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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Meteor landing makes a “great impact” at Ashton Elementary School *Education Foundation simulates meteor landing for immersive learning project*

Sarasota, Fla. (Feb. 6, 2019) –Ashton Elementary School students and teachers returned from a three-day weekend on Tuesday, Jan. 22, to discover a meteor had skidded across the lawn and landed on campus.

The Education Foundation of Sarasota County funded the “Great Impact” Meteor Landing, a weeklong schoolwide immersive grant designed to bring earth space science and geology to life for students.

University of South Florida (USF) professors responded as NASA scientists by quarantining the meteor with caution tape and processing the site by collecting scientific data and utilizing sterilizing techniques and outward observation procedures.

This science-based inquiry project allows for unique cross-curricular or interdisciplinary opportunities for all students. Elementary classes took part in the discovery throughout the week, interacting with scientists, asking questions and recording their own findings.

Some of the ways in which teachers incorporated the simulated meteor landing into their curriculum include:

- Eight multi-age groups of 22 students each rotated through eight different classrooms with different STEM activities. Students created unique bracelets that represent relative distances of the planets, acted out the Sun and orbits of each planet in our solar system, painted positivity-message rock-planets to hide all over campus to promote wellness, and engineered and launched their own straw rockets.
- Groups of first- through fifth-grade students collaborated to create tinfoil constellations and books, craft Popsicle stick meteor catapults and moon sand, design a successful Mars Rover mission, and make CD hover-discs out of balloons..
- Science and drama classes ran stations “in the field” all week. Students at all grade levels tested samples of the rock to determine weight, size, streak, transparency, magnetism, floating, texture, luster, hardness and color.
- An ESE (exceptional student education) teacher used the meteor for the foundation of a lesson on safety.

Professional development was provided to assist faculty and administrators with guiding students' curiosity toward testable questions, quantifiable inquiries, plausible hypotheses, observations, and inferences, helping the students develop accurate scientific habits of mind.

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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.

PHOTO CAPTIONS:

1. Ashton Elementary School students gather around the meteor landing site.
2. Students record their observations while visiting the landing site.
3. USF professor Dr. Dana Zeidler helps students as they take measurements of the meteorite.