

# Sioux Falls School District Opens First SmartLab at New Marcella LeBeau Elementary

*Ribbon Cutting Celebrates Innovative STEM Lab Designed to Transform Learning for Sioux Falls Students*

SIOUX FALLS, SD, UNITED STATES, September 19, 2025 / EINPresswire.com/ -- The Sioux Falls School District celebrated a major milestone on Tuesday, August 19, with the ribbon cutting of its first-ever SmartLab at the newly built Marcella LeBeau Elementary School. The cutting-edge STEM learning environment is designed to give students a hands-on, project-based approach to learning that fosters curiosity, creativity, and collaboration—while preparing them for the careers of tomorrow.



Students and staff celebrate the grand opening of their new SmartLab, a hands-on learning space designed to inspire creativity, collaboration, and innovation through STEM and project-based learning.

Principal Patrick Purdy expressed his excitement about the transformative potential of the new lab: "I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to see our students grow and discover new ways to collaborate and grow academically with our STEM lab. The possibilities for students to begin exploring new ways of learning and having so many hands-on learning projects will prepare them for careers they pursue in the future. The STEM lab is a gateway to endless possibilities and it's so fun to hear how excited the kids are about what they're building, learning about, and exploring with in class."

What makes this lab unique is The SmartLab Approach—an integrated ecosystem that sparks "ah-ha" moments and builds STEM identity in students. The program combines a career-connected project-based learning curriculum with hands-on tools and equipment that turn theory into practice. Students work in customized STEM learning environments, guided by a SmartLab Certified Facilitator, with the District benefiting from ongoing support and partnership to ensure long-term success.

Jessica Freeman, SmartLab Facilitator, emphasized how unique this space is for students: "The STEM lab is an exciting place at our school with so many fun and exciting opportunities to work together with very different and unique materials for students! The learning experiences these students are having and will have here together in this space are truly one of a kind!"

The SmartLab's design encourages students to collaborate, solve problems, and discover their potential. With every hands-on challenge, learners not only build technical skills but also develop confidence, resilience, and a strong belief in their ability to innovate and make an impact.



SmartLab provides a dynamic, flexible learning environment where students can collaborate, explore, and engage in hands-on STEM and project-based learning experiences.

District leadership sees the SmartLab as a groundbreaking step in innovation. "Opening a new school is always exciting, but the SmartLab brings something truly unique," said Dr. Kirk Zeeck, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction. "As the first in our District, it offers students and staff at Marcella LeBeau Elementary a daily adventure in hands-on learning unlike anything they've experienced before. We can't wait to see how this transforms their learning."

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*Dr. Kirk Zeeck, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction*

The event drew community members, educators, and families eager to witness the start of a new era of learning in Sioux Falls. With students already buzzing about their projects and experiments, the SmartLab is poised to inspire curiosity and innovation across grade levels.

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The Sioux Falls School District (SFSFSD) is widely recognized for accomplishments in student achievement and innovative educational strategies. SFSFSD serves a diverse population of more than 24,000 students. The vision of SFSFSD is to embrace the opportunity for all children to learn about the world's cultures from curriculum and through the shared experiences of their classmates. Students in the SFSFSD consistently score above state and national averages on standardized exams with many students recognized as National Merit Scholars and Advanced

Placement Scholars. The District also features gifted education, National Honor Society, state and nationally recognized academic teams, as well as a host of state and nationally recognized co-curricular programs.

[Visit sf.k12.sd.us to learn more.](https://sf.k12.sd.us)

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SmartLab delivers turnkey, career-centered K-12 STEM programs that equip today's students for tomorrow's challenges.□Every hands-on PBL solution integrates grade-appropriate STEM applications across eight industry pathways. SmartLab programs include dedicated classroom setups or flexible systems designed for mobility, along with standards-aligned curriculum, teacher training, and ongoing technical and curricular support. [Visit SmartLablearning.com to learn more.](https://SmartLablearning.com)



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