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# STARBASE Gives Students a Head Start in STEM

The Department of Defense DoD STARBASE is a national science, technology, engineering and mathematics program, or STEM for short, with a mission to get fifth-graders and high schoolers interested in technology-based careers.

The DOD realized the amount of people going into STEM fields, did not even compare to the number of people retiring. Since the DOD is the number one employer of STEM professionals in the US, it created DoD STARBASE.

The program challenges students and motivates them to pursue STEM education, and results in a skilled and innovative American workforce. It's meant for them to fail. You read right -- fail.

According to their research, making mistakes helps the brain grow, and these children fail, with a smile on their face.

"We believe STEM is a meta-discipline. It's not just more math more science. It's using those tools to think outside the box and solve problems. Coming here instills confidence in the kids, where if they hear physics or they hear chemistry down the road, it doesn't scare them. they think back to STARBASE and they go wait a minute I did that and I was good at it," said Laurie Ilgenfritz, STARBASE Louisiana co-director.

As part of the program, these students will have to solve real world problems using math, chemistry, robotics and even rocketry.

The kids love it.

"Here at STARBASE you can do all these cool activities that you don't really get a chance to at school, so it's really amazing," said fifth-grader Jenna Stanfield.

Elijah Lepper, who is also a fifth-grader added, "I was really looking forward to it because I thought it was going to be really fun and it is. I just wanted to have a great time."

Nearly 30,000 students have been through this program.

STARBASE has only 66 sites across the country. Louisiana actually has four of them. One of them is here in the Shreveport/Bossier area on Barksdale Air Force Base.

Teachers like Vivian Boothe feel lucky their students can be a part of this.

“STARBASE is a really great experience for the kids because my students are getting to come in and do hands on activities. But the really important thing that they implement here at STRABASE is that it’s cross curriculum,” said Boothe.

[Full Article](#) <sup>[1]</sup>

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**Links:**

[1] [https://www.ktbs.com/news/arklatex-indepth/starbase-gives-students-a-head-start-on-technology/article\\_2b92ade6-2340-11e9-8423-9bdbae89ed09.html](https://www.ktbs.com/news/arklatex-indepth/starbase-gives-students-a-head-start-on-technology/article_2b92ade6-2340-11e9-8423-9bdbae89ed09.html)