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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ECISD student invited to participate in discussion panel at the International Space Station Research and Development summit

Deidre Morales, a junior at Falcon Early College High School, was selected by the Center for the Advancement of Science in Space (CASIS) and manager of the International Space Station to participate in a panel at the International Space Station Research and Development (ISS R&D) summit in Atlanta on August 1. You may recall, Deidre and her team from Falcon ECHS were selected last year as the flight experiment finalist for ECISD via the Mission 12 Student Spaceflight Experiments Program (SSEP). The experiment they designed was flown to the International Space Station and conducted there last summer. 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 onto the ISS since 1973 and the only SSEP student responding to the impact of conducting an experiment on the ISS. There have been only two other SSEP student groups participate in this summit in the past. 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 was facilitated in AVID by AVID teacher, Elizabeth Gray. The Mission 12 student researcher experiment is titled, "The Efficacy of *Ideonella Sakaiensis* in a Microgravity Environment". The experiment will study 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.

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. 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 Innovation Department at 432-456-0999.