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Public Information Officer
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PICK Education launches space program partnership

Ector County ISD has been selected as 1 of 31 communities in the U.S., Canada and Brazil to be accepted into America's Space Program! Eight ECISD campuses will be participating in the Student Spaceflight Experiments Program (SSEP) Mission 12 to the International Space Station (ISS). This program gives students the ability to design and propose real microgravity experiments to fly in low Earth orbit. In addition, each community will have the opportunity to fly two Mission Patches to the ISS.

In November, a committee of primarily local scientists will select three student spaceflight proposals to be submitted to a national selection committee assembled by National Center for Earth and Space Science Education (NCESS), which will select one flight experiment proposal to be sent to the ISS in 2018. An astronaut aboard 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.

Participating students will also have the opportunity to attend the SSEP National Conference in Washington, D.C. hosted by NCESS and the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum in Summer 2018. Students will be able to present on their experiment designs and attend featured presentations by nationally recognized scientists and engineers.

SSEP is an opportunity brought by ECISD's Innovation Department's program, PICK Education, which serves to bring real-world experiences into the classroom, make learning tangible and promote students' ownership in their education. 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 (NCESS) 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 Student Spaceflight Experiments Program (SSEP) is about inspiring America's and Canada's next generation of scientists and engineers, and engaging entire communities in the process. It is a national program delivered at the local level, with student teams across a community designing and proposing real microgravity experiments to fly in orbit as the core activity. But community-wide engagement, and cross-

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disciplinary learning are also cornerstone objectives in the context of the embraced Learning Community Model for STEM education.” –SSEP Website

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