

First Day Message from the President
July 1st, 2021

Dear IMSA Colleagues,

It's a great honor to start my tenure as president of the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy. I am truly thrilled to return to my home state, joyful to be part of this exceptional STEM institution, and humbled to be surrounded by some of the most talented educators. Regardless of your role at IMSA, we are *all* educators to ignite and nurture creative, ethical, scientific minds that advance the human condition. I chose IMSA because of its distinguished reputation as a laboratory for imagination and inquiry, and also a place where equity and excellence are a priority. With 18 years of leadership experience, focusing on STEM schools and progressive models of education, I couldn't imagine another place on earth that aligns better with my identity.

I come to Aurora with my wife Jen and three children -- Luke 7, Brooke 4 and Hope 2. I am sure you will have a chance to meet them because we love to be part of our school activities and events. When we are not with the school community, we love watching sports, going to kid-themed parks and eating great sandwiches. OK, I admit, my wife Jen might list some different things. My three priorities in life are to be a great husband, a great dad and a great school leader. This is more of a lifelong goal because each requires incredible care and attention, and realistically these priorities are constantly out of balance; life has plenty of twists, turns and surprises to make me feel more human with plenty of wrinkles and a desire to be more empathetic, authentic and appreciative about each day.

As I get started at IMSA, I have three priorities:

Deeply Understand IMSA and the People Who Make it Amazing

I have been learning policies and job responsibilities over the past couple of months. Now that I'm physically on campus, I want to get to know you better and learn our history, our culture, and stories from your classrooms and professional community. Even though it's summer, I hope you can stop by for a conversation during office hours. These regular small group opportunities allow me to listen-and-learn about your work, your impact, any hurdles, and your inspirations. The first ones will be on campus Tuesday, July 6, at 3:00 p.m., and another Wednesday, July 7 at 9:00 a.m. I hope we can walk around to spaces that are important to you. In addition, a virtual office hours will be on Thursday, July 8 at 9:00 a.m. for those of you that can't make it to campus. I'd like to make these sessions small so I can get to know you, like five people at a time, and will continue to offer them every week during the summer and into the fall.

Re-open School in Person, not Just Operationally in a Safe Manner, but also Culturally

I have been fortunate this past year to be in school that was held physically in person, and have learned many COVID protocols along the way. IMSA is a different school with different operating conditions and a culture that has been operating remotely for a year. Now that Illinois has entered phase 5 of re-opening, the Cabinet and Return to Learning and Working Committee want to make sure you feel prepared to return to campus in a healthy and productive manner.

Build on Our Equity and Excellence Plan

I couldn't imagine anything more important in a school community than to ensure students and teachers have a deep sense of emotional safety and belonging. Being part of a caring community creates conditions where everyone can thrive. This goal requires constant attention, nimbleness and belief we will continuously get better in our practices and cultural competency. That's certainly true for me as a white, heterosexual male who grew up in the Chicago suburbs. I still have much more to learn and am glad to prioritize year two of our [equity and excellence plan](#).

I'd like to offer gratitude to Dr. Storm Robinson and the IMSA Cabinet for moving these goals forward since the beginning of May. I want to thank all of you in advance for helping me transition to IMSA so that it feels like home. Just like moving to a new home, I expect there will be many aspects familiar to me as I have led three different schools over my career. However, there's always something new to experience in every home. For me, it will be residential life, commitment to advance education across the entire state (and beyond), and working closely with a Board of Trustees who represent both past and future interests. Since you know IMSA, additional ideas may come to mind about what I need to learn, and I hope you share them with me in person or by email at eglazer@imsa.edu.

Most important to a new home will be you -- the new "family" that I'll want to get to know, understand, appreciate and celebrate because people make all the difference in a thriving school community. I look forward to our time together and hearing from you on what makes IMSA a special place for learning and growing.

Titans Together,
Evan

Evan Glazer
President
Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy

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