

# + How to Improve Your IMSA Application

Students who complete the application process to IMSA represent a very select group of students from throughout the state of Illinois. These students have typically experienced academic success on a consistent basis and have demonstrated their interest, task commitment, and creativity in a variety of settings in mathematics, science and/or technology.

Because of our limited capacity, many highly qualified and motivated students are turned away each year. We expect to have three to four strong applicants for each space available in the class scheduled to arrive in August of 2013. Regardless of the outcome of your application, we hope the process of applying to IMSA will be a positive experience for you. Use this time to think carefully about your own educational goals and to examine and celebrate your talents.

**Some of the questions we will ask during our review of each applicant include:**

- **To what extent did this student take advantage of local resources?**
- **To what extent did this student clearly demonstrate talent, interest, and motivation in mathematics and/or science beyond the bounds of the classroom when available?**
- **Is this student enrolled in the most challenging curriculum available to them in mathematics and/or science within their home school setting?**
- **Will this student complete all mathematics and science courses at the local school prior to senior year?**

We encourage you to consider the following suggestions as you complete your application:

**1. Your application file represents you to the IMSA review committee members.** The care and thought with which you complete your application is revealed by things such as correct spelling and punctuation, legible handwriting, and attention to the intent of the question. Lack of care and thought causes reviewers to question your commitment to the task, and in turn, your probable commitment to the IMSA academic program. If possible, we recommend that you type your responses. Please do not use font size smaller than 10 or larger than 12.

**2. Reviewers will look in several areas for evidence and potential of your desire and eagerness to accept and seek out challenges, demonstrate motivation and task commitment, and engage in and resolve problems creatively.** These include:

- a. Mathematical reasoning and curiosity demonstrated by specific achievement or activities.
- b. Scientific reasoning and curiosity demonstrated by specific achievement or activities.
- c. Communication skills demonstrated by your written responses to questions.
- d. Interpersonal skills demonstrated by evidence of understanding viewpoints other than your own, acceptance of both leader and follower roles, self sufficiency and independence in daily living and learning skills, and promotion of cooperative behaviors among peers.
- e. Skill application demonstrated by activities such as computer programming, musical performance, construction of models, etc.
- f. Leadership based on reports from teachers of observed behavior and/or specific accomplishments.

**3. Your application cannot be reviewed if it is not complete.** Check back with your references to make sure the forms have been sent to IMSA on time. Remember that these people are very busy. Please allow them sufficient time to complete the forms carefully.

**4. Let your passion and personality emerge from your file.** Let the reviewers “see” your sensitivity, sense of humor, love of learning, and insight. Remember, this is an important way they can learn about you.