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[Home](#) > Students Learn STEM at STARBASE 2.0

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Bossier Parish middle school students have wrapped up another year of stimulating educational experiences and firsts through STARBASE Louisiana 2.0.

STARBASE 2.0 is a three year creative immersion into science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) concepts through hands-on science and engineering activities and projects. The 2.0 curriculum is a continuation of the original STARBASE program, which provides fifth grade students with an exciting 25-hour hands-on, minds-on STEM course.

Kathy Brandon, Executive Director of STARBASE Louisiana, said the 2.0 program has been extremely successful, expanding from one site of 24 participants in the pilot year to three sites and nearly 100 participants. She also credited its success to the many volunteers and mentors from Barksdale Air Force Base and the business community.

“The support was incredible, and added tremendously to the programs successful expansion,” Brandon added. “The teachers and facilitators at each school were phenomenal in offering the necessary support. The military and community mentors established a positive rapport with the students, and provided real-world expertise of STEM concepts and applications.”

In addition to the original STARBASE Louisiana 2.0 curriculum developed and piloted last year, we piloted a new rocketry component with a select group of 8th grade students at Cope Middle School. Teams had to design and build custom rockets that could perform within the parameters of the national Team America Rocketry Challenge competition

Brandon said “all of the students in post-program surveys expressed that this was one of their favorite school and out-of-school time activities this year.”

“Although none of our teams qualified for nationals, they worked hard to apply their knowledge of physics and math, and developed essential 21st Century skills of communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity,” she said.

Brandon said feedback from students, teacher partners, and parents has been “extremely positive,” and “nearly all students have expressed they would like to continue in STARBASE programs in the future.”

Aliyah Concepcion, a seventh grader at Elm Grove Middle School, said she gained more confidence and courage going through STARBASE 2.0.

“STARBASE taught me that no matter what the answer is, the answer you give is partly right,” Concepcion said. “My question complexity has grown, therefore making my questions more in depth.”

Cope Middle School seventh grader Alejandro Espinoza said, “The knowledge I gained over the year is very useful in the real world. As hard as engineering a car, to as easy as making a chair, I could use the STEM knowledge that I learned to do any sort of thing.”

Entering its third year this fall, Brandon said there are currently plans to expand the sites that piloted the program this year to enable more students to participate.

“STARBASE has already initiated a dialogue with Bossier Parish to work toward establishing a high school phase of STARBASE,” Brandon said. “It is not certain yet what form that will take – whether it continues to be an afterschool program, or is integrated into a part of the school-day engineering and cyber curriculum. This continued exposure to problem-based engineering curriculum utilizing industry-standard software, opens up the possibility of creating a stronger pipeline of STEM skilled students into the local workforce.”

For students who just can’t get enough of STARBASE, the STARBASE 2.0 staff will be offering the first ever STARBASE 3.0 experience to a select group of 2.0 graduates this summer. To apply, send a request for an application to starbasela2.0@gmail.com [1]. Include the words STARBASE 3.0 Summer Academy in the subject line of your email.

For original article, click [here](#) [2].

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