Response to Request for Information (RFI): STEM Learning Exchanges

Overview:

1. The Computing Technology Industry Association (CompTIA) plans to lead the Information Technology (IT) Cluster for the Illinois State Board of Education through a partnership with the Illinois Technology Association (ITA) and TechAmerica, and with the support of a wide array of business, academic, and government partners. CompTIA and its partners have already recruited support and/or sponsorship from 27 public and private organizations, as indicated by the attached Letters of Support.

2. The primary contact person for this Project will be Gretchen Koch, Sr. Director of Workforce Development Programs. Her contact information is:
   Gretchen Koch
   Sr. Director, Workforce Development Programs
   CompTIA
   3500 Lacey Rd., Suite 100
   Downers Grove, IL  60515-5439
   630.678.8425
   gkoch@comptia.org

3. CompTIA is a not-for-profit trade association representing the international technology community. CompTIA’s membership includes manufacturers, distributors, resellers, solution providers, ISPs, ASPs, software developers, e-commerce and telecom companies. CompTIA also serves the IT Industry as the world’s largest developer of vendor-neutral foundational and professional level IT certifications. Subject matter experts and industry leaders from the public and private sectors, including business, academia and government, work with CompTIA to develop broad-based, foundational exams that validate an individual’s IT skill sets and prepares them to enter the workforce. To date, more than 1.5 million CompTIA certifications have been earned worldwide.

The Illinois Technology Association, a next-generation business organization is a driving force behind the growth of Illinois' vibrant technology industry. ITA’s mission is to accelerate the growth of our 700 member companies, drive their visibility and bridge the technology talent gap from startups to industry leaders in software, services and information technology. Through collaboration and collective action, ITA brings the industry together to drive member success and advocate for the Illinois technology community locally and nationally. Illinois is a national leader in technology and ITA is committed to its continued growth. For more information about ITA, please visit www.illinoistech.org or follow us on twitter @itabuzz.

TechAmerica is the leading voice for the U.S. technology industry – the driving force behind productivity growth and jobs creation in the United States and the foundation of the global innovation economy. Founded in 1943 by David Packard, TechAmerica is a 501(c)(6) non-profit representing approximately 1,200 member companies employing more than two million workers in the US. It is the industry’s largest advocacy non-profit and the only organization providing a grassroots-to-global advocacy network, with offices in state capitals around the United States, Washington, D.C., Europe (Brussels) and Asia (Beijing). TechAmerica’s Midwest office is a key partner with the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity and a leading organization supporting policies and initiatives to drive innovation and job growth in Illinois. Learn more about TechAmerica at www.techamerica.org/Midwest.
4. CompTIA is a not-for-profit 501(c)6 organization.
5. CompTIA has participated for the past several years on the IL IT Task Force and assisted in the
development of the IT Programs of Study (POS), which include CompTIA’s Strata IT
Fundamentals, A+ and Network+ certifications, as well as certifications from other leading
credentialing bodies, e.g. Microsoft and Cisco. Since 2005 CompTIA has acted as the National IT
Career Cluster Leader for the States Career Cluster Initiative, co-sponsored by the National
Association of State Directors of Career and Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEc) and
the US Department of Education (USDOE). CompTIA is currently working with the Health
Science Career Cluster to develop a Health IT Program of Study that will be piloted at Chicago
Public Schools in both the Health Science and IT Career Clusters. CompTIA is also working with a
team of subject matter experts to develop a Health IT Competency Model for the Department of
Labor.

CompTIA recently completed a Data Sharing Pilot with the IL State Board of Education and the IL
Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity in which we shared five (5) years of IL
students’ certification exam performance data with the IL Community College Board. The
results of this study were presented to the USDOE’s Office of Vocational and Adult Education
(OVAE), who is interested in pursuing it as a national model. CompTIA sits on the Advisory
Board of Chicago Public Schools IT Cluster, as well as on the IT Advisory Boards of the College of
DuPage and Oakton Community College. CompTIA sits on the Board of the Chicago Technology
Academy, ChiTech, and advises them in the development of their IT curriculum. CompTIA has
been the fiscal agent and administrator of several Department of Labor grants over the years,
including the National IT Apprenticeship System and several H-1B Grants. At the invitation of
the USDOE, CompTIA is currently participating in a College and Career-Ready Program 21st
Century Community Learning Centers: Demonstration Project, as part of a Technical Working
Group.

The Illinois Technology Association is committed to driving the success of the technology
industry in Illinois. Critical to our future success is that we foster and develop today’s K-12
students through STEM related educational programs. As part of this partnership, ITA will bring
forth its 700 members to be an active participant on an ongoing basis in the development
programs to assure they are meeting the needs of our dynamic industry.

The TechAmerica Foundation educates industry executives, policymakers, and opinion leaders
on the promise of technological innovation to advance prosperity, security, and the general
welfare. Launched in 1981, the foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, non-partisan affiliate of
TechAmerica, the leading voice and resource for the U.S. technology industry. It disseminates
award-winning industry, policy, and market research covering topics such as U.S.
productivity, competitiveness in the global economy, STEM, innovation in government, and other areas of
national interest. The foundation also organizes conferences and seminars to explore pertinent
issues with government and industry representatives and to share the foundation’s findings. The
foundation also focuses its efforts on supporting efforts to improve K-12 education, workforce
training, domestic sourcing, and other areas to support innovation and job growth in the US. A
recent example is the creation of the foundation’s REAL Agenda Commission. The
Recommendations for Education and Advancement of Learning (REAL) Agenda, which was
unveiled as part of the White House’s Digital Promise effort last year, has been tasked with
outlining a set of initial research projects for Digital Promise and identifying any policy hurdles that inhibit progress. The TechAmerica Foundation REAL Agenda Commission will submit those recommendations to the White House upon completion.

6. Because of the role that CompTIA plays in developing vendor-neutral IT certifications it has long-standing and deep business relationships with leading curriculum developers and publishing houses, e.g. Pearson, Axzo Press, ElementK, & Wiley Sybex, who provide textbooks, online courses and professional development, as well as e-learning curriculum, lab simulations, assessment tools and resources for students and teachers for CompTIA’s certifications and many of the other leading IT certifications that are included in the IL IT Cluster POS. As indicated above, CompTIA and its partners, ITA and TechAmerica, membership ranks include leading IT companies within the state that could be recruited for workplace learning opportunities such as internship, mentorship and externship opportunities for students and teachers. Many of these companies may be interested in developing IT competitions and challenges across the state that would support student organizations and their major activities. As indicated above, CompTIA has strong relationships with IL School Districts, Community Colleges, and contract high schools, e.g. ChiTech. CompTIA also has strong relationships with Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) across the state. CompTIA sits on the Board of the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE) Foundation, a subject matter expert in STEM, particularly as it relates to the inclusion of young females and disadvantaged youth in STEM learning initiatives.

7. As the Learning Exchange for the IT Cluster is more fully defined CompTIA would expect to pull from the IT business community in Illinois, and other organizations as mentioned above, for subcontractors to assist us in fulfilling our mission.
March 9, 2012

Ms. Sherri Sullivan  
State Purchasing Officer  
Fiscal and Procurement Division W-380  
Illinois State Board of Education  
100 North First Street  
Springfield, IL  62777-0001

Re: STEM Learning Exchange for Information Technology Cluster

Dear Ms. Sullivan

The Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago are pleased to submit this letter in support of the CompTIA’s application for the STEM Learning Exchange. CompTIA is uniquely qualified to serve as the lead in development of the Learning Exchange for the information technology cluster.

The Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago is a consortium of eight Workforce Boards covering the City of Chicago, Northern Cook County, South and West Suburban Cook County, DuPage County, Kane/DeKalb/Kendall, Lake County, McHenry County and Will County. The Workforce Boards are charged with wide-ranging policy and planning responsibilities for workforce development within their communities. As leaders in workforce development, we recognize the value of the STEM Learning Exchange in developing a pipeline of skilled workers and are in the best position to be engaged in and contribute to the planning and implementation process.

The Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago – collectively and individually – are committed to working with the CompTIA. The Workforce Boards can assist them in making connections with local employers and other key stakeholders in the workforce development system. The eight Workforce Boards have extensive experience with regional and local sector based initiatives that have focused on disseminating career information to students and job seekers, developing education and training programs that address the need for high demand skills, and increasing the pipeline of skilled workers for high skill occupations. As a result of this
experience, the Workforce Boards have a unique perspective in terms of how the Learning
Exchange can contribute to the development of skilled workers.

Sincerely,

Gary Gibson, Manager
Lake County Workforce Investment Board

Ray Bentley, Board Liaison
Cook County Workforce Investment Board

Pat Fera, Manager
Workforce Investment Board of Will County

Jeffery Poynter, Director
McHenry County Workforce Investment Board

Tracy McDonnell, Executive Director
River Valley Workforce Investment Board

Jennifer Stasch, Executive Director
The Workforce Board of Northern Cook County

Mary Beth Marshall, Executive Director
DuPage Workforce Board
March 7, 2012

Sherri Sullivan
State Purchasing Officer
Fiscal and Procurement Division W-380
Illinois State Board of Education
100 North First Street
Springfield, IL 62777-0001

Dear Ms. Sullivan:

Please accept this Letter of Support on behalf of TechNexus, as an indication of our support of CompTIA’s response to the RFI: STEM Learning Exchanges, specifically for the Information Technology Cluster. TechNexus is a venture collaborative focused on driving the development of future technology companies in Illinois.

CompTIA is partnering with ITA and TechAmerica in its response. TechNexus has been an active partner with the ITA and CompTIA in support of the development of the Chicago Technology Academy as well as on key IT related development initiatives. We strongly feel that CompTIA & its partners’ response demonstrate the leadership required to develop a successful IT Learning Exchange for the Illinois State Board of Education.

In support of this effort TechNexus is proud to offer its services as an advisor to the program, connector to the industry and a mentor to the students.

TechNexus believes the IT Learning Exchange will provide the best resources and tools to support the needs of IL School Districts participating in the RTTT IT Cluster. TechNexus supports your strong consideration of CompTIA’s Response and urges your selection of the IT Cluster for the one of the (3) to five (5) full implementation contracts.

Sincerely,

Terry Howerton
Founder
March 12, 2012

Sherri Sullivan  
State Purchasing Officer  
Fiscal and Procurement Division W-380  
Illinois State Board of Education  
100 North First Street  
Springfield, IL  62777-0001

Dear Ms. Sullivan:

Please accept this Letter of Support on behalf of Sun Trading LLC as an indication of our support of CompTIA’s response to the RFI: STEM Learning Exchanges, specifically for the Information Technology Cluster. Sun Trading is a proprietary trading firm based in Chicago which relies on the hiring of bright young technologists to keep its competitive edge. We are very devoted to the concept of local hiring.

STEM education is critical to the success of the industry and companies like ours. CompTIA with support from the Illinois Technology Association (ITA) and TechAmerica in its response is the right organization to lead these key state IT related development initiatives. We strongly feel that CompTIA & its partners’ response demonstrate the leadership required to develop a successful IT Learning Exchange for the Illinois State Board of Education.

Sun Trading will provide support to these efforts as appropriate and as necessary to achieve our common goals.

Once again, Sun Trading believes the IT Learning Exchange will provide the best resources and tools to support the needs of IL School Districts participating in the RTTT IT Cluster. We support your strong consideration of CompTIA’s Response and urges your selection of the IT Cluster for the one of the (3) to five (5) full implementation contracts.

Sincerely,

Denise Bindelglass  
Chief HR Officer
March 11, 2012

Sherri Sullivan
State Purchasing Officer
Fiscal and Procurement Division W-380
Illinois State Board of Education
100 North First Street
Springfield, IL 62777-0001

Dear Ms. Sullivan:

Please accept this Letter of Support on behalf of SNtial Technologies, Inc. as an indication of our support of CompTIA’s response to the RFI: STEM Learning Exchanges, specifically for the Information Technology Cluster. As a systems integration and custom application development company, SNtial Technologies, Inc. provides clients in P-20 with solutions crafted to meet strategic goals and enables them to profit from the innovative application of technology. For over 10 years, our experience has helped clients navigate the sea of business and technological change, while staying focused on delivering effective, timely, high quality results. SNtial was listed in the Inc.5000 list of top private companies in the US for 2009 and 2010. SNtial is a certified Minority Based Enterprise (MBE).

STEM education is critical to the success of the industry and companies like ours. CompTIA in partnering with the Illinois Technology Association (ITA) and TechAmerica in its response is the right organization to lead these key state IT related development initiatives. We strongly feel that CompTIA & its partners’ response demonstrate the leadership required to develop a successful IT Cluster Learning Exchange for the Illinois State Board of Education.

SNtial Technologies, Inc. will provide support to these efforts as appropriate and as necessary to achieve our common goals.

SNtial Technologies, Inc. believes the IT Learning Exchange will provide the best resources and tools to support the needs of IL School Districts participating in the Race to the Top (RTTT) IT Cluster. We support your strong consideration of CompTIA’s Response and urge your selection of the IT Cluster for one of the (3) to five (5) full implementation contracts.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Sandeep Nain
President
SNtial Technologies, Inc.
Sherri Sullivan  
State Purchasing Officer  
Fiscal and Procurement Division W-380  
Illinois State Board of Education  
100 North First St.  
Springfield, IL 62777-0001

Ms Sullivan:

I am writing to express support for CompTIA, in partnership with the IL Technology Association (ITA) and TechAmerica’s response to the IL State Board of Education’s Request for Information (RFI): STEM Learning Exchange for the IT Cluster. Because of the role that CompTIA plays in the development of vendor-neutral, foundational IT certifications, the States Career Cluster Initiative as the National IT Career Cluster Leader, and as part of the IL IT Task Force and its development of Programs of Study for the state’s IT Cluster, provides ample experience and qualifications to serve as the lead for an implementation entity for the IT Learning Exchange. CompTIA and its partners bring together a strong network of stakeholders from the business, academic, and government communities, as well as an array of partners to provide resources, products and tools for the establishment of a robust IT Learning Exchange.

In particular Rico Computers Enterprises Inc. intends to support the implementation of the following components of the State's request for
information (RFI): Stem Learning Exchange for IT Cluster. *Rico Computers Enterprises, Inc. is an Information Technology Firm that has worked with educational institutions since 1991. John Rico is a member of the P20 and is dedicated to assisting school districts and struggling students by developing, promoting and implementing ground-breaking technology and educational solutions that will prepare students to compete in the global economy of the 21st Century.*

*John Rico, CEO of Rico Computers Enterprises, Inc. has served with Gretchen Koch on the Illinois Workforce Board and IT Task Force Committee for the last seven years, as well as CompTIA, the IL Technology Association (ITA) and TechAmerica. Rico will specifically undertake to support the State's Request for Information (RFI) Stem Learning Exchange for IT Cluster through the following actions of support. We will provide the technology tools necessary for students to succeed in the Global Economy of the 21st century. Rico is dedicated to assisting school districts and struggling students by developing, promoting and implementing ground-breaking technology solutions that will help support those programs. These solutions will include:*

- serving as an advisor to the project, providing general support as needed and appropriate for the IT Cluster
- providing e-learning curriculum resources, including online courses, assessments and feedback systems, reference materials, databases and software tools
- expanding access to classroom and laboratory space, equipment, and related educational resources necessary to support programs of study through regional partnerships and other strategies
- supporting student organizations and their major activities
- providing internships and other work-based learning opportunities
- providing professional development resources for teachers and school administrators integrated and aligned across middle school, high school, and community college instruction
- providing career development and outreach resources to expand awareness of cluster-related programs and careers to K-12 students
- providing tools and resources to assist students and schools with implementing personalized education plans and transitions to post-secondary academic and training programs
- review and report on performance of STEM programs of study through aggregate student data and assessments

We strongly support CompTia, the IL Technology Association (ITA) and TechAmerica’s in leading the Illinois State Board of Education’s response request for Information (RFI): STEM Learning Exchange for the IT Cluster. We look forward to partnering with compTIA and with the Illinois State Board of Education on the development and implementation of this STEM Learning Exchange Project.

Sincerely yours,

John Rico
President & CEO
Rico Enterprises, Inc.
March 7, 2012

Sherri Sullivan
State Purchasing Officer
Fiscal and Procurement Division W-380
Illinois State Board of Education
100 North First Street
Springfield, IL 62777-0001

Dear Ms. Sullivan:

Please accept this Letter of Support on behalf of the School of Information Technology at Illinois State University as an indication of our support of CompTIA’s response to the RFI: STEM Learning Exchanges, specifically for the Information Technology (IT) Cluster. The School of Information Technology provides a quality undergraduate and graduate education in Computer Science, Information Systems, and Network & Telecommunications Management that produces graduates who are in demand throughout Illinois and the U.S.

STEM education is critical to the success of the industry and educational institutions like ours. CompTIA in partnering with the Illinois Technology Association (ITA) and TechAmerica in its response is the right organization to lead these key state IT related development initiatives. We strongly feel that CompTIA & its partners’ response demonstrate the leadership required to develop a successful IT Cluster Learning Exchange for the Illinois State Board of Education.

The School of Information Technology will provide support to these efforts as appropriate and as necessary to achieve our common goals. In particular, our faculty would be willing to serve as an advisor to the project in all relevant IT Clusters, provide e-learning curriculum resources, providing professional development for P-20 teachers and other career development resources, participate in outreach, and work with K-12 students and other STEM disciplines to increase awareness of IT and IT careers.

We especially support P-20 teacher development and finding effective means of IT curriculum delivery. Many current state and national initiatives show an awareness for the increased need for computing professionals and while such programs have proposed better integration of computing in the K-12 (P-20) curriculum most fail to address the shortage of trained educators to deliver this improved curriculum.
The School of Information Technology believes the IT Learning Exchange will provide the best resources and tools to support the needs of IL School Districts participating in the Race to the Top (RTTT) IT Cluster. We support your strong consideration of CompTIA’s Response and urge your selection of the IT Cluster for one of the (3) to five (5) full implementation contracts.

Sincerely yours,

Joaquin Vila-Ruiz, Ph.D.
Director, School of Information Technology
Illinois State University
March 8, 2012

Sherri Sullivan
State Purchasing Officer
Fiscal and Procurement Division W-380
Illinois State Board of Education
100 North First Street
Springfield, IL 62777-0001

Dear Ms. Sullivan:

Please accept this Letter of Support on behalf of Oakton Community College as an indication of our support of CompTIA’s response to the RFI: STEM Learning Exchanges, specifically for the Information Technology Cluster.

STEM education is critical to the success of the industry and companies like ours. CompTIA in partnering with the Illinois Technology Association (ITA) and TechAmerica in its response is the right organization to lead these key state IT related development initiatives. We strongly feel that CompTIA & its partners’ response demonstrate the leadership required to develop a successful IT Cluster Learning Exchange for the Illinois State Board of Education.

Oakton Community College will provide support to these efforts as appropriate and as necessary to achieve our common goals.

Oakton Community College believes the IT Learning Exchange will provide the best resources and tools to support the needs of IL School Districts participating in the Race to the Top (RTTT) IT Cluster. We support your strong consideration of CompTIA’s Response and urge your selection of the IT Cluster for one of the (3) to five (5) full implementation contracts.

Sincerely,

Reza Dai
Chair, Computer Networking & Systems (CNS)
Oakton Community College
7701 N Lincoln Ave.
Skokie, IL 60077
March 7, 2012

Sherri Sullivan
State Purchasing Officer
Fiscal and Procurement Division W-380
Illinois State Board of Education
100 North First Street
Springfield, IL 62777-0001

Dear Ms. Sullivan:

Please accept this Letter of Support on behalf of Axzo Press, LLC as an indication of our support of CompTIA’s response to the RFI: STEM Learning Exchanges, specifically for the Information Technology Cluster. For over 12 years, Axzo Press has enhanced training and education for professionals, trainers, and students alike, through tested, high-quality Instructor-Led Training courseware and additional educational materials.

STEM education is critical to the success of the industry and companies like ours. CompTIA in partnering with the Illinois Technology Association (ITA) and TechAmerica in its response is the right organization to lead these key state IT related development initiatives. We strongly feel that CompTIA & its partners’ response demonstrate the leadership required to develop a successful IT Cluster Learning Exchange for the Illinois State Board of Education.

Axzo Press will provide support to these efforts as appropriate and as necessary to achieve our common goals.

Axzo Press believes the IT Learning Exchange will provide the best resources and tools to support the needs of IL School Districts participating in the Race to the Top (RTTT) IT Cluster. We support your strong consideration of CompTIA’s Response and urge your selection of the IT Cluster for one of the (3) to five (5) full implementation contracts.

Sincerely,

Christopher Bloor
Vice President, Enterprise Sales
March 13, 2012

Sherri Sullivan  
State Purchasing Officer  
Fiscal and Procurement Division W-380  
Illinois State Board of Education  
100 North First Street  
Springfield, IL  62777-0001  

Dear Ms. Sullivan:

Please accept this Letter of Support on behalf of PEARSON as an indication of our support of CompTIA’s response to the RFI: STEM Learning Exchanges, specifically for the Information Technology Cluster. As the leading education services company, Pearson is serious about evolving how the world learns. We apply our deep education experience and research, invest in innovative technologies, and promote collaboration throughout the education ecosystem. Real change is our commitment and its results are delivered through connecting capabilities to create actionable, scalable solutions that improve access, affordability, and achievement.

STEM education is critical to the success of the industry and companies like ours. CompTIA in partnering with the Illinois Technology Association (ITA) and TechAmerica in its response is the right organization to lead these key state IT related development initiatives. We strongly feel that CompTIA & its partners’ response demonstrate the leadership required to develop a successful IT Cluster Learning Exchange for the Illinois State Board of Education.

PEARSON will provide support to these efforts as appropriate and as necessary to achieve our common goals.

PEARSON believes the IT Learning Exchange will provide the best resources and tools to support the needs of IL School Districts participating in the Race to the Top (RTTT) IT Cluster. We support your strong consideration of CompTIA’s Response and urge your selection of the IT Cluster for one of the (3) to five (5) full implementation contracts.

Sincerely,

David Dusthimer  
Associate Publisher
March 12, 2012

Sherri Sullivan  
State Purchasing Officer  
Fiscal and Procurement Division W-380  
Illinois State Board of Education  
100 North First Street  
Springfield, IL  62777-0001

Dear Ms. Sullivan:

I am pleased to submit this letter of support on behalf of the National Alliance for Partnerships in Equity (NAPE) as an indication of our endorsement of CompTIA’s response to the RFI: STEM Learning Exchanges, specifically for the Information Technology Cluster. As you know, NAPE is a non-profit organization that serves a consortium of state and local education agencies working to increase access, equity, and diversity among underrepresented students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). We feel that students entering education pathways that lead to careers in STEM are more likely to enter into high skill, high wage careers that strengthen families, communities, and our nation.

As a strong collaborator with CompTIA, NAPE is very aware of the organization’s commitment to STEM education and its dedication to ensuring the success of the Information Technology (IT) industry. CompTIA (in partnering with the Illinois Technology Association (ITA) and TechAmerica in its response) is the right organization to lead these key state IT related development initiatives. We strongly feel that CompTIA and its partners’ response demonstrate the leadership required to develop a successful IT Cluster Learning Exchange for the Illinois State Board of Education.

I look forward to identifying potential collaborations that could ensure your efforts are successful and help us to achieve our shared education and workforce goals for all students.

NAPE believes the IT Learning Exchange will provide the best resources and tools to support the needs of IL School Districts participating in the Race to the Top IT Cluster. We support your strong consideration of CompTIA’s Response and urge your selection of the IT Cluster for one of the three to five full implementation contracts.

Sincerely,

Mimi Lufkin  
Executive Director
March 11, 2012

Gretchen Koch

CompTIA

3500 Lacey Rd., Suite 100

Downers Grove, IL  60515-5439

Microsoft is pleased to work and support CompTIA, in partnership with the IL Technology Association (ITA) and TechAmerica, is responding to the IL State Board of Education's Request for Information (RFI): STEM Learning Exchange for the IT Cluster. During the past few decades, the demand for increasingly sophisticated information technology in society and the workplace has placed a growing premium on technology-intensive skills. As most occupations progress into the category of information worker, how we educate those workers becomes a key challenge in the 21st century.

We believe that, given current demands on national economies, leveraging the existing workforce to the fullest is a goal that should be pursued. Economies must foster increased labor productivity by allocating workers to higher-value activities. To do this, national economies need a more adaptable, skilled, and technology-literate workforce. Microsoft, based in Redmond WA, is the world’s largest software company and a leader in technology and software and is a publicly traded company.

Microsoft has closely worked with the State of Illinois for nearly four years on various Task Forces and Committees, including the State of Illinois IT Task Force, the Illinois Workforce Investment Board, the P-20 Council and the Chicago Workforce Investment Board. During this time, Microsoft representatives have enjoyed the participation and leadership of Gretchen Koch of CompTIA, as well as the participation and leadership of Fred Hoch of the ITA and Ed Longanecker of TechAmerica. The work, in partnership with the State, has been of high quality, with strong thought leadership, deep analysis of the 10 year outlook for required skills, and a collaborative business exchange of ideas.

Microsoft applauds the decision for Gretchen Koch, of CompTIA, to lead the STEM Learning Exchange for the IT Cluster, in association with ITA and TechAmerica.
Microsoft has been deeply involved with the State of Illinois working groups, which have resulted in the proposed STEM Learning Exchanges, and we are deeply committed as a company to supporting programs which provide STEM skills and pathways for careers in IT.

Microsoft is pleased to offer the following specific items and areas of support by providing:

• E-learning curriculum resources, including online courses, assessments and feedback systems, reference materials, databases and software tools
• Professional development resources for teachers and school administrators integrated and aligned across middle school, high school, and community college instruction
• Career development and outreach resources to expand awareness of cluster-related programs and careers to K-12 students
• Tools and resources to assist students and schools with implementing personalized education plans and transitions to post-secondary academic and training programs

Microsoft US Partners in Learning will offer all Illinois middle and high school students CareerForward (course location: http://nroc.careerforward.org/careerforward/). CareerForward is a 20 hour, free, media-rich online learning program, developed through a unique public-private partnership between the Michigan Department of Education, Michigan Virtual University and Microsoft. The program helps students wrestle with some of the burning questions about their futures: What am I going to do with my life? What is the world of work like? What will I need to succeed? What’s next for me? Using a variety of multimedia, course topics explore these questions and more. Throughout the course, students are asked frequently to reflect on what they’re learning, to write their thoughts down as a continual refinement of their thinking, and to discuss their thoughts with other students, either in-person or online.

Students can work with local educators to access the online course, which takes about four to six weeks or approximately 20 hours to complete. The course is designed to be facilitated by a local teacher and can be used independently or as part of an existing face-to-face course in career planning, business or global studies. Moreover, Microsoft US Partners in Learning offers for free for all teachers specific CareerForward resources such as the student workbook and facilitators’ guide to help integrate this online course with their face to face instruction.

Teachers can take advantage of the existing pre and post student surveys to measure shift in their career awareness, engage their students in creating an individual learning plan as part of the course, and access data about the number of students completing the course in Illinois, the United States, and throughout the world.
In summary, all of us at Microsoft would like to reiterate our support to the IL State Board of Education’s RFI for the IL Pathways STEM Learning Exchange. Microsoft is committed to enhancing the technology industry and workforce development activities.

Sincerely,

Shelley Straw Grash
Microsoft Citizenship and Public Affairs Director
March 14, 2012

Sherri Sullivan  
State Purchasing Officer  
Fiscal and Procurement Division W-380  
Illinois State Board of Education  
100 North First Street  
Springfield, IL 62777-0001

Dear Ms. Sullivan:

Please accept this Letter of Support on behalf of Lumity as an indication of our support of CompTIA’s response to the RFI: STEM Learning Exchanges, specifically for the Information Technology Cluster.

STEM education is critical to the success of the industry and companies like ours. CompTIA in partnering with the Illinois Technology Association (ITA) and TechAmerica in its response is the right organization to lead these key state IT related development initiatives. We strongly feel that CompTIA & its partners’ response demonstrate the leadership required to develop a successful IT Learning Exchange for the Illinois State Board of Education.

Lumity believes the IT Learning Exchange will provide the best resources and tools to support the needs of IL School Districts participating in the RTTT IT Cluster. We support your strong consideration of CompTIA’s Response and your selection of the IT Cluster for the one of the (3) to five (5) full implementation contracts.

Sincerely,

Kara Kennedy  
Executive Director
3/12/2012

Sherri Sullivan  
State Purchasing Officer  
Fiscal and Procurement Division W-380  
Illinois State Board of Education  
100 North First Street  
Springfield, IL  62777-0001

Dear Ms. Sullivan:

Please accept this Letter of Support on behalf of LOQUOR IT INC as an indication of our support of CompTIA’s response to the RFI: STEM Learning Exchanges, specifically for the Information Technology Cluster. At LOQUOR IT INC we help lean startups, small to medium size companies and public sector organizations run a more integrated, unified, productive and profitable technology infrastructure - everything from help desk to hardware and software procurement.

STEM education is critical to the success of the industry and companies like ours. CompTIA in partnering with the Illinois Technology Association (ITA) and TechAmerica in its response is the right organization to lead these key state IT related development initiatives. We strongly feel that CompTIA & its partners’ response demonstrate the leadership required to develop a successful IT Learning Exchange for the Illinois State Board of Education.

LOQUOR IT INC will provide support to these efforts as appropriate and as necessary to achieve our common goals.

LOQUOR IT INC believes the IT Learning Exchange will provide the best resources and tools to support the needs of IL School Districts participating in the RTTT IT Cluster. We support your strong consideration of CompTIA’s Response and urges your selection of the IT Cluster for the one of the (3) to five (5) full implementation contracts.

Sincerely,

Michael Becker | CIO  
Director of Integrated Services
March 7, 2012

Sherri Sullivan  
State Purchasing Officer  
Fiscal and Procurement Division W-380  
Illinois State Board of Education  
100 North First Street  
Springfield, IL 62777-0001

Dear Ms. Sullivan:

Please accept this Letter of Support on behalf of TEC Services as an indication of our support of CompTIA’s response to the RFI: STEM Learning Exchanges, specifically for the Information Technology Cluster. TEC Services has worked to develop and deliver innovative education and workforce development solutions for over twenty years and is extremely supportive of this initiative in Illinois.

STEM education is critical to the success of the industry and companies like ours. CompTIA in partnering with the Illinois Technology Association (ITA) and TechAmerica in its response is the right organization to lead these key state IT related development initiatives. We strongly feel that CompTIA & its partners’ response demonstrate the leadership required to develop a successful IT Cluster Learning Exchange for the Illinois State Board of Education.

TEC Services will provide support to these efforts as appropriate and as necessary to achieve our common goals.

TEC Services believes the IT Learning Exchange will provide the best resources and tools to support the needs of IL School Districts participating in the Race to the Top (RTTT) IT Cluster. We support your strong consideration of CompTIA’s Response and urge your selection of the IT Cluster for one of the (3) to five (5) full implementation contracts.

Sincerely,

Greg Sutton  
Director – Education and Workforce Development Programs
March 7, 2012

Sherri Sullivan  
State Purchasing Officer  
Fiscal and Procurement Division W-380  
Illinois State Board of Education  
100 North First Street  
Springfield, IL 62777-0001

Dear Ms. Sullivan:

Please accept this Letter of Support on behalf of the Illinois Technology Foundation (ITF), as an indication of our support of CompTIA’s response to the RFI: STEM Learning Exchanges, specifically for the Information Technology Cluster. The Illinois Technology Foundation is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the development of the technology talent pipeline in the State of Illinois by creating and coordinating mentorships, internships and networking opportunities. We work closely with industry, academia, and government in order to fulfill our mission.

CompTIA is partnering with ITA and TechAmerica in its response. ITF has been an active partner with the ITA and CompTIA in support of the development of programs that support the talent pipeline in Illinois. We strongly feel that CompTIA & its partners’ response demonstrate the leadership required to develop a successful IT Learning Exchange for the Illinois State Board of Education.

In support of this effort, ITF is proud to offer its services as an advisor to the program, connector to the industry and a mentor to the students.

The ITF believes the IT Learning Exchange will provide the best resources and tools to support the needs of IL School Districts participating in the RTTT IT Cluster. ITF supports your strong consideration of CompTIA’s Response and urges your selection of the IT Cluster for the one of the (3) to five (5) full implementation contracts.

Sincerely,

William R. Waas  
Chairman
To: Illinois State Board of Education  
From: Center for Mathematics Science and Technology, Illinois State University  
Date: March 9, 2012  

Subject: Letter of Support to Implement the Finance STEM Learning Exchange

I am writing this memo to express the support of the Center for Mathematics, Science, and Technology and Illinois State University for the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce in leading the Finance STEM Learning Exchange through the Illinois Pathways Initiative.

At CeMaST we are very interested in helping to plan and implement the Finance STEM Learning Exchange. We look forward working with the Chicagoland Chamber of commerce and the rest of the partnership.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely yours,

Willy Hunter
William Hunter
Sherri Sullivan, State Purchasing Officer  
Fiscal and Procurement Division W-380  
Illinois State Board of Education  
100 North First St.  
Springfield, IL 62777-0001

Dear Sherri:

On behalf of the members of the Illinois Business Roundtable, I am writing to express our full support Comptia’s response to the Request for Information for the creation of the STEM Learning Exchange for Information Technology. The Illinois Business Roundtable (IBRT) is a voluntary statewide association of chief executive officers of Illinois' leading businesses, formed in 1989 to study, make recommendations, and take action on critical public policy issues facing Illinois. The Roundtable is nonprofit and nonpartisan. Its work is solely supported by dues and contributions from our corporate members.

Through the IBRT’s Education Task Force and Foundation, the IBRT started scholarships for teachers seeking National Board Certification; developed the initial model for the current school improvement website, the Illinois Interactive Report Card; and documented best teaching practices through Illinois State University. The Illinois Pathways Initiative, under development since 2009, seeks to capture and leverage existing private and public resources to enrich and broaden the education and career interests of Illinois’ students and workforce.

The IBRT is familiar with the tremendous work of Comptia and several of the other key partners responding to the RFI for Information Technology through their work on the IT Task Force of the Workforce Investment Board.

The IBRT intends to provide general support to this effort to form the information technology exchange by identifying and reaching out to companies within this cluster to inventory, align, aggregate and leverage current investments in workforce training and education programs being made by them.

We are extremely pleased to support Comptia and the other participants associated with this IT proposal.

Jeff Mays, President  
Illinois Business Roundtable

Sherri Sullivan
State Purchasing Officer
Fiscal and Procurement Division W-380
Illinois State Board of Education
100 North First St.
Springfield, IL  62777-0001

Dear Ms Sullivan,

CompTIA, in partnership with the IL Technology Association (ITA) and TechAmerica, is responding to the IL State Board of Education’s Request for Information (RFI): STEM Learning Exchange for the IT Cluster. The IIT School of Applied Technology fully supports CompTIA’s response to the RFI for the STEM Learning Exchange for the IT Cluster. With degree programs in Cyber Forensics and Security, Information Technology and Management, Industrial Technology and Management, and professional learning programs in areas ranging from information technology, engineering, manufacturing, business and international studies, IIT’s School of Applied Technology is offering a distinctive education experience that produces graduates with deep technical knowledge who are prepared for leadership positions. Our faculty take pride in mentoring students who have embraced the opportunity to grow professionally and get the most that they can out of the project learning which they are provided at IIT. Employing a hands-on, reality-based approach to education, the college allows students to apply what they learn in class to solve real life problems. Students learn about new and emerging technologies and the application, integration, and administrative practices used in the effective management of these technologies. They are provided an innovative experience in which they work on cutting-edge, industry-sponsored projects. This teaching philosophy prepares students to become technology innovators, entrepreneurs, and leaders of the future. Our degree programs in both Information Technology and Management and Cyber Forensics and Security make maximum use of standards established by CompTIA.

Even prior to the formal establishment of the School of Applied Technology our predecessor programs established a strong bond and professional relationship with CompTIA and have actively been involved with CompTIA for over twelve years. As an Association Member affiliated with the CompTIA Education to Careers (E2C) Program and now as a CompTIA Academy Partner Program member, we have been formal educational partners with CompTIA since the establishment of our degree programs in 2002. Industry Professor of Information Technology and Management Ray Trygstad has
been a CompTIA subject matter expert, has attended every CompTIA Annual Member Meeting, and has participated on committees that help shape the future direction of CompTIA certifications and industry involvement. As our Associate Director and manager of our curricula in Information Technology and Management, Professor Trygstad has actively incorporated CompTIA examination objectives into course syllabi and curricular planning. CompTIA’s leadership in the creation of measurable objectives to define professional competence in Information Technology roles has been critical in the development of the Information Technology profession and in the definition of academic curricula to meet that goal.

As an organization the IIT School of Applied Technology will be willing to serve as an advisor to the project, providing general support as needed and appropriate for the IT Cluster. The strength of our programs is our ability to attract industry-experienced faculty who make a strong commitment to student education through project based learning; as such we are in perfect position to act in this advisory capacity. Our extremely close geographic proximity to the CompTIA main offices will allow us to actually work face-to-face in this capacity. In addition, we can support this project in additional ways:

- We can provide access to classroom and laboratory space, equipment, and related educational resources necessary to support programs of study through regional partnerships and other strategies.
- We would be happy to expand our existing program to provide meaningful after-school and summer internships and other work-based learning opportunities.
- We can provide professional development resources for teachers and school administrators integrated and aligned across middle school, high school, and community college instruction. We have deep experience in this area having provided early Internet professional development opportunities for over 1,200 secondary educators in the western suburbs of Chicago, and we currently have faculty members and professional staff serving on advisory boards for community college IT programs.

In conclusion, we believe that there is no non-profit association in a better position to establish a robust IT Learning Exchange than CompTIA, and they have our full support for this project.

C. Robert Carlson

Cc: Ray Trygstad
    Ruth Sweetser
    Dennis Roberson
    Michael Gosz
    Gretchen Koch, CompTIA
    Carol Betti, CompTIA
Sherri Sullivan, State Purchasing Officer
Fiscal and Procurement Division W-380
Illinois State Board of Education
100 North First St.
Springfield, IL 62777-0001

Dear Sherri:

On behalf of the members of the Illinois Business Roundtable, I am writing to express our full support Comptia’s response to the Request for Information for the creation of the STEM Learning Exchange for Information Technology. The Illinois Business Roundtable (IBRT) is a voluntary statewide association of chief executive officers of Illinois’ leading businesses, formed in 1989 to study, make recommendations, and take action on critical public policy issues facing Illinois. The Roundtable is nonprofit and nonpartisan. Its work is solely supported by dues and contributions from our corporate members.

Through the IBRT’s Education Task Force and Foundation, the IBRT started scholarships for teachers seeking National Board Certification; developed the initial model for the current school improvement website, the Illinois Interactive Report Card; and documented best teaching practices through Illinois State University. The Illinois Pathways Initiative, under development since 2009, seeks to capture and leverage existing private and public resources to enrich and broaden the education and career interests of Illinois’ students and workforce.

The IBRT is familiar with the tremendous work of Comptia and several of the other key partners responding to the RFI for Information Technology through their work on the IT Task Force of the Workforce Investment Board.

The IBRT intends to provide general support to this effort to form the information technology exchange by identifying and reaching out to companies within this cluster to inventory, align, aggregate and leverage current investments in workforce training and education programs being made by them.

We are extremely pleased to support Comptia and the other participants associated with this IT proposal.

Jeff Mays, President
Illinois Business Roundtable
March 14, 2012

Sherri Sullivan
State Purchasing Officer
Fiscal and Procurement Division W-380
Illinois State Board of Education
100 North First Street
Springfield, IL 62777-0001

Dear Ms. Sullivan:

Please accept this Letter of Support on behalf of Fippex as an indication of our support of CompTIA’s response to the RFI: STEM Learning Exchanges, specifically for the Information Technology Cluster. Fippex is a cloud-based client enablement platform that relies heavily on skilled software programmers for developing its systems.

STEM education is critical to the success of the industry and companies like ours. CompTIA in partnering with the Illinois Technology Association (ITA) and TechAmerica in its response is the right organization to lead these key state IT related development initiatives. We strongly feel that CompTIA & its partners’ response demonstrate the leadership required to develop a successful IT Learning Exchange for the Illinois State Board of Education.

Fippex will provide support to these efforts as appropriate and as necessary to achieve our common goals.

Fippex believes the IT Learning Exchange will provide the best resources and tools to support the needs of IL School Districts participating in the RTTT IT Cluster. We support your strong consideration of CompTIA’s Response and urges your selection of the IT Cluster for the one of the (3) to five (5) full implementation contracts.

Sincerely,

Tim Swindle
Chief-Operating-Officer (COO)
March 12, 2012

Sherri Sullivan
State Purchasing Officer
Fiscal and Procurement Division W-380
Illinois State Board of Education
100 North First Street
Springfield, IL 62777-0001

Dear Ms. Sullivan:

Please accept this Letter of Support on behalf of College of DuPage as an indication of our support of CompTIA’s response to the RFI: STEM Learning Exchanges, specifically for the Information Technology Cluster.

STEM education is critical to the success of the industry and companies like ours. CompTIA in partnering with the Illinois Technology Association (ITA) and TechAmerica in its response is the right organization to lead these key state IT related development initiatives. We strongly feel that CompTIA & its partners’ response demonstrate the leadership required to develop a successful IT Cluster Learning Exchange for the Illinois State Board of Education.

College of DuPage will provide support to these efforts as appropriate and as necessary to achieve our common goals.

College of DuPage believes the IT Learning Exchange will provide the best resources and tools to support the needs of IL School Districts participating in the Race to the Top (RTTT) IT Cluster. We support your strong consideration of CompTIA’s Response and urge your selection of the IT Cluster for one of the (3) to five (5) full implementation contracts.

Sincerely,

Clyde Cox
Professor, CIT

425 Fawell Blvd
Glen Ellyn, Illinois, 60137
March 13, 2012

Sherri Sullivan
State Purchasing Officer
Fiscal and Procurement Division W-380
Illinois State Board of Education
100 North First Street
Springfield, IL  62777-0001

Dear Ms. Sullivan:

Please accept this Letter of Support on behalf of Clean Energy Trust, as an indication of our support of CompTIA’s response to the RFI: STEM Learning Exchanges, specifically for the Information Technology Cluster. CET’s mission is to accelerate the development of a clean energy ecosystem in the Midwest by connecting entrepreneurs, researchers and early stage companies with the resources they need to succeed in the marketplace.

CompTIA is partnering with ITA and TechAmerica in its response. CET is headquartered in the same office space as, and has collaborated with ITA on building out the local network of individuals and organizations with a stake in expanding STEM programs, which are critical to improving readiness for the advanced jobs that will invigorate our economy. We strongly feel that CompTIA & its partners’ response demonstrates the leadership required to develop a successful IT Learning Exchange for the Illinois State Board of Education.

In support of this effort Clean Energy Trust is proud to offer its services as a mentorship coordinator, feedback provider and a supporter of student activities. CET has successfully led a mentor-matching program for its portfolio companies and offers advice to many burgeoning entrepreneurs as they attempt to take their ideas to market. CET has also developed the Clean Energy Exchange, an online social platform for the cleantech community, which can be used to promote student activities, connect them with online resources and link them with experts in their chosen technology.

Clean Energy Trust believes the IT Learning Exchange will provide the best resources and tools to support the needs of IL School Districts participating in the RTTT IT Cluster. Clean Energy Trust supports your strong consideration of CompTIA’s Response and urges your selection of the IT Cluster for the one of the (3) to five (5) full implementation contracts.

Sincerely,

Amy Francetic
Executive Director

200 S Wacker Drive, Suite 1500, Chicago, IL 60606
March 8, 2012

Sherri Sullivan
State Purchasing Officer
Fiscal and Procurement Division W-380
Illinois State Board of Education
100 North First St.
Springfield, IL 62777-0001

Ms. Sullivan,

This letter is being written in support of the STEM Learning Exchange for the IT Cluster being led by CompTIA, the Illinois Technology Association, and TechAmerica. We are in full and enthusiastic support of the partnership that will result in STEM Learning Exchange that will serve as an economic engine for growth and innovation for the IT Cluster.

The City Colleges of Chicago (CCC) is one of the largest community college systems in the nation, serving close to 120,000 students in programs that range from adult basic education, college credit, and continuing education. In the past few years, community colleges have received increased attention at the local, state, and federal level. Long known for being an accessible entry point for higher education, community colleges are quickly becoming a destination for first time college students as well as professional seeking to improve or expand their skills. According the National Science Foundation’s Science and Engineering Indicators, 46% of science and engineering graduates reported that they took classes at a community college. As we seek to meet our nation’s needs for increased degree attainment, community colleges, like CCC, will be an important asset.

CCC is proud to partner with CompTIA in the STEM Learning Exchange. In the past, CCC has worked with CompTIA to offer vendor-neutral certifications in Information Technology. These industry certifications make our students competitive in the job market, and focus their skills based on relevant and emerging needs. The rest of the team for the IT cluster is made up of industry partners that represent potential employers, and industry advisors that will inform our curriculum as well as provide a path for our students. One partner, John Rico Sr., of Rico Enterprises has been a long time partner of CCC. He was a member of the advisory council at Harold Washington College for several years, a relationship we have both benefitted from.

As a partner in STEM Learning Exchange IT cluster, CCC will be able to make contributions in three key areas: (1) provide increased access to learning spaces, computer labs, and equipment for our regional partners, (2) provide professional development resources for teachers and school administrators integrated and aligned across middle school, high school, and post-secondary faculty, and (3) provide career development and outreach resources to expand awareness of cluster-related programs and careers to K-12 students. Through our recent Reinvention and other city-wide efforts, CCC will track the effectiveness of all programs that contribute to and benefit from the STEM Learning Exchange. We will further leverage funds from our Broadening Advanced Technological Education Connections (BATEC) grant with the National Science Foundation (NSF).
In summation, I would like reiterate our enthusiastic support of the STEM Learning Exchange IT Cluster. I believe that the team assembled and lead by CompTIA provides the infrastructure needed to make an economic and pedagogical impact in information technology. The City Colleges of Chicago looks forward to the opportunity. If there are any questions or concerns regarding this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Michael Davis  
Associate Vice Chancellor for STEM  
City Colleges of Chicago  
mdavis@ccc.edu | 312-553-2773
March 12, 2012

Sherri Sullivan  
State Purchasing Officer  
Fiscal and Procurement Division W-380  
Illinois State Board of Education  
100 North First Street  
Springfield, IL 62777-0001

Dear Ms. Sullivan:

Please accept this Letter of Support on behalf of Chicago Tech Academy as an indication of our support of CompTIA’s response to the RFI: STEM Learning Exchanges, specifically for the Information Technology Cluster. CompTIA is a founding partner of Chicago Tech Academy: Chicago’s first and only academy focused 100% on connecting the global technology industry with tomorrow’s technology leaders through curriculum design, mentorships, projects, internships and jobs.

CompTIA has played an essential role in implementing these signature programs: programs ready to be scaled up in the IT Learning Exchange. Because of this, I couldn’t think of a better organization to spearhead this statewide initiative.

CompTIA, in partnering with the Illinois Technology Association (ITA) and TechAmerica in its response, is the right organization to lead these key state IT related development initiatives. We strongly feel that CompTIA & its partners’ response demonstrate the leadership required to develop a successful IT Cluster Learning Exchange for the Illinois State Board of Education.

Chicago Tech Academy will provide support to these efforts as appropriate and as necessary to achieve our common goals.

Chicago Tech believes the IT Learning Exchange will provide the best resources and tools to support the needs of IL School Districts participating in the Race to the Top (RTTT) IT Cluster. We support your strong consideration of CompTIA’s Response and urge your selection of the IT Cluster for one of the (3) to five (5) full implementation contracts.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Matt Hancock  
Executive Director
March 13, 2012

Sherri Sullivan
State Purchasing Officer
Fiscal and Procurement Division W-380
Illinois State Board of Education
100 North First Street
Springfield, IL 62777-0001

Dear Ms. Sullivan:

Please accept this Letter of Support from The Boeing Company as an indication of our endorsement for CompTIA’s response to the STEM-IT Learning Exchange. We believe that the Learning Exchange offers an innovative approach to addressing the critical skills’ needs facing our industry and others. By partnering in this collaborative effort to bolster STEM and IT education, we hope to strengthen the pipeline for future talent to manufacturing and IT businesses.

STEM and IT education are critical to the success of companies like ours. CompTIA, in partnering with the Illinois Technology Association (ITA) and TechAmerica in its response, demonstrates their organizational capacity to lead key state IT-related development initiatives. We strongly believe that CompTIA is well-positioned to demonstrate the leadership and provide the organizational guidance required to develop a successful IT Cluster Learning Exchange for the Illinois State Board of Education.

Boeing believes that the IT Learning Exchange can amass the best resources and tools to support the needs of Illinois School Districts participating in the Race to the Top (RTTT) IT Cluster. Boeing asks for your strong consideration of CompTIA’s proposal and urges your selection of the IT Cluster for one of the three to five full implementation contracts.

Sincerely,

Rick Stephens
Senior Vice President, Human Resources and Administration, The Boeing Company
Chair, Illinois Business Round Table
Governor’s P-20 Council
March 6, 2012

Sherri Sullivan  
State Purchasing Officer  
Fiscal and Procurement Division W-380  
Illinois State Board of Education  
100 North First St.  
Springfield, IL 62777-0001

Dear Ms. Sullivan:

Apex Learning is pleased to support the IT Cluster STEM Learning Exchange as it responds to the Illinois State Board of Education RFI for IL Pathways STEM Learning Exchange.

Apex Learning is the leading provider of digital curriculum for the nation’s schools. The Apex Learning digital curriculum includes standards-based courses in math, science, English, social studies, world languages, electives, and Advanced Placement. Apex Learning courses are widely used for original credit, credit recovery, remediation, intervention, acceleration and exam preparation. In the 2010-2011 school year, we served 40,000 students with 135,000 courses.

Apex Learning is a leader in eLearning. The company is involved with a variety of national organizations that all have the collective goal of promoting online learning, increasing graduation rates and decreasing dropout rates. Apex Learning sits on the Digital Learning Council, a group of thought leaders convened by Govs. Jeb Bush and Bob Wise to define the 10 Elements of High Quality Digital Learning and identify the actions needed to be taken by lawmakers and policymakers to foster a high quality, customized education for all students. We are a member of the Alliance’s Business Leaders Council and Education Innovators group. This year, Apex Learning and America’s Promise formed a partnership with four school districts to support America’s Promise Alliance’s Grad Nation Campaign, a 10-year initiative to mobilize Americans to end the high school dropout crisis and prepare young people for the 21st century workforce. The goal of the Grad Nation Campaign is to improve the nation’s overall high school graduation rate to 90 percent by 2020.

An Apex Learning representative has been involved with the College Career Committee of P20 Council and the STEM advisor group for two years. We applaud the work these groups have done in increasing access to high-quality earning education tools.

Apex Learning will support this program by providing access to rigorous, standards-based online courses designed to support academic success for all students, from those not prepared for grade-level academic challenges to those capable of accelerating their learning. Apex Learning online courses are coupled with a comprehensive reporting suite that enables educators to make data-driven decisions to support student progress.

We look forward to supporting the IT Cluster STEM Learning Exchange and the Illinois State Board of Education as they endeavor to prepare students with 21st century skills. Resources like those offered via this program will give more students opportunities to prepare for career, college, and life.

Best regards,

[Signature]

Cynthia Fogan,  
Vice President
March 11, 2012

Sherri Sullivan  
State Purchasing Officer  
Fiscal and Procurement Division W-380  
Illinois State Board of Education  
100 North First Street  
Springfield, IL 62777-0001

Dear Ms. Sullivan:

Please accept this Letter of Support on behalf of the Chicago Chapter of the Association of Information Technology Professionals (AITP – www.aitpchicago.com), as an indication of our support of CompTIA’s response to the RFI: STEM Learning Exchanges, specifically for the Information Technology Cluster.

Founded in 1951, the Association of IT Professionals (AITP) remains one of the largest professional technology associations in the country. AITP Chicago is one of the largest chapters of the Association of IT Professionals. We hold monthly dinner meetings as well as Special Interest Group meetings throughout the calendar year. AITP Chicago also founded and sponsors our annual CIO of the Year and IT Team Effectiveness award for outstanding achievements.

CompTIA is partnering with ITA and TechAmerica in its response. We have worked closely with ITA and the Illinois Technology Foundation to promote technology training and education in the Chicago area. We strongly feel that CompTIA & its partners’ response demonstrates the leadership required to develop a successful IT Learning Exchange for the Illinois State Board of Education.

In support of this effort AITP Chicago is proud to offer its services as an advisor.

AITP Chicago believes the IT Learning Exchange will provide the best resources and tools to support the needs of IL School Districts participating in the RTTT IT Cluster. AITP Chicago supports your strong consideration of CompTIA’s Response and urges your selection of the IT Cluster for one of the (3) to five (5) full implementation contracts.

Sincerely,

Paul F. Dittmann  
Past President and Board Member  
AITP Chicago  
Paul.dittmann@aitpchicago.com  
www.aitpchicago.com  
312-372-1052 x6006