



## ***MEDIA ALERT***

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### **Outbreak at Booker Middle School Deemed Safe** ***Education Foundation implements a schoolwide, immersive program to teach career readiness through real-world scenarios.***

Sarasota, FL (March 19, 2018) – An outbreak discovered within the simulated city at Booker Middle School has been deemed safe. Scientists from the University of South Florida arrived on the scene at daybreak to evaluate suspicious mold found on one of the buildings and determined the bacteria is a strain of probiotic. Dr. Mitch Ruzek, the lead contamination response scientist, explained to staff and students that probiotics are a form of “healthy” bacteria often added into yogurts and medications to assist with digestive health.

**WHAT:** “Outbreak” Hits Simulated City at Booker Middle School

As part of a schoolwide grant to explore careers, the Education Foundation worked with teachers and administrators of Booker Middle School to build a simulated city. Students arrived at school Monday, March 19, to discover an unknown substance has caused an outbreak in their city. The outbreak was immediately contained and determined to be a strain of probiotic. The source of the contamination is unknown, but scientists on the scene speculate that during construction, snacking at the build site may have led to a spill.

Now, students will utilize what they have learned to protect their citizens.

**WHEN:** ***Additional photo and interview opportunities:***

**Wednesday, March 21 and Thursday March 22**

8am to 11am every 15 minutes

Mini-science lessons will take place at the “contamination site.”

**Thursday, March 22**

5:30pm to 7pm

A Parent University will include a viewing of the city and hear about the careers explored during the simulated city build and outbreak.

**WHERE:** Booker Middle School  
2250 Myrtle St, Sarasota, FL 34234

**WHO:** Education Foundation of Sarasota County with funding provided by United Way Suncoast

(MORE)

Booker Middle School (BMS) is the recipient of a schoolwide immersion grant from the Education Foundation of Sarasota County with funding provided by United Way Suncoast. Created in coordination with professors from the University of South Florida, BMS students (grades 6-8) and teachers have built a simulated city to expose students to a wide variety of career options through immersive, hands-on learning experiences.

Simple scale representations of each constructed building are on display in the Booker Middle School amphitheater, creating a visual representation of an entire city. Building on display include:

- City Government Buildings
- Fire Station
- Planetarium
- Hospital
- News Station
- Homes
- Art Museum
- Airport

Each classroom or content area will have the opportunity to explore careers and meet community professionals related to their specific building. For a classroom building a hospital, the Education Foundation will organize career chats with local physicians, nurses, specialists and even architects to discuss the planning, design and human resources necessary to construct and run a functional medical facility. Educational materials and digital content will allow students to further explore careers they find interesting.

#### **About the Education Foundation**

The Education Foundation of Sarasota County is an independent partner working to advance philanthropic support for Sarasota County Schools. Its mission is to enhance the potential of students, promote excellence in teaching and inspire innovation in education. Guided by the belief that education changes lives, the Education Foundation strives to match each donor's passion with high-impact projects created to ensure students graduate with purpose and are prepared for a post-secondary pathway. The Education Foundation of Sarasota County and its philanthropic investors are champions for students, teachers, and schools. For more information on how to be a champion for education, visit [EdFoundationSRQ.org](http://EdFoundationSRQ.org).

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