

## NEWS RELEASE

### **WSD Elementary School STEM Experiments to be tested in outer space Two teams of sixth-graders will test plant growth on the International Space Station**

**Dec. 15, 2017 (Winnipeg, MB)** – Students from two Winnipeg School Division (WSD) elementary schools are going to have their science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) experiments tested in outer space in 2018 on the International Space Station. The projects, developed by students at Grosvenor School and Wolseley School, are part of the Student Spaceflight Experiments Program (SSEP).

The Grosvenor School project is called **Growth of *Lacinato* in Microgravity** and the Wolseley School project is called **Can Yarrow Germinate in Microgravity?**

“This program was an opportunity for WSD teachers and students to embark on a unique and authentic inquiry project in the Sciences,” says WSD Science Consultant Kristin Melnyk. “It incorporates 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills that emphasizes critical thinking and problem solving in a collaborative group setting.” The students’ addressed big picture ideas focussing on the health and well-being of astronauts on long space journeys. The two project finalists address questions related to sustainable growth of food and medicinal sources from plants.

“The extraordinary work submitted by our students has resulted in the Clarke Institute offering the WSD an additional flight opportunity aboard this mission.”

During the mission, the student teams will each conduct two identical experiments – one in a test tube on the International Space Station and another in their classroom – to see how gravity effects the germination of a yarrow seed and a kale seed to determine whether the difference in gravity between outer space and Earth affects the direction of root and leaf growth in the plants. The students say the results of their experiment could help answer the question of whether life could be maintained in a place other than Earth.

The student members from the Wolseley STEM team are sixth-graders Kiara Dayson, Madeline Stewart, Betty Ngo, Sariah Dayson, Emelia Stephenson, led by Suzanne Mole and from the Grosvenor STEM team are sixth-graders Charlie Buehler, Keaton Fish, Quinn McMullan, Kale Peterson, Merrick Williamson, led by Brandy Anderson.

The Wolseley and Grosvenor experiments were selected from 87 proposals submitted by students from 64 WSD elementary schools. A local committee of 13 community members, professors, science professionals and Winnipeg School Division educators selected the top three experiments. A national review board convened by the National Center for Earth and Space Science Education, which administers the program, selected the Wolseley and Grosvenor School experiments for spaceflight.

Magellan Aerospace is a Canadian National Partner on SSEP, and provided significant local funding support to the WSD STEM program.

SSEP is a program of the National Center for Earth and Space Science Education (NCESSE) 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.

WSD was established in 1871 and currently has 78 schools, 33,000 students and 6,000 employees. Its purpose is to provide a learning environment that fosters the growth of each student’s potential and provide equitable opportunity to develop the knowledge, skills and values necessary for meaningful participation in a global and diverse society.

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