

NASA Stars (NNM05AA07G)
U.S. Space and Rocket Center
Huntsville, AL 35805
Vanessa Suggs
(256) 961-1369

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

NASA Stars is a program for underprivileged and underserved students in Alabama. Fifth grade teachers from Title I schools come to the U.S. Space and Rocket Center during the summer for a 1-week professional development summer institute. Curriculum consists of intense instruction in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) using space science and space exploration as tools for delivery. Lessons and activities are correlated to the State of Alabama math and science standards. Core curriculum includes techniques and instructional methods for incorporating “best practices” in the classroom. Teachers go back to the classroom to prepare students for a 3-day Space Camp experience designed to engage students in a hands-on environment. Teachers then participate in an additional follow-on technology workshop designed to help promote student interest in STEM.

PROGRAM RELEVANCE TO NASA

NASA Stars promotes Outcome 2 of the Education Strategic Framework which states: Attract and retain students in STEM disciplines through a progression of educational opportunities for students, teachers, and faculty.

PROGRAM BENEFITS TO SOCIETY

Title I students are introduced to experiences they might not otherwise have and are given hands on exposure to the STEM disciplines thus reinforcing class work and exposure to STEM related careers. Teachers are given long term professional development which enables them to better teach and inspire students. As a result of participation, schools are more inclined to participate in Space Week activities and involve parents in fund raising to bring similar experiences to their children.

PROGRAM GOALS

NASA Stars promotes Outcome 2 of the Education Strategic Framework which states: Attract and retain students in STEM disciplines through a progression of educational opportunities for students, teachers, and faculty.

PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Over 40 Alabama teachers have participated in the NASA Stars professional development sessions and have incorporated NASA’s unique education resources in the classroom. One teacher stated, “The type of children I teach would never have an opportunity to go to Space Camp and learn that there are fun careers in math and science. They can read it all day long in a book, but experiencing it first hand means so much more...Many of my students tell me that they want jobs in the fields of math and science and they actually try harder in math and science.”

STUDENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Over 1,000 students have successfully completed the NASA Stars education experience which includes a 3-day Space Camp experience coupled with classroom instruction by their teachers. Students are expected to fully participate and contribute to the Space Camp mission experience.