

March 31, 2025

Via E-Mail Delivery

Senator Mary Kunesch, Chair
Senator Jason Rarick, Lead Republican
Senate Education Finance Committee
St. Paul, MN 55155



Dear Chair Kunesch, Senator Rarick, and Members of the Senate Education Finance Committee,

I am writing you today as Executive Director of STARBASE Minnesota, Inc. to express my gratitude for the past financial support we have received from the State of Minnesota and to ask for your support for the appropriation included in SF2255 for STARBASE. The Governor is recommending \$500,000 per year in FY26-27 for an appropriation to STARBASE Minnesota in his budget recommendations. This recommendation has been included in SF2255.

STARBASE uses this funding, along with support from Minnesota corporations (3M, Ecolab, Xcel Energy, etc) to prepare Minnesota's skilled STEM workforce for the future by providing schools with free STEM education programming and resources. STARBASE has state of the art facilities in St. Paul and Duluth where students participate in 5-day, 20-25 hour, immersive, authentic and rigorous STEM programs.

STARBASE also reaches students and their teachers across Minnesota by providing them with free STEM kits and curriculum. All STARBASE curriculum is aligned with Minnesota math and science benchmarks and is reflective of premiere STEM education, building students' skills and confidence in STEM and exposing students to STEM career opportunities, focusing on populations of students traditionally underrepresented in STEM. Additionally, STARBASE helps students continue their path in STEM by bringing STEM mentors into afterschool programming, connecting students with real-world scientists and engineers. These programs and more are made possible through our state funding.

The impact of STARBASE programming on students and educators is evident in the vast reach of our programming and the results we see from students and teachers.

Program Reach (2023-2024)	Program Results (2023-2024)
Onsite Programming <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 101 schools• 6,906 5th grade students• 245 educators	Onsite Programming – Student pre/post, surveys, teacher surveys <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 94% of students improve pre to post test• 97% reported they learned new things• 82% have greater interest in STEM and STEM careers• 92% of teachers report gains in knowledge, strategies• 100% of teachers want to return
STEM Kits and Curriculum <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 34,155 students• 845 educators• 438 schools• 51% metro - 49% greater MN• 63% Title 1 - 37% non-Title 1	STEM Kits and Curriculum – Teacher Surveys <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 94% observed increased student engagement in STEM• 83% reported positive impact on student problem solving and critical thinking• 79% noted greater student interest in STEM careers• 91% of teachers reported greater ability/ease teaching STEM• 95% of teachers reported the STEM kits helped them implement math and/or science benchmarks

At STARBASE, we are doing our part to help build a strong future Minnesota STEM workforce and STEM literate society. We look forward to continuing this important work.

Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions. My email address is mpeters@starbasemn.org. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Melanie Peters

Melanie Peters

Executive Director, STARBASE Minnesota



cc – Belinda Cordina, Chair - STARBASE Minnesota Board of Directors/Director of Global Operations- Life Sciences, Ecolab