



Media Contact:

Dandy Stevens

503-792-3803

dandy_stevens@gervais.k12.or.us

Gervais School District Raising Funds to Join National Program that Launches Student Experiments into Space

GERVAIS, OREGON - August 4, 2022 – With support from the greater community, the Gervais School District plans to launch a new program that could see some of its students' work on the International Space Station (ISS). The district has been selected to participate in the Student Spaceflight Experiments Program's (SSEP) Flight Experiment Design Competition, with a chance to fly on Mission 17 to the ISS in the spring of 2023.

Through this program from the National Center for Earth and Space Science Education (NCESSE), Gervais students in grades 8-10, as well as advanced science students in 11th and 12th grades, will have the opportunity to design and propose real microgravity experiments that could fly into low Earth orbit. Design experiments can focus on fields such as seed germination, food studies, bacteria, and cell biology. Of the many experiments and proposals Gervais students will put together, one will be selected to join others from around the world to be ferried to the ISS, where astronauts will conduct the experiments as directed by the student teams.

“The Gervais School District has had a strong focus on STEAM — science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics — and this program not only aligns with our curriculum goals, but also with our district’s vision,” said Superintendent Dandy Stevens. “This project will not only foster a greater appreciation and understanding of science, but it will also challenge and empower students to examine more deeply their abilities and impact on the global community.”

In addition to the Flight Experiment Design Competition, there will be a district-wide art competition for the Mission Patch, a paper 4-by-4 square emblem designed by students that will accompany the winning experiment representing Gervais in space.

“It’s exciting that Gervais School District students have a desire for a challenging and formative STEM experience and that SSEP is seen as an opportunity to demonstrate that the next generation of scientists and engineers can come from Gervais as equally as they can come from anywhere else,” said Dr. Jeff Goldstein, director of the NCESSE. “While we aim to embrace student ownership in learning, just as important is to use the excitement of real science to engage entire communities.”

The district is seeking donations from the public to reach its goal of \$27,000 that would make the program possible. Costs are associated with materials, participation fees, and professional development. To learn more, visit the district website at www.gervais.k12.or.us.

About Student Spaceflight Experiments Program

The Student Spaceflight Experiments Program (or SSEP) is a program of the National Center for Earth and Space Science Education (NCESSSE) in the U.S. and the Arthur C. Clarke Institute for Space Education internationally. It is enabled through a strategic partnership with NanoRacks LLC, which is working with NASA under a Space Act Agreement as part of the utilization of the International Space Station as a National Laboratory.

About Gervais School District

In 1834 the first school in Oregon was opened on Joseph Gervais' farm, and the town bearing his name established the Gervais School District in 1871. More than 150 years later, the district educates nearly 1,300 students from pre-K to 12th grade and has a vision of graduating resilient, responsible students whose learning extends to the global community beyond Gervais.

###