

2013 SESSION

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HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 829

Commending Russell County Public Schools.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 8, 2013
Agreed to by the Senate, February 14, 2013

WHEREAS, the National Center for Earth and Space Science Education, in strategic partnership with NanoRacks, LLC, launched the Student Spaceflight Experiments Program (SSEP) in June 2010, as a United States National Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education program meant to inspire America's next generation of scientists and engineers; and

WHEREAS, the SSEP provides a participating school district with their own space program, by providing a flight-certified, microgravity research mini-laboratory and all launch services to transport a single experiment contained in the mini-lab to low earth orbit, first on the final two flights of the United States Space Shuttle Program, and then to the International Space Station (ISS)—America's newest National Laboratory; and

WHEREAS, Russell County Public Schools, through significant planning, applied for and was accepted in SSEP Mission 2 to the International Space Station—just one of 12 communities across the United States with this distinct honor, and the first community in this great Commonwealth to participate; and

WHEREAS, Russell County engaged 81 students in grades five through 12 in every facet of microgravity experiment design and proposal writing in Winter/Spring 2012, and secured 25 flight experiment proposals from student research teams; and

WHEREAS, 531 Russell County students took part in a mission patch design competition that resulted in 531 submitted patches, and two of these were selected to accompany Russell County's flight experiment to orbit; and

WHEREAS, Russell County forwarded the following three finalist flight experiment proposals to the SSEP National Step 2 Review Board meeting held at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum on May 22-24, 2012:

The Rate of Oxidation in a Microgravity Environment

Grades 10 - 11, Lebanon High School

Co-Principal Investigators: Diana Odhiambo, Donna Odhiambo, Jacob Akers, and McKenna Collins

Teacher Facilitator: Jane H. Carter, Chemistry Teacher;

The Effects of Zero-Gravity on Stain Remover

Grade 8, Lebanon High School

Principal Investigator: Xena Breeding

Co-Investigators: Christian Amos, Matthew Looney, and Matthew Mowrey

Teacher Facilitator: Jani Purtee, Teacher;

Sea Monkey See, Sea Monkey Do!

Grade 7, Castlewood Elementary

Principal Investigator: Allison Skeens

Co-Investigator: Haley Duty

Collaborators: Grayson Wright and Lexi Monk

Teacher Facilitator: Mitzi Johnson, STEM Teacher; and

WHEREAS, the SSEP Step 2 Review Board chose The Rate of Oxidation in a Microgravity Environment as the Russell County flight experiment, which then underwent and passed formal flight safety review at NASA Johnson Space Center's office of toxicology; and

WHEREAS, Russell County's flight experiment was integrated into the Mission 2 to ISS Antares Payload, and was launched to the International Space Station at 8:35 p.m. ET, October 7, 2012, aboard the historic flight of SpaceX-1, the flight of the Dragon; and

WHEREAS, Russell County's flight experiment was conducted by Station Commander Sunita Williams, and was returned to earth and to the student flight experiment team by way of the Soyuz (TMA-05M) 31S vehicle, which de-orbited from the International Space Station on November 19, 2012; and

WHEREAS, microgravity researchers and future doctors, Odhiambo, Odhiambo, Akers, and Collins, are now in the process of analyzing their experiment, and will report results at the Smithsonian National

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Air and Space Museum in July 2013 as participants in the 3rd Annual SSEP National Conference; and

WHEREAS, Russell County Public Schools' involvement in Mission 4, under the unwavering leadership of SSEP Community Program Co-Directors Jane Carter and Scotty Fletcher, and the capable oversight of student engagement provided by the school district's SSEP local team of teachers and administrators, have truly shown Virginia's next generation of scientists and engineers a pathway to the stars; and

WHEREAS, the Russell County greater community of businesses, organizations, and parents made this extraordinary, real world—in fact out of this world—adventure in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) education possible; and

WHEREAS, other communities across this great Commonwealth also have the opportunity to take part in future missions of the Student Spaceflight Experiments Program, for this continuing adventure beyond the confines of our world powerfully demonstrates how humans push the frontiers of understanding and inspire the explorer in children; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Russell County Public Schools on its successful science experiment placed aboard the International Space Station; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the House of Delegates prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to the Russell County Public Schools, and to all involved businesses, as an expression of the General Assembly's immense pride in what this community has accomplished.