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Mike Adkins  
Communications Officer  
Date: July 31, 2019

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **ECISD student set to participate in international science panel**

In May, Ector County ISD held a press conference announcing one of our students, Deidre Morales, was invited to participate in a discussion panel at the International Space Station Research and Development Summit in Atlanta. That panel discussion takes place tomorrow, August 1, and our ECISD Innovation Department will be documenting Deidre's experience. If you would like a recorded video interview or photos, please contact Gabriela Granado at [gabriela.granado@ectorcountyisd.org](mailto:gabriela.granado@ectorcountyisd.org) for the footage. If you would like to monitor it yourself, it appears the conference will be live streaming all of the talks at [https://twitter.com/ISS\\_CASIS](https://twitter.com/ISS_CASIS) and on its home page at <https://www.issconference.org/>.

Deidre, who will be a senior at Odessa Collegiate Academy (formerly named Falcon Early College High School), was selected for this panel by the Center for the Advancement of Science in Space (CASIS) and manager of the International Space Station.

This amazing opportunity came as a result of the work Deidre and her classmates from Falcon ECHS did in developing a science project for the Mission 12 Student Spaceflight Experiments Program (SSEP). The experiment they designed was flown to the International Space Station and conducted aboard the ISS last July. Deidre will be the only SSEP student on this international panel and will represent not only ECISD and Texas, but also three different countries that participated in the SSEP. She will be among a panel of people that have been sending experiments to the ISS since 1973 and the only SSEP student responding to the impact of conducting on an experiment on the ISS. The team at CASIS felt Deidre would be a great choice and thought she was "poised, smart, articulate, and had a research project that is conceptually accessible". CASIS will cover travel costs for her and one chaperone to include flight, lodging and meals.

SSEP at Falcon ECHS (now OCA) was facilitated in AVID by AVID teacher, Elizabeth Gray. The experiment was titled, "The Efficacy of Ideonella Sakaiensis in a Microgravity Environment". The experiment studied how that bacteria decomposed poly(ethylene terephthalate) in microgravity and compared it to Earth. Poly(ethylene terephthalate) or PET is used in fibers for clothing and containers for liquids and foods.

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 student ownership in their education.

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SSEP is designed as a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) education initiative, and gives students the opportunity to become researchers where they are able to design and propose real microgravity experiments to be conducted by an astronaut aboard the International Space Station. SSEP had 38 communities participating in the competition, across three countries; U.S., Canada and Brazil. Funding was provided by a grant from the Texas Space Grant Consortium, Subaru of America, Inc., Chevron and Education Foundation of Odessa.

For more information, contact the ECISD Communications Department at 432-456-9019.

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