

The Virgin Islands Consortium

St. Croix Students Witness Historic Rocket Launch in Florida

St. Croix Central High School students participate in a thrilling educational trip, including a live rocket launch, enhancing their STEM learning

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A group of ambitious students from St. Croix Central High School, along with their Spanish teacher and advisor Dr. Annette Garcia, experienced a trip of a lifetime to Orlando, Florida, culminating in the live viewing of a historic rocket launch.

The field trip, organized for the AP Spanish Language and Culture & Spanish National Honor Society (SNHS) students, took place from April 7 to April 9, 2024.

The students, accompanied by SNHS honorary member Martha Acosta as chaperone, had the unique opportunity to witness the final flight of the Delta 4 Heavy Rocket from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station. This powerful three-core rocket, fueled by liquid hydrogen, was carrying a top-secret payload for the U.S. National Reconnaissance Office. The students, who had never before seen a rocket launch live, described the trip as exciting.

The educational journey extended beyond the excitement of the rocket launch. The students visited the Kennedy Space Center, where they came face-to-face with the Space Shuttle Atlantis and learned about the history of NASA's space exploration efforts. They toured the Apollo/Saturn V Center, home to the 363-foot-long Saturn V rocket, and explored various NASA operational areas, shows, and exhibits arranged in chronological Mission Zones—from Mercury and Gemini to Apollo, Shuttle, and beyond.

Their learning experience was broadened with visits to several other attractions in Orlando. At the Sea Life aquarium, the group studied diverse marine life and their habitats, focusing on oceans and rainforests. They also visited Madame Tussauds, where they engaged with lifelike figures of celebrities, influential world leaders, and historical figures.

Epcot Center offered an immersive experience in multilingual communities and diverse cultures, while their trip to St. Augustine provided a historical perspective as they explored the oldest city in the United States. At Universal Studios, the students learned how principles of science and technology are applied in designing theme park attractions, enhancing their understanding of engineering and mathematics. They also engaged in cognitive development and critical thinking activities at Ripley's Mirror Maze Museum.

These diverse experiences are designed not only to enrich the students' understanding but also to enhance their performance on standardized Advanced Placement (AP) Tests and prepare them for future careers in the science and technology sectors.