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Mike Adkins  
Public Information Officer  
Date: December 19, 2017

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Students' science experiment under NASA Flight Safety Review**

Students at Falcon Early College High School participating in the Student Spaceflight Experiments Program—an opportunity brought by ECISD's Innovation Department and PICK Education—have been selected to have their microgravity experiment conducted on the International Space Station (ISS) as part of SSEP Mission 12 upon confirmation from NASA's Flight Safety Review. Their proposal, "The Efficacy of Ideonella Sakaiensis in a Microgravity Environment" will look at how the bacteria will decompose poly(ethylene terephthalate) in microgravity and compare it to Earth. Poly(ethylene terephthalate) or PET is used in fibers for clothing and containers for liquids and foods.

In 2018, an astronaut aboard the ISS will conduct the experiment, and after a typical 4-to 6-week stay in orbit, the experiment will be returned safely to Earth for harvesting and analysis by the school's student flight team. Students at Falcon ECHS will also have the opportunity to attend the SSEP National Conference in Washington, D.C. hosted by National Center for Earth and Space Science Education (NCESSSE) and the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum in Summer 2018, where they will present on their experimental designs and attend featured presentations by nationally recognized scientists and engineers.

Funding was provided by a grant from the Texas Space Grant Consortium, Chevron and Education Foundation of Odessa.

The Student Spaceflight Experiments Program [or SSEP] is a program of the National Center for Earth and Space Science Education (NCESSSE) in the U.S. and the Arthur C. Clarke Institute for Space Education internationally. It is enabled through a strategic partnership with DreamUp PBC and NanoRacks LLC, which are working with NASA under a Space Act Agreement as part of the utilization of the International Space Station as a National Laboratory.

The SSEP team at Falcon includes the following students: Deidre Morales, 10<sup>th</sup> grade; Devin Arriaga, 10<sup>th</sup> grade; Fabian Carrasco, 10<sup>th</sup> grade; Francis Dapanas, 10<sup>th</sup> grade; Mason Driggers, 10<sup>th</sup> grade; Faith Eleby, 11<sup>th</sup> grade; Damien Galindo, 10<sup>th</sup> grade; Kobe Hernandez, 11<sup>th</sup> grade; Wendy Hernandez, 10<sup>th</sup> grade; Leodegario Lopez, 9<sup>th</sup> grade; Juandedios Mendoza, 10<sup>th</sup> grade; Yazlin Romero, 10<sup>th</sup> grade; Gracielle Velasco, 10<sup>th</sup> grade.

All of these students will be available for interviews at tonight's Board of Trustees meeting at 6:00 p.m. in the Odessa High School Performing Arts Center, 1301 N. Dotsy.

For more information about this press release contact ECISD Innovation Department at 456-9507.