

IAF SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Lift Off - Secondary Space Education (2)

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THE YEAR OF EDUCATION ON STATION

Abstract

The fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) help power our economy and advance our society. In a complex, ever-changing world, we need students - our future leaders and explorers - equipped to take on new challenges. To do this, we must ensure students develop the necessary STEM knowledge and skills to work through tough problems and come up with creative and effective solutions. NASA's Office of STEM Engagement used the Year of Education on Station to do just that, all while connecting students and educators to the International Space Station.

During the 2017-2018 school year, former classroom teachers Joe Acaba and Ricky Arnold flew consecutive missions aboard the International Space Station, bringing their classroom experience and passion for education forward as part of the Year of Education on Station. The ultimate objectives for the Year of Education on Station included inspiring students in STEM, helping teachers stimulate the interests of their classes in STEM, and encouraging the pursuit of STEM careers to advance achievements in discovery, invention, and exploration in space.

The Year of Education on Station saw almost 300,000 students and educators across the United States speak directly to astronauts onboard the station, positively affecting the participants, their education organizations, and the surrounding communities. Thousands more participated in the Year of Education on Station through NASA partnerships with companies, learning centers, associations, universities, media organizations, and institutions. New educational demonstrations were filmed aboard the International Space Station and released along with corresponding lesson plans. Ricky Arnold also filmed four of the lessons Teacher in Space astronaut Christa McAuliffe planned to film during her mission aboard Space Shuttle Challenger.

The success of the Year of Education on Station demonstrates the impact educational activities can have on students and educators. Pairing the wonders of spaceflight and the International Space Station to education, NASA's Office of STEM Engagement will continue the development of opportunities and resources for students and educators who play a key role in inspiring and preparing students for their bright futures.