In May 2012 USU's Emma Eccles Jones College of Education and Human Services received a 15.5 million dollar GEAR UP grant from the US Department of Education. The Department of Teacher Education and Leadership has partnered with students in Utah and Nevada, 7 rural school districts, 3 Charter Schools, the Ute Indian Tribe, and several community/business organizations to address the needs of these low-income and at-risk students in small rural communities in Utah. The School Districts involved in the grant are: Tooele, Elko, Uintah, Logan, Davis, South Sanpete, North Sanpete; 3) Charter Schools: American Preparatory Academy, American Preparatory Academy – New Americans, Dual Immersion Academy.

**What does USU STARS! GEAR UP stand for?**

USU STARS! GEAR UP stands for Utah State University Science Technology Arithmetic Reading Students Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs.

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**Who's who at USU STARS! GEAR UP**

Program Director-Eric Packenham
Co-Principal Investigator-Jim Dorward
Program Coordinator-Melia Balls
Business Officer-Meg Boudrero
Staff Assistant-Jenny Christensen
Research Assistant-Krista Gurko
Research Assistant-Gary Bronson

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Meg, Melia and Eric pose with Big Blue
What is the purpose of USU STARS! GEAR UP?

USU STARS! is a federally funded program that was designed to help students prepare for and succeed in college. Seventh grade students from 11 selected middle schools will be followed in this program until they complete their first year of college in 2019. Schools and community partners have teamed up to provide services to students to help them succeed in school now and succeed in college in the future. Parents and educators are also receiving workshops and training to help them better help their students.

Teachers attend UCTM Conference

As part of our ongoing professional development, USU Space Dynamics Lab sponsored one Site Coordinator and two math teachers from our cohort schools to attend the UCTM math teachers conference. The participants were provided with exclusive training on linear equations from Sheryl Rushton. Positive feedback was received from the participants on the value of attending the conference.

NASA Educator visits schools

USU's School of Teacher Education and Leadership brought Tony Leavitt to Utah from the NASA Ames Research Center. Tony presented an assembly at North Davis Jr. High and American Preparatory Academy. He spoke about the 88 space missions currently in progress and how students could pursue a job at NASA. Tony also visited 8th grade classes throughout the day. Several 8th graders had the opportunity to participate in hands-on NASA lab activities.
Students participate in International Science Experiment

Students had the opportunity to participate in the BION-M1 Seed Germination and Plant Growth Program, which kicked off with the international planting day on October 14. The program is testing radish growth using seeds that were aboard the Russian BION M-1 space mission in May of 2013 to see if the radiation that affects space flight also affects seeds. They will be compared with seeds planted at the same time that have remained on Earth. GEAR UP students will join with students in Japan, Russia and Hawaii to compare results on an international level. Students have an opportunity to interact with those from the Russian and Japanese schools as the experiment progresses. The project is sponsored by USU’s Space Dynamics Laboratory. The project will conduct another round of planting mid January.