

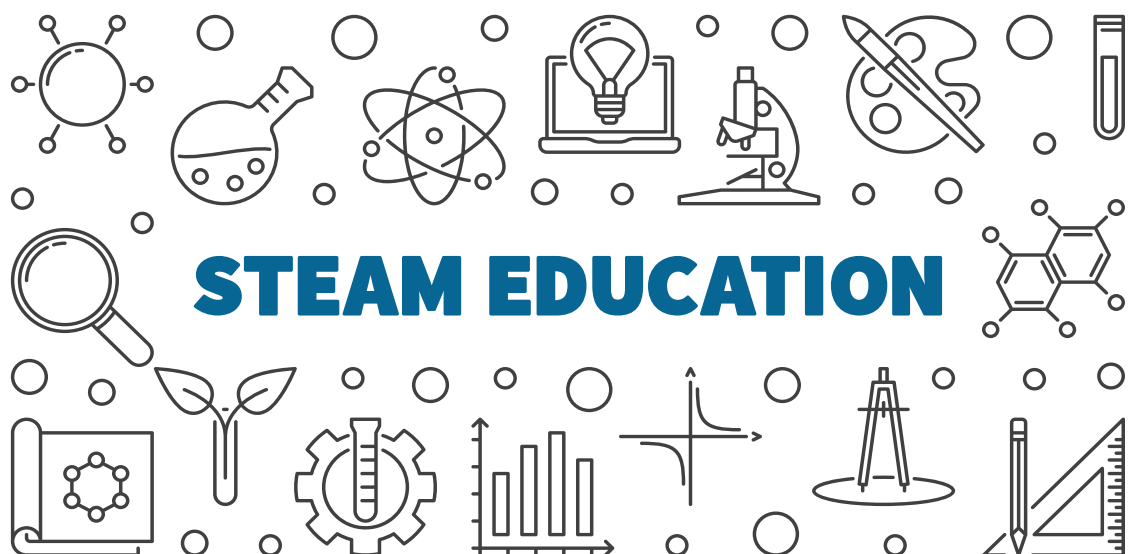
JANUARY  
2024

News from the field of the premiere DoD Youth STEM education program.

## STARBASE Shifts to STE(+A)M!

The Every Student Succeeds Act, Section 4107 focuses on activities to support well-rounded educational opportunities for students at the elementary and secondary level. STEM education has played a key role in those opportunities. In 2019, Title 10 US Code, Section 2193b was amended to incorporate Art and Design into STEM education offerings, and the basic STEM concept evolved into STEAM. DoD STARBASE has been incorporating art and design throughout the development of curriculum and implementation of instruction since its inception and eagerly embraces the opportunity to officially move forward as a premier STEAM program.

Be on the lookout for more information and guidance regarding new curriculum developments that include art and design components!



"Neither the arts nor the sciences have a monopoly on teaching creativity, collaboration, or problem-solving skills." -- John Ceschini, Principal & Arts Integration Specialist

# Director of the Air National Guard Recognizes STARBASE Minnesota-Duluth

In celebration of the 75th anniversary of the 148th Fighter Wing, Lt. General Michael Loh, Director Air National Guard, and his wife, Diana, paid a visit to the wing. Lt. Gen. Michael Loh is in charge of all 108,000 Air National Guard airmen and civilians across 90 wings and 180 installations in 159 communities in the United States, District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands.



During his tour of the base, General and Mrs. Loh stopped into the STARBASE Minnesota-Duluth facility for a visit to the classrooms. During the visit, Director Charity Johnson shared information about the program and how the STARBASE facilities in Minnesota are supporting over 2,800 5th grade students from a 500-square-mile area of Northeastern Minnesota. Students from Moose Lake Elementary School in Moose Lake, MN had the chance to meet Gen and Mrs. Loh and ask questions about their experiences in the military. The couple told the students how proud they were for successfully navigating their week-long STARBASE mission and shared with them the importance of pursuing their dreams and working hard.

After their visit, General Loh presented Director Johnson with the Air National Guard Coin of Excellence, formerly called the Challenge Coin. It is a military tradition for military leaders to honor someone with their coin as a way to show appreciation for a special achievement or job well done. General Loh congratulated the STARBASE team for their work in supporting underrepresented and underserved students across Minnesota. He acknowledged the work of the STARBASE Minnesota-Duluth educators who have demonstrated excellence in their work with students from rural communities where access to resources and technology is not easy to come by.

"I was overwhelmed by the moment," said Director Johnson. "I was aware of the tradition but never thought our team would or could be recognized by a military leader in this way for our work with students. It was such an honor and validates what we do every day to support the students we serve. It is a piece of STARBASE history that we will remember always."



# STARBASE Comes Full Circle for Cleveland Elementary

Students from Cleveland Elementary School attending STARBASE Sioux Falls were treated to a special military interaction during their recent 25-hour STEM experience. Technical Sergeant (TSgt) Jacob Wallenstein, Aircrew Flight Equipment, regularly shares about his career of supporting pilots at the 114th Fighter Wing. From maintaining equipment like helmets to inspecting and packing emergency items like parachutes and survival kits, Wallenstein engages students with an interactive presentation.

Wallenstein himself attended Cleveland Elementary growing up, and values the opportunity to connect with students from his former school. "I really enjoyed having the opportunity to share my current Air Force job experience with 5th graders from my old elementary school. Being able to tell and show them that they all can join the military one day, like I did, and seeing their faces light up is one of the highlights of STARBASE. I hope that with my inspiration, one day some of these kids will be filling my shoes in the South Dakota Air National Guard."

Some students come to STARBASE with military knowledge and interest, particularly about F-16 jets in Sioux Falls, yet many others leave with a new found awareness and curiosity – and Wallenstein is helping make that impact. One Cleveland Elementary STARBASE student stated, "It is crazy that someone who went to school where I go, gets to work with jets now. Someday, I want to do that."

Thank you, TSgt Wallenstein, and all of our military supporters, for your commitment to the STARBASE program and the many students you influence.



# STARBASE or Starbase? What does it mean?

Have you ever wondered, or been asked “What does STARBASE stand for?” Well, the answer is nothing. Though always written in capital letters, STARBASE is not an acronym. Early on in the program development Barbara Koscak, founder of the STARBASE program, was encouraged by Senator Carl Levin to write STARBASE in capital letters so it would stand out amongst the legal jargon and documentation.

In 1993 when the National Guard became the sponsor of the program, they required an accompanying meaning in order to ensure STARBASE could always be capitalized moving forward. DoD later determined that the acronym being circulated didn’t accurately reflect the depth of the DoD STARBASE curriculum and therefore eliminated the use of the acronym, but the capitalization has remained!

## A Call for Participation

Throughout the year, this newsletter will continue to spotlight the achievements, partnerships, and tips of the participants of the DoD STARBASE program. Please share your achievements, success stories, and helpful tips with us at [email@dodstarbase.org](mailto:email@dodstarbase.org).

# STARBASE Robins Advanced Teams Compete in the First LEGO League Robotics Tournament

Ten STARBASE Advanced Clubs competed in the First LEGO League Challenge on December 2, 2023 in Macon, Georgia. Middle Georgia State University’s campus hosted the regional competition. Students met with STARBASE facilitators at their schools for ten weeks to prepare them for the competition. This year, TWO of STARBASE Robins’s sponsored teams won trophies. The students really enjoyed the experience while competing at a high level. Congratulations to all participants!

