

News Release: PGCPs Students Participate in Conversation with Astronaut Aboard the International Space Station

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For Immediate Release

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UPPER MARLBORO, MD –A partnership between Oxon Hill High School, the Tuskegee Airmen Youth Aviation Program, and the Amateur Radio on the International Space Station (ARISS) helped create a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for students enrolled in Oxon Hill's STEM and JROTC programs.

On Friday, April 24, students participated in a Q&A with Samantha Cristoforetti, an astronaut currently aboard the International Space Station (ISS). Cristoforetti, the first female Italian astronaut and a career fighter pilot and engineer, answered questions about careers in space, technology, and communications, and shared her experiences as an astronaut.

Students also heard remarks from William T. Fauntroy, Jr., a documented original Tuskegee airman and Frank Bauer, chairman of ARISS.

"We're here to speak to students who are excited about STEM fields, and we want to explain the careers students can pursue in STEM," Bauer said. "This is a good opportunity for students to get involved."

"I hope it will spur more interest in every aspect from [the students] to science and technology," added Lt. Col. Marc Branche, department chair, Oxon Hill's JROTC program and organizer of the event.

The program was live-streamed for students across the school district to observe Oxon Hill's the contact with the ISS. To view the event, click [here \(https://drive.google.com/a/pgcps.org/file/d/0BxSGFDMtdkARYII0RkptMkItSTg/view\)](https://drive.google.com/a/pgcps.org/file/d/0BxSGFDMtdkARYII0RkptMkItSTg/view).

Oxon Hill's STEM program is a structured and highly competitive four-year academic program. Enrolled students participate in a rigorous curriculum of mathematics, pre-engineering technology, research, and science courses. There are four areas of concentration, Pre-engineering Technology, Biological Science, Physical Science, and Science and Technology Exploration. The program represents the top five percent of students from PGCPs.

The AFJROTC (MD-11) program at Oxon Hill was designated one of the first 20 Air Force Junior ROTC units established in 1966.

It is one of the premier units nationwide and the only unit in the state that offers an Aviation Ground School as a class to JROTC cadets. MD-11 participates in the Youth in Aviation Program that exposes cadets to different aviation career fields and offers flight and ground school to cadets at no cost.

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Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS), one of the nation's 20th largest school districts, has 201 schools and centers, more than 133,000 students and nearly 20,000 employees. The school system serves a diverse student population from urban, suburban and rural communities located in the Washington, DC suburbs. PGCPS is nationally recognized for college and career-readiness programs that provide students with unique learning opportunities, including dual enrollment and language immersion.

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