

# STORIES FOR ADVOCACY

## Students Introduce New Technologies

As told by Jim Gerry, Illinois Math and Science Academy, Aurora, IL to Suzie Boss

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The Illinois Math and Science Academy is a residential public high school serving grades 10-12. Students from across the state apply for admission, and are selected based on their ability and potential in science and mathematics.

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One teacher, John Thompson, has introduced a program that invites new technologies into teaching and learning. He is an evangelist of problem-based learning, where students use inquiry methods to investigate and solve authentic problems. Students spend much of their class time in the field, designing experiments and collecting and evaluating data. John also encourages students to investigate technologies that they think could support their research and enhance their learning.

Through this approach, students have become the school's technology leaders. Rather than relying on one or two staff members to stay informed about new tools and emerging technologies, the academy relies on its students for technical insights. When students learn about a promising technology, they become the resident experts and share what they learn with faculty and other students. This not only keeps the school at the forefront of technology, but builds the students' leadership skills. In fact, students from the Illinois Math and Science Academy have presented to adult audiences at the National Educational Computing Conference (NECC).

By entrusting its students to learn, teach, and lead the way when it comes to technology, the school manages to stay in the vanguard of innovation. Meanwhile, teachers can devote their time and attention to the learning context, helping students use all available tools to reach their academic goals.

To learn more about the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), and to view other stories and resources in the Advocacy Toolkit, please visit [www.iste.org/advocacy/toolkit/](http://www.iste.org/advocacy/toolkit/).

*ISTE provides leadership and service to improve teaching and learning by advancing the effective use of technology in education.*