



SD69 QUALICUM

NEWS RELEASE

Science Students to Present with Comics at #BCTECHSummit

(PARKSVILLE, B.C., Canada – March 4, 2019) Two local groups heading to western Canada's largest annual innovation event, the #BCTechSummit, have partnered for maximum impact. Exhibitor, Pixton Comics, is collaborating with conference keynote speakers #SproutsInSpace École Ballenas Secondary students to help them tell their story.

This summer five students are sending an experiment to the International Space Station. Their project, referred to as #SproutsInSpace has a formal title: Investigating the Growth Patterns of Alfalfa (*Medicago sativa*) Sprouts in Microgravity: A Potential Nourishment for Future Manned Spaceflight. The experiment was developed when School District 69 was invited to participate in the Student Spaceflight Experiments Program (SSEP), an initiative based in the United States. SSEP provided the opportunity, and \$18,000, donated by the Karen and Fred Green Fund (held at Vancouver Foundation) and Magellan Aerospace, allowed it to happen.

“Being invited to provide a seven-minute keynote at #BCTechSummit is a huge deal,” shared Clive Goodinson, CEO and Founder, Pixton Comics. “We want the students to succeed and loved the idea of creating customized comic and character graphics to strengthen their visual presentation. Our tools give anyone the ability to create comics, and this is a great example of how they can be applied.”

Based in Qualicum Beach, Pixton is a web-based comic making tool with applications for education, business, and entertainment. Pixton is used in schools around the world as a writing tool; it engages students in any topic, from literature to math. In Ontario, the Ministry of Education has licensed Pixton for use at schools across the province, and Pixton has just released EDU (<https://edu.pixton.com>), a tool specifically designed for use in the classroom.

Innovation Island, the regional voice for technology entrepreneurship connected Pixton to the school district.

“Our organization is here to support entrepreneurs and get them started, so they can grow technology companies,” explained Graham Truax, Interim Executive Director and Executive in Residence, Innovation Island. “We provide them with programs and resources they need to succeed, and we have been a mentor and advisor to Pixton Comics. Connecting them with the students is an extraordinary collaboration that demonstrates to young people that they can grow ideas and businesses here at home.”

“Pixton’s involvement with our students is a valuable community partnership that supports learning,” enthused Gillian Wilson, Assistant Superintendent, School District 69. “We know the public wants us to connect with the community and build relationships to expand the world vision of students and this certainly does. The partnership with Pixton and our students’ involvement with the #BCTechSummit is our vision in action: preparing today’s learners for tomorrow’s world.”

#SproutsInSpace students will present on day two of the BCTECHSummit.



SD69 QUALICUM

NEWS RELEASE

Page 2 of 2

This summer they hope to watch the launch of their experiment at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. Later, during a conference at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC, they intend to share their experiment findings with SSEP student scientists and the general public. The group hopes to raise \$17,000 for the two trips to the United States. To support the students, please make a tax-deductible donation online at Canada Helps <https://bit.ly/2Nlvady>.

ABOUT THE STUDENT SPACEFLIGHT EXPERIMENTS PROGRAM

The Student Spaceflight Experiments Program (SSEP) is an initiative of the National Center for Earth and Space Science Education (NCESSE), located in the United States, and the Arthur C. Clarke Institute for Space Education, which works internationally. It is enabled through a strategic partnership with DreamUp, PBC and NanoRacks, LLC, which are working with National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) under a Space Act Agreement as part of the utilization of the International Space Station as a National Laboratory.

ABOUT #BCTECHSumit (March 11-13, 2019)

Are you ready to navigate the new age of innovation? The world is changing at an unprecedented rate, with new realities introduced every day. How will we use emerging technologies - from AI to Robotics, Quantum to Clean-tech, Blockchain to AR/VR – to solve the biggest challenges facing BC and the world today? Explore the possibilities. Prepare for the future.

To view the comic version of this news release at: <https://share.pixton.com/PzdQoPB>

CONTACTS:

Carl Savage
Science Teacher and
SSEP Coordinator
School District 69
T. 250-240-9425
E. csavage@sd69.bc.ca

Clive Goodinson
CEO and
Founder
Pixton Comics
T. 250-607-7250
E. clive@pixton.com

Graham Truax
Interim Executive Director and
Executive in Residence
Innovation Island
T. 250.753.8324
E.graham@innovationisland.ca

###