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Tekna-Theos students meet governor

By Kelly J. Stigliano, Correspondent

ORANGE PARK-Teacher Kevin Simmons, founder and President of Tekna-Theos Inc, a student-led corporation furthering the education and investigation of science and space, took 13 current students, and one former student who is now the vice-president of Tekna-Theos Inc, to Tallahassee last week.

They were there to meet with elected officials, including Gov. Jeb Bush and Lt. Gov. Tom Jennings.

State Rep. Jennifer Carroll's legislative assistant, Michelle Grant, planned the day, beginning with a charter bus picking the group up at Orange Park Christian Academy. The students went to the Florida Legislature, sat in the gallery and Carroll introduced them from the floor.

The students had been scheduled to meet with the governor for 10 minutes. When they arrived at his office, both

Bush and Jennings met with the students for 35 minutes. It was a lively interaction as the studies and advances of Tekna-Theos intrigued and impressed both Bush and Jennings.

The governor suggested an unplanned stop in Representative Leslie Waters' office. She graciously opened her office to the students, listening to Simmons' explain his STAIRS program, (Student Teacher Aerospace Education in Rural Schools) which would instruct teachers how to bring aeronautics and biomedical technology into high school science and math classrooms.

Back on schedule, the students met with state Sen. Stephen Wise. He invited them to sit in on an open Education Committee meeting where he introduced them as some of Florida's "best and brightest" students.

State Rep. Bob Allen was the last appointment before returning home. Be-



CORRESPONDENT PHOTOS BY KELLY J. STIGLIANO

Tekna-Theos Inc. students met with the governor and lieutenant governor. Shown are, from left, Megan Snay, Deborah Eccles, Mr. Kevin Simmons, Christine Enmon, Ele Simmons, Robin Draughon, Joseph Spradling, Lt. Governor Tom Jennings, Governor Jeb Bush, Joel Spencer, Micky Calderon, Kelsi Yeckel, E.J. Szegegy, Harry Vaswani, Anthony Free, Alex Benn, David Hogg, Eugene Williams and state Rep. Jennifer Carroll.

cause he sits on the Spaceport & Technology Committee, he was very interested in what Tekna-Theos Inc. is doing. A long day, Simmons felt it was productive in that he and the students were able to personally request the funding

of further space-related budget items. While the students didn't enjoy things tourists enjoy, they experienced events, saw people and learned a little more about politics and that's education at its finest.