



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## IDAHO JUNIORS MAY APPLY FOR AEROSPACE PROGRAM THROUGH THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

(BOISE) – Idaho high school juniors will have the opportunity to take a special science class that could result in their having an opportunity to visit the NASA Ames Research Center in Sunnyvale, Calif., next summer and meet top NASA scientists.

Registration will be open from Aug. 31 to Dec. 1, 2015, for the Idaho Science and Aerospace Scholars program, a cooperative program of the Idaho State Department of Education and NASA. Once accepted into the program, students will sign up for the special on-line course, which is provided through the Idaho Digital Learning Academy (available at all schools), by going to their IDLA school site coordinator.

The course will be offered from January through May and students will receive one science elective credit for completing the class, which has a heavy emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). Students may also register for two concurrent credits through Boise State University.

After completing the competitive NASA-developed course on space exploration, the top 88 students will be invited to attend a special week-long Aerospace Scholars Summer Academy session at Boise State University next summer, which will include an all-expense-paid two-day trip to the Ames Center. Utilizing mentors and master educators at BSU and Ames, the students will simulate development of a human mission to Mars, utilizing not only their STEM capabilities, but also developing teamwork and presentation skills.

All of the Aerospace Scholar program participants and their families also will have the opportunity to take part in a series of regional Capstone Celebrations that offer interactive, hands-on Idaho-based STEM activities and tours at various facilities, labs and sites that showcase the STEM resources and career opportunities at the state's colleges, universities and industries. "It's a core NASA program, but we infuse it with an Idaho emphasis," said Peter Kavouras, who directs the Aerospace Scholars effort for the State Department of Education.

The program seeks to capture the imagination of students and there is an emphasis on reaching out to rural schools. "In some of the smaller districts, there may be just a handful of students, or maybe only one, with a love of astronomy or space," said Kavouras.



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“By partnering with the Idaho Digital Learning Academy, along with Idaho business and industry, we can offer a program that can inspire them and give them a chance to decide how to focus their classes in their senior year, or when they head to college,” he added.

**To apply, students must:**

- Be a U.S. citizen and Idaho resident.
- Be a high school junior with an interest in science, technology, engineering or mathematics.
- Have a minimum GPA of 2.7.
- Be at least 16 years of age by July 1, 2016.
- Commit to all aspects of the Idaho Science and Aerospace Scholars program.
- Have internet access and e-mail (home, school, or public library).

“It was a remarkable experience,” one student from a recent program wrote. “Not everybody gets to interact with astronauts and NASA scientists and engineers. The Academy was definitely inspiring. It really made me want to pursue a career in engineering. That’s something that not many programs can offer today. (It) was definitely one of the best experiences I have ever had.”

Teachers also may apply to be mentors for the program and may be selected for the trip to Ames with the students.

For more information, contact Kavouras at [pgkavouras@sde.idaho.gov](mailto:pgkavouras@sde.idaho.gov) or visit the program website at: <https://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/science/ISAS>.

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