



Rutherford County Schools

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PRESS RELEASE

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Dr. David M. Sutton, Assistant Superintendent

Educators in Rutherford County Schools have a new resource to support high-quality instruction in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics: industry experts who work in those fields each day. Superintendent Dr. Janet H. Mason announced the school district's partnership with the Science and Technology Advanced Resource (STAR) program to members of the Rutherford County Board of Education during its business meeting on Tuesday, February 4, 2014. Rutherford County Schools is the first school district in North Carolina – and throughout the eastern United States – to partner with STAR to bring leading experts in STEM fields into its classrooms, creating rich opportunities for teachers and students to collaborate with engineers, meteorologists, seismologists, and other experts engaged in advanced research and development on real-world issues of theory and practice.

STAR is an educational program that integrates engineers within Lockheed Martin's Advanced Development Programs ("Skunk Works") into school classrooms through Internet-based, interactive webcasts and events. The program connects multiple subject areas to the fields of science and technology, fosters high engagement among students, develops both critical and conceptual thinking skills, promotes creativity and imagination, and leverages work-based education to maximize student growth. Through their work with leading edge technology, rapid prototyping, scientific discovery, and adaptive solutions, Skunk Works engineers have fostered innovation in the areas of aeronautical and maritime engineering, space flight, vehicular design, and electronics for sixty-five years. Now, they will also collaborate with teachers in Rutherford County Schools to bring that expertise to students in local classrooms.

In 2011, the school district launched its Going G.L.O.B.A.L. initiative aimed at increasing opportunities for all students to access resources, collaborate, and compete in an increasingly interconnected environment. Since then, the school district has worked to overcome the digital divide by equipping schools, educators, and students with 21st century technology tools. "The infrastructure, professional development, and purposeful collaboration associated with that effort has enabled our school district to make this exciting possibility a reality for our students," Dr. Mason observed. "We are excited to break new ground as the first STAR partner on the East coast, but we are even more excited about the program's substantial benefits for our students. No longer isolated by geography or physical distance, our students will have direct access to some of the most innovative and respected experts in STEM fields, and our teachers

Rutherford County Schools Vision: All Rutherford County students will be successful in a global community.

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will enjoy great working relationships with leading engineers at Lockheed Martin, an undisputed national leader in STEM innovation.”

Students, parents, and community members will have an opportunity to learn more about STAR, and about exciting career opportunities in STEM fields, at events to be held during the coming weeks. While additional details about those events are forthcoming, Assistant Superintendent Dr. David Sutton explained that they will offer attendees an opportunity to meet online with representatives of STAR and Lockheed Martin’s Skunk Works division for an interactive discussion about the program’s goals, resources, and integration into local classrooms, and about opportunities for local students to explore future careers in STEM fields. “I am especially excited about the great flexibility our teachers will have as they identify specific ways to bring industry experts into their classrooms most effectively,” he added. “Bringing our teachers’ expertise in curriculum and instruction together with Lockheed Martin’s expertise in STEM industries is a recipe for success with tremendous benefits for our students in high school, middle school, and the upper elementary grades.”

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