

# STARBASE Students Visit CCSU

**School Stuff** Submitted by Melissa Vanek, STARBASE CT, on 2011-12-05.

The second day of December was graduation day for the 30 students from O'Connell school, who just completed their five day learning experience at STARBASE.

During their visit, the students learned about the fields of science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) in an engaging way - participating in their learning. The students have an opportunity to "become" scientists and engineers at STARBASE, by testing theories in science experiments and designing prototypes to print on a 3D printer. STARBASE CT has been bringing a high-quality STEM program to the fifth grade students of East Hartford schools for four years, though the National DoD STARBASE program has been in existence since 1991.



STARBASE student, Victor Murphy, is amazed that the piece of metal broke during the stress test. This is the same material that his school bus is made out of, the professor from CCSU told him.

Graduation days at STARBASE are always full of excitement; however, this graduation day had an extra buzz in the air. The students were going to visit Central Connecticut State University (CCSU) and see the engineering lab there. They were going to see how people apply the very knowledge they had learned at STARBASE. Dan Ray, a student at CCSU and a volunteer at STARBASE, set up the entire field trip for the fifth grade students.

Dan was able to arrange a number of activities with the college professors to engage the fifth grade students. One activity involved showing the students how to use technology to test the stress point of materials. The students were very excited to learn that the material used to make their school bus has a much higher stress point than the plastic they tested. The students were also able to learn about fluids in the Fluid Dynamic laboratory. While there, the students were able to impress the professor with the knowledge they had already learned at STARBASE - that air is a fluid. Some students had a chance to look through a refracting telescope to see sun spots on the sun and others learned about fossils in sedimentary rocks.

On the way back to the school bus, some of the college student volunteers that Dan had gathered to help with the field trip, were able to answer questions that the fifth grade students had about college. "Do you get to choose your own classes? Is it hard? Do you live with your parents or at school? What are you doing in engineering?" More than one fifth grade student left saying out loud, "I really want to go to college!"

It was a very successful trip and a great collaboration between East Hartford Public Schools, Central Connecticut State University and STARBASE.