

ECISD students' science, art rocketing to International Space Station

By [Odessa American](#) - November 18, 2022



Courtesy Photo

Three students from Ector County ISD will become part of the exciting world of spaceflight when their work is launched to the International Space Station next week. Swetha Kesavan, a 2022 graduate of Permian High School, last year designed a science experiment to test the growth of a bacteria in microgravity, and that experiment will be conducted by astronauts on the International Space Station.

The experiment was selected as the winner from ECISD by a national panel of researchers, scientists and educators. Accompanying Ms.

Kesavan's experiment will be two mission patches that were designed by ECISD students, with one elementary and one secondary winner being selected by ECISD staff members. The elementary winner is Celeste Ortega from EK Downing Elementary and the secondary winner is Vivian Hernandez from Crockett Middle School.

The science experiment and mission patches are part of a competition that ECISD is participating in again this year called the Student Spaceflight Experiments Program. The 2022 competition is SSEP Mission 16, and Ector County ISD also participated in Missions 12 and 13 in 2018 and 2019, respectively.

SSEP is real-world science, technology, engineering, and math that provides students with the opportunity to go through the same process as professional researchers go through to have their experiments flown in space. The science experiments will test the differences in the way a biological, chemical, or physical system behaves in microgravity on the ISS versus with gravity on Earth. On the ISS, astronauts will carry out the experiments, and then when the experiment returns to Earth the student will compare the data from the ISS to the control experiment that stayed on Earth. The knowledge gained from these experiments could provide critical information for future space travel, a news release said.

Mission patches have been part of the United States space program since the time of the Apollo missions. Every spaceflight has had its own mission patch, and the ECISD student winners' art will continue that tradition. The original student art will fly with the experiment to the ISS, and will return to Earth certified as "flown in space." This year's mission patches also commemorate ECISD's 100-year celebrations. The mission patches and the experiment will return to Earth approximately seven weeks after launching.

The ECISD experiment and patches will blast off to the ISS on a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Florida on Monday (Nov. 21) if everything goes as planned. Two of the winning students, along with their families, will be visiting Kennedy Space Center this weekend, and one family is planning to attend the launch. The students and their families will get to participate in a variety of educational experiences all about space, space travel, and the history of spaceflight while at the Kennedy Space Center.

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Ector County ISD is excited for our student winners, and congratulates them for their hard work and their



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