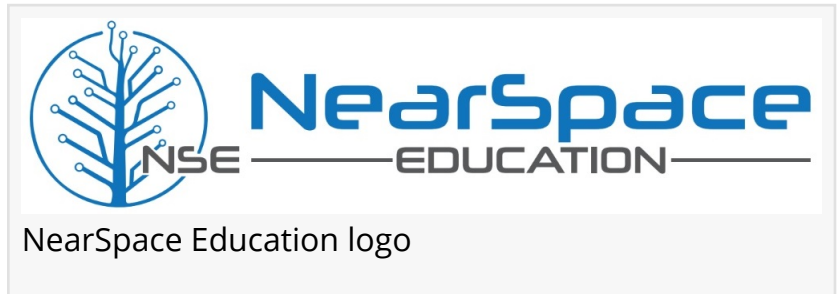


# NearSpace Education Awarded Statewide NASA Grant to Send Student-Programmed Hardware into Orbit

*NearSpace Education (NSE) has been awarded a NASA TEAM II STEM Innovator grant to erase the line between classroom coding and actual spaceflight.*



UPLAND, IN, UNITED STATES, February 4, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ --

[NearSpace Education](#) (NSE), a rural

Indiana nonprofit, has been awarded a NASA TEAM II STEM Innovator grant for a three-year program that erases the line between classroom coding and actual spaceflight. Up to 900 Indiana students and reaching thousands more through outreach programs in grades 5-8 will

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Dream Big exists to help students discover their potential. This launch turns curiosity into confidence, teamwork, and learning into real-world impact.”

*Matthew Voss, President of  
NearSpace Education*

deliver hardware for the BBC micro:bit programmable device, test it on balloon flights to the edge of space, and launch their boards in a [NearSpace Launch](#) satellite to Low Earth Orbit.

The program, officially titled "[Dream Big Phase II: STEPS to Space](#)" (Scalable Testing of Electronics and Programming by Students), aims to remove barriers to STEM education and foster future aerospace innovators and problem solvers. The formula is simple but radical: 30 teams of up to 30 students are given the opportunity to follow the plan

below, based on the lifecycle of a real satellite mission.

-Programming Phase: Students use NASA educational materials and Micro:bit Educational Foundation curriculum to learn coding and design experiments aligned with NASA space missions.

-Testing Phase: Teams test their programmed micro:bit boards on high-altitude balloon flights hosted by regional partner institutions at public outreach events.

-Flight Selection: Students will add their software to one programmed micro:bit from each of the 30 teams. These will be integrated into a NearSpace Launch TROOP 6U CubeSat.

-Launch: The satellite will launch to Low Earth Orbit aboard NearSpace Launch Spacecraft via

SpaceX's Transporter mission.

Operations & Analysis: Students monitor flight data in real-time, analyze results, and present findings through reports, websites, or conferences.

NearSpace Education is collaborating with these Regional State Partners:

- Science Central, Fort Wayne
- STARBASE Indiana - Gary, Gary
- Indiana State Museum, Indianapolis
- Angel Mounds State Historic Site, Evansville
- Terre Haute Children's Museum, Terre Haute

Each of these partners will host high-altitude balloon launches and other public outreach events, bringing the excitement of space exploration directly to their respective communities and sponsors.

#### About NearSpace Education

NearSpace Education is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization based in Upland, Indiana, with the mission to inspire, equip, and impact the next generation of STEM students through innovative educational programs. Founded in 2020, NSE has worked with more than 100 high schools, colleges, and universities, providing hands-on experiences including high-altitude balloon launches, summer space camps, aerospace clubs, and satellite development projects. The organization operates from a 7,000-square-foot maker space in downtown Upland and envisions "every student with access to space."

#### About NASA TEAM II Program

NASA's Teams Engaging Affiliated Museums and Informal Institutions (TEAM II) program is a



Dream Big mission patch



NSL Hosted Payload

competitive award initiative that enables nonprofit museums, planetariums, libraries, and youth-serving organizations to propose NASA mission-inspired STEM projects for K-12 students. The STEM Innovator tier, created in 2024, provides up to \$250,000 for 2-3 year projects that expand regional NASA STEM educational resources. Since 2008, NASA has issued more than 150 TEAM II awards to organizations across 41 states.

### About NearSpace Launch

NearSpace Launch (NSL) is an Upland, Indiana-based satellite manufacturer specializing in affordable and reliable CubeSat systems and subsystems. Founded by Dr. Hank Voss, Chief Scientist, and Jeff Dailey, Chief Engineer, the NSL leadership team brings more than 70 years of combined aerospace experience. NSL focuses on uninterrupted global satellite communications by leveraging existing commercial satellite-to-satellite networks and is best known for its EyeStar radio technology. Over the past decade, NSL has successfully deployed more than 1,000 systems and subsystems to orbit, including over 215 EyeStar radios. The company has collaborated with several government agencies including NASA, as well as more than 100 commercial and academic teams.

### About Micro:bit Educational Foundation

The Micro:bit Educational Foundation is a not-for-profit organization founded in the UK in 2016, with the aim of inspiring every child to create their best digital future.

They do this by:

- developing hardware and software that inspires young people to get excited about technology and the opportunities it presents for them
- creating free, user-friendly educational resources to support teachers in delivering engaging and creative lessons
- working with like-minded partners to deliver high-impact educational programmes across the globe.

Their flagship award-winning device, the BBC micro:bit, is a pocket-sized computer that gives children an accessible, enjoyable way to learn digital creativity and programming skills. 11 million devices have been distributed globally, and it is estimated that 70 million young people from more than 85 countries have benefited from learning with the micro:bit so far.

Alex Reno

NearSpace Education

+1 765-998-8942

[email us here](#)

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