

## Summer school at IMSA: Teaching future teachers

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By Linda Girardi Special to The Beacon News (Aurora)

"We had an opportunity to work with the best of the best," said Jayme Tate, 21, an aspiring middle school science teacher attending Lewis University in Joliet.

Twenty-one "scholars" majoring in mathematics and science education attended the inaugural residential Golden Apple Summer Institute at the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy in Aurora.

The Golden Apple Foundation and IMSA partnership was awarded a \$341,000 federal grant to help train prospective math and science teachers for Illinois schools.



Jozel Shwatal (left), representing the Golden Apple Foundation, talks about an energy project with U of I student Joyce Zhang at the Golden Apple ceremony at the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy Friday. Shwatal is also a mentor for beginning teachers. donnell collins / Special to the Beacon News

U.S. Sen. Dick Durbin awarded the grant earlier this year.

IMSA President Max McGee said the need to nurture students' interests, skills and aptitudes in science, engineering and mathematics has never been greater.

"We are looking to sustain and grow this program," McGee said.

The Golden Apple institute, a five-week program for the prospective teachers, was held during IMSA's annual summer programming offered to students in third through ninth grades.

"This is advanced teaching preparation that places students in a field where they are inspired and have early access to great teachers -- they are in the classrooms as practitioners," said James Sorensen, who supervises all of the scholar programs for the Golden Apple Foundation.

Golden Apple Summer Institute director Linda Newman said the aspiring teachers -- 17 to 21 years old -- had an opportunity to study with IMSA teachers who are at the top in their fields.

"All of our scholars have a vested interest in teaching math and science where the need is great," Newman said.

The scholars received \$2,000 to participate in the Summer Institute and \$2,500 for university tuition. In return, participants agreed to teach for five years in an Illinois school designated as a "school of need" by Golden Apple.

The educators related the summer institute at IMSA to a medical student completing residency at a hospital or clinic.

"By starting the students this early in their careers, they truly will be able to hit the ground running," Newman said.

The scholars said they appreciated learning and practicing IMSA's teaching methods in a comfortable setting.

"We were able to work with teachers that know the best teaching methods and work with some of the state's brilliant students. We've walked away with a bundle of ideas and are willing to work where the resources are needed," Tate said.

"By the time they complete the scholars programs, they will have hundreds of hours of practice, which would be equivalent to a teacher in the classroom for 5 years. It is very intense. By the time they walk into the classroom, they will be ready to teach," said Kristin Ciesemier, vice president of extern educational programs at IMSA.