monitors to allow Infinity High School to meet a goal of having a 1:1 ration of computers to students.

“The partnership between Infinity High School and Illinois State University aims to increase the capacity of all partners to work in a community-based context—improving the quantity and quality of teachers working in Little Village schools” said Robert Lee, director of the Chicago Teacher Education Pipeline. “It has been a collaborative process as we learn more about this community school’s needs and how to best prepare and recruit our teacher candidates for Chicago schools to meet those demands.”

Specifically, over the past three years, Illinois State professors have provided Infinity faculty with onsite professional development in mathematics and developed authentic assessment tools for their problem-based learning curriculum as well as assisted with faculty professional development in the creation and use of digital student portfolios to assess student growth and achievement.

To increase the number of students from the Little Village community who pursue teacher education programs, the Chicago Teacher Education Pipeline has initiated a TEACH (Teacher Education and Access to College for Highschoolers) chapter which provides high school students and their parents with post-secondary awareness seminars, including campus visits, college application and financial aid workshops, and ACT prep courses. TEACH also offers tutoring/mentorship training models for interested students and opportunities for these future teachers to practice their newly acquired skills in feeder elementary schools within their own community.

In turn, Infinity HS has opened its doors to Illinois State University, offering a place for ISU pre-service teachers to complete clinical observations; student teaching, which is set to expand next year; hosted the ISU/Little Village TEACH College Prep summer program during its first two years of programming.