

April 8th, 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 ask you to oppose SF2255 Senate Delete-All Amendment which would eliminate all funding for STARBASE. This change would have an immediate negative impact on at least 438 schools across Minnesota, by further limiting their access to high quality STEM education resources. The proposed change to delete STARBASE funding, opposes the Governor's recommended budget that includes an appropriation of \$500,000 per year in FY26-27 for STARBASE.

STARBASE provides schools throughout the State of Minnesota with free STEM education programs and resources, with proven success among students and their teachers. At a time when schools in our state are asked to do more with less, STARBASE is there, creating that spark of excitement for STEM in students and relieving the pressure on schools and educators by providing premiere STEM education programming in the form of 5-day, onsite programs or STEM kits and curriculum to schools across the state.

Minnesota is home to a strong STEM industry, contributing to the economic vitality of our state. That same STEM industry depends on a future STEM workforce and STARBASE is helping to prepare that workforce. All STARBASE lessons and activities feature a direct connection to a MN STEM career, helping students to envision themselves in the future STEM workforce.

Please accept the testimony of Ryan Gibbs, Principal, Oak View Elementary School, Osseo, Minnesota, who can share the importance of STARBASE Minnesota programs on the schools we serve. Please also see the enclosed informational brief that shows the strong impact STARBASE Minnesota has on STEM education in Minnesota. Thank you for your consideration and again and for your opposition of the Delete-All amendment.

Sincerely,

Melanie Peters

Melanie Peters
Executive Director, STARBASE Minnesota



STARBASE MINNESOTA, INC.

Mission: Educate and inspire youth in STEM.

207,418 students reached . . . and counting!

Since 1993, STARBASE Minnesota, Inc. has been “Giving Wings to Dreams” to students in the Twin Cities, Duluth, and across the State of Minnesota by providing schools with free STEM education programming and resources. STARBASE Minnesota, Inc. has state of the art facilities on MN Air National Guard bases in St. Paul and Duluth, where approximately 7,000 students participate in onsite programming each year, including our standard DoD STARBASE program.

Our standard program is anything but standard,

- 5 days, 20-25 hours
- Designed for 5th graders
- Immersive STEM experience
- Authentic, rigorous, engaging
- Connected to future STEM careers
- Aligned to MN math and science benchmarks
- *FREE to schools, primarily Title I

with measurable impact on students

- 94% of students increase knowledge and skills in STEM
- 95% report STARBASE made learning fun
- 97% said they learned new things at STARBASE
- 86% have increased interest in STEM and STEM careers

and their teachers, too.

- 99% of teachers rate the program as excellent or very good
- 100% want to return
- 92% of teachers report gains in knowledge and STEM teaching methods and strategies



Link to
STARBASE video

STARBASE Minnesota, Inc. goes beyond the standard,

- STARBASE Advanced - Mentoring
 - After school STEM club connecting middle school students with STEM professionals
- Summer STEM Camps
- STEM at Work - Career Events
- Community Outreach to Support STEM Events

inspiring students across the state in STEM

Destination Mars STEM Kits and Curriculum



- Free STEM kits distributed to 35,000 5th graders and their teachers each year
- More than 20 integrated STEM lessons
- Includes all student supplies and web resources for easy implementation
- Connections to STEM careers throughout



to build the future STEM workforce in Minnesota.

- STEM career exploration website
- More than 50 STEM career videos
- Highlight STEM professions and trades in Minnesota
- Featuring MN STEM corporations and industry

Thanks to the support of our partners.

- US Department of Defense
- MN National Guard
- MN Dept. of Education
- STEM Corporate Partners
- Local Colleges and Universities
- Hundreds of MN schools

Contact Us:

Twin Cities and Greater MN

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Link to
participating
schools

STARBASE Minnesota, Inc. is a non-federal entity. It is not part of the Department of Defense or any of its components and has no governmental status.

www.starbasemn.org