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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Griffiss Institute Launches STEM Circuit (4)

Expanding Hands-On STEM Access Across Mohawk Valley

**Rome, NY — July 18, 2025** - Griffiss Institute has launched STEM Circuit (4), a bold new summer program delivering immersive, hands-on STEM education to students in the Mohawk Valley. With support from [Empire State Development](#) (ESD), STEM Circuit (4)'s rotating camp model introduces students in grades 3–6 to high-demand STEM skills in their own neighborhoods, free of charge.

The program is operating at Lyndon H. Strough Middle School in Rome, SUNY Polytechnic Institute in Marcy, Albany Elementary School in Utica, and J.D. George Elementary in Verona, and began in early July 2025. Each site hosts a different one-week camp, with students exploring Chemistry, Biology, Aerospace/Drones, and Coding through project-based learning and early career exposure.


“This rotating model is a game-changer,” said Jennifer Marshall, Director of Strategic Program Pursuits and Launches at Griffiss Institute. “It allows us to reach more students in more places, breaking down the transportation and cost barriers that too often hold kids back from STEM exploration.”

Funding is anchored by a lead investment from Empire State Development through its Mohawk Valley Empowers initiative. “Programs like STEM Circuit (4) are at the heart of the Mohawk Valley Empowers initiative,” said ESD President, CEO and Commissioner Hope Knight. “By creating meaningful educational experiences for youth across the region, Griffiss Institute is working to strengthen New York’s workforce pipeline and ensure that all students have an opportunity to explore innovative careers in science and technology.”

The program also benefits from strong school and community partnerships. At Vernon-Verona-Sherrill (VVS) Central School District, Superintendent Martha Group said, “VVS is grateful for the opportunity to partner with the Griffiss Institute on this regional collaboration. The Institute makes meaningful STEM education accessible for our students and their families, engaging our students in expanded learning opportunities that challenge their thinking and allow them the time to apply their new skills and knowledge. We look forward to continuing our participation in this regional collaboration with the Griffiss Institute.”

Dana Benzo, Director of Elementary Programs, Rome City School District added, “The Rome City School District greatly values its partnership with the Griffiss Institute in delivering hands-on, real-

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world STEM experiences to our students, right here in our community. STEM Circuit 4 enables students to deeply explore a specific area of interest while engaging in meaningful collaboration with peers from surrounding districts.”

Also of Rome City School District, Melissa Sisco, Director of Secondary Programs, further explained, “STEM Circuit (4) brings real-world, hands-on STEM learning right to our students’ doorsteps. This kind of access and engagement is exactly what our kids need to imagine bold futures and build the skills to achieve them. The opportunity to engage and collaborate with Griffiss Institute and our surrounding districts has had a powerful impact on our students and community.”

Michelle Hall, Director of Career & Technical Education at Utica City School District said, “Providing our students with access to summer STEM camps allows them to explore real-world applications of science, technology, engineering, and math in a hands-on engaging environment. These experiences spark curiosity, build confidence, and help students see themselves in future careers that are critical to our local and global workforce.”

With a goal to empower up to 400 students this summer, Griffiss Institute will measure participation and progress, tracking how each young learner builds confidence, stays engaged, and starts to envision a future in STEM.

“If we want to build a future-ready workforce, we need to start early, expand access and stay committed to creating pathways for tomorrow’s talent,” added Marshall. “That’s what STEM Circuit (4) was designed for, mobilizing STEM education to bring it to the communities where students live and learn, offering real world experiences that spark their curiosity, inspire continued learning, and show students what’s truly possible.”

### **About Griffiss Institute**

Griffiss Institute is a 501c3 nonprofit organization based in Rome, NY, accelerating national security innovation through its three-pillar mission of Talent, Technology, and Venture Development. As the steward of the Innovare Advancement Center, an open, unclassified research and collaboration campus, Griffiss Institute fosters and drives partnerships across government, industry, and academia to advance dual-use technologies. Griffiss Institute is committed to strengthening national security through nontraditional STEM education, accelerated innovation, and the commercialization of emerging technologies, with a deep belief in American-made solutions by a resilient U.S. science and engineering workforce.

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