

**U.S. Department of Education**  
**2020 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program**

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[X] Public or [ ] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [X] Title I [ ] Charter [X] Magnet [ ] Choice

Name of Principal Ms Lorena Hernandez  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Henry W Longfellow Career Exploration Academy  
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address 5314 Boaz Street  
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Dallas State TX Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 75209-4202

County Dallas County

Telephone (972) 749-5400 Fax (972) 749-5401

Web site/URL https://www.dallasisd.org/longfellow E-mail lgaray-hernandez@dallasisd.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal's Signature)

Name of Superintendent\* Mr. Michael Hinojosa E-mail hinojosam@dallasisd.org  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Dallas Isd Tel. (972) 925-3700

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Superintendent's Signature)

Name of School Board  
President/Chairperson Mr. Justin Henry  
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature)

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

*\*Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, write N/A in the space.*

## **PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION**

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The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school’s eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state’s performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2020 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration includes one or more of grades K-12. Schools on the same campus with one principal, even a K-12 school, must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2014 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for the past three years.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, or 2019.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school’s application and/or rescind a school’s award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as “persistently dangerous” within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution’s equal protection clause.
11. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

## PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

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Data should be provided for the most recent school year (2019-2020) unless otherwise stated.

**DISTRICT** (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools)

- Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
  - 138 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
  - 34 Middle/Junior high schools
  - 39 High schools
  - 15 K-12 schools

226 TOTAL

**SCHOOL** (To be completed by all schools)

- Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- Urban (city or town)
- Suburban
- Rural

- Number of students as of October 1, 2019 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school:

| Grade                 | # of Males | # of Females | Grade Total |
|-----------------------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| PreK                  | 0          | 0            | 0           |
| K                     | 0          | 0            | 0           |
| 1                     | 0          | 0            | 0           |
| 2                     | 0          | 0            | 0           |
| 3                     | 0          | 0            | 0           |
| 4                     | 0          | 0            | 0           |
| 5                     | 0          | 0            | 0           |
| 6                     | 70         | 83           | 153         |
| 7                     | 81         | 65           | 146         |
| 8                     | 69         | 63           | 132         |
| 9                     | 0          | 0            | 0           |
| 10                    | 0          | 0            | 0           |
| 11                    | 0          | 0            | 0           |
| 12 or higher          | 0          | 0            | 0           |
| <b>Total Students</b> | 220        | 211          | 431         |

\*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
  - 1.2 % Asian
  - 3.9 % Black or African American
  - 87.7 % Hispanic or Latino
  - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
  - 5.6 % White
  - 1.6 % Two or more races
  - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2018 - 2019 school year: 1%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

| <b>Steps For Determining Mobility Rate</b>   | <b>Answer</b> |
|--|---------------|
| (1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year   | 1             |
| (2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2018 until the end of the 2018-2019 school year | 5             |
| (3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]  | 6             |
| (4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2018   | 424           |
| (5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)   | 0.01          |
| (6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100  | 1             |

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

Spanish, Burmese, Swahili

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 40 %  
172 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 78 %

Total number students who qualify: 336

8. Students receiving special education services: 2 %  
7 Total number of students served

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

- |                                  |  |
|----------------------------------|--|
| <u>4</u> Autism                  | <u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities                 |
| <u>0</u> Deafness                | <u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment                 |
| <u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness          | <u>0</u> Other Health Impaired                 |
| <u>0</u> Developmental Delay     | <u>0</u> Specific Learning Disability          |
| <u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance   | <u>2</u> Speech or Language Impairment         |
| <u>1</u> Hearing Impairment      | <u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury                |
| <u>0</u> Intellectual Disability | <u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness |

9. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 5

10. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below:

|  | <b>Number of Staff</b> |
|--|------------------------|
| Administrators   | 2                      |
| Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.  | 13                     |
| Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.  | 12                     |
| Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.   | 1                      |
| Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc. | 3                      |

11. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 23:1

12. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

| <b>Required Information</b> | 2018-2019 | 2017-2018 | 2016-2017 | 2015-2016 | 2014-2015 |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Daily student attendance    | 98%       | 98%       | 98%       | 98%       | 98%       |
| High school graduation rate | 0%        | 0%        | 0%        | 0%        | 0%        |

13. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2019.

| <b>Post-Secondary Status</b>                  |    |
|---|----|
| Graduating class size                         | 0  |
| Enrolled in a 4-year college or university    | 0% |
| Enrolled in a community college               | 0% |
| Enrolled in career/technical training program | 0% |
| Found employment                              | 0% |
| Joined the military or other public service   | 0% |
| Other   | 0% |

14. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes  No

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award. 2014

15. In a couple of sentences, provide the school’s mission or vision statement.

To empower learners to excel through a challenging academic and collaborative environment that includes specialized courses, leadership development, enhancement of critical thinking skills, and career exploration.

16. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

Henry W. Longfellow is a magnet school that requires students to apply and go through a selection process that includes a written essay and an on-site interview and academic performance. All students are scored using established rubrics and selections are made based on students' final score. Every sector of the city is represented in our student population. The number of students selected is based on the number of slots available for each grade level.

## **PART III - SUMMARY**

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Henry W. Longfellow Career Exploration Academy (Longfellow) is a 6th-8th grade campus established to provide a rigorous academic environment that encourages the exploration of various career pathways. Henry W. Longfellow is located in Dallas, a modern metropolis city in North Texas. The school district serves approximately 155,030 diverse learners. The majority of students in the district, 86.2%, are classified as economically disadvantaged, and over half, 62.9%, are considered at-risk for school failure. Students enrolled in the Dallas Independent School District (DISD) have the unique option of selecting an educational path to suit their interests by applying to the many available magnet schools and choice schools.

As a DISD magnet school, Henry W. Longfellow Career Exploration Academy was founded to provide advanced academics and expose students from all over the district to various career pathways. To enter the school, students must apply by first meeting entry criteria, which includes a minimum state math and reading assessment score and a minimum grade point average. Once the first criteria is met, students are required to complete a written essay and a face to face interview. Immediately after being accepted and enrolled in the school, students begin a three-year journey of discovery and exploration through the many college and career courses offered to all students.

Over the past five years since the previous National Blue Ribbon designation, Longfellow has maintained a high level of excellence by continuously being ranked in the top 1% of all Texas schools. The National Blue Ribbon designation has afforded us a level of autonomy to offer innovative courses. Students enrolled at Longfellow now take more accelerated and advanced academic courses. All of the students receive all pre-advanced placement courses in reading, math, science, and social studies, including high school credit Algebra I, Physics, and Astronomy. Students now enroll in all career courses for high school credit. There is a new robust selection of career exploration courses that give students an introduction to various career paths that include careers in Business Finance and Marketing, Engineering, Architecture, Audio/Video Technology and Communications, Law, Medicine, and Information Technology. As a result of high expectations, the campus has received all seven academic distinctions and rated a grade of an A by the Texas Education Agency.

Longfellow provides personalized support to ensure that students meet not only their academic goals but also their social and emotional goals. Educators firmly believe that it is their responsibility to prepare each one of the students to become contributing members of society while exposing them to a variety of academic and extracurricular experiences. Educators work collaboratively during their advisory classes to set both academic and social-emotional goals with the students that they serve. This daily advisory time allows educators and students to meet, discuss, and problem solve real challenges they may be facing. Each year students in the student ambassador program, contribute to the school's decision-making process. Longfellow students sit in on every school committee and provide ideas and offer solutions. Year after year, Longfellow students compete at the regional, state, and global levels in Chess, Robotics, Math, Science, and Destination Imagination. A variety of student clubs offered annually replace competitive athletics due to the school's magnet status. Teachers sponsor over twenty different student clubs that span from Cooking, Debate, Chess, Robotics, Camping, and even Esports. The school culture offers a balance of both academic and extracurricular experiences that contribute to memorable experiences that build a strong foundation for their transition into high school and beyond.

The school's motto is "One Team, One Goal, to ensure Everyone Wins!" The key to Henry W. Longfellow's success is the prevailing team culture that values, supports, and celebrates the contributions of each amazing member of the campus. At Longfellow, everyone has distinct talents, and those unique abilities are appreciated and fostered for the benefit of all. Longfellow educators meet in teams to collaboratively build rigorous and engaging lessons. Students meet with educators to provide a voice and choice into the activities and programs that support their academic and social-emotional experiences on campus. The community and the parents come together monthly through Coffee with the Principal and Site-Based Decision Making to contribute ideas that support a true partnership approach for all stakeholders. There is a culture of celebration that permeates the campus. Students receive recognition for displaying the pillars of character that include respect and responsibility. Students celebrate their peers' positive contributions

monthly during their advisory time. Teachers give shout outs to their peers, and a Longhorn Spirit recipient is highlighted during each staff meeting to celebrate positive contributions to the success of the school. All members of the campus, whether it be staff, students, or parents, are encouraged to think creatively, share ideas and opinions, and engage in the decision-making process. This leadership approach has contributed to the overall success of the school community.

## **PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION**

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### **1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.**

**1a.** Overall approach, which may include overarching philosophy or approaches common across subject areas

The Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) for each grade level and content guide all of the decisions regarding the curriculum. The decision to focus on the TEKS is grounded in the belief that no program or resource can ensure the level of academic success that is expected by the state standards. Longfellow teachers are intentional in studying and analyzing the standards for alignment and level of complexity. They begin by mapping their instructional calendars and taking a backward design approach. Once specific TEKS have been identified to be taught, teachers develop assessments that align with the level of rigor necessary for students to master the skills. Teachers plan engaging lessons aligned to assessments to ensure students meet or exceed expectations. Longfellow's instructional approach includes daily opportunities for students to collaborate, solve problems, and apply their learning in new ways. Teachers follow a lesson cycle that affords students multiple levels of support before expecting mastery.

Formative assessments come in the form of engaging checks for understanding throughout the lesson. Multiple response strategies that include the use of dry erase boards, quick writes, and moving around the room are some ways that students show their understanding throughout the lesson. Teachers utilize the data from these formative checks to reteach if necessary, before administering summative assessments. Weekly data check-ins have contributed to the individual success of all students. Teachers and administrators work together to identify gaps and plan the next steps. The school monitors each student's level of progress toward meeting their growth targets that have been set by the state and the campus goals. Teachers and administrators work collaboratively to plan differentiated approaches to reach every student.

**1b.** Reading/English language arts

The overall philosophy for the English Language Arts and Reading department is to prepare lifelong learners with the skills needed to be successful in the current school year and beyond. The department believes the key to instilling a love of reading and writing--and increasing overall comprehension--is to allow students the opportunity to choose their books for six-week book projects.

The Language Arts Department integrates a balanced literacy curriculum focused on reading, writing, listening, and speaking and is centered around complex texts and incorporating strategies that prompt critical thinking. Reading benchmarks given three times a year, determine reading levels, and formative assessments administered weekly provide data on mastery level of standards. Based on this data, students receive targeted, differentiated instruction to match their capabilities and to challenge their skill level. There are many interventions utilized to address individual student needs. In addition to differentiated small group interventions that take place in the classroom, additional remediation occurs in after school tutoring. Teachers integrate aggressive monitoring while tracking student progress in the class and maintain detailed records that break down student achievement by state standards.

Writing is taught in all grade levels and is practiced by formulating developed ideas and crafting multi-paragraph essays. Students practice different types of writing, such as personal narrative, expository, persuasive, creative, short response, poetry, and short stories.

The school believes that a classroom that allows the student's voice to be heard and utilized is the best type of classroom. Students engage in student-centered discussions on materials read and learned in class. Discourse has become one of the school's priority since it is one of the main ways that students can learn and retain information. The school focuses on creating engaging, rigorous lessons that provide students with multiple ways to respond to text orally and in writing. Test-taking strategies are seamlessly integrated into the classroom to best prepare students to be successful on the state assessment. Teachers closely monitor student progress through formal and informal assessments and adjust individual student needs accordingly. Teachers create detailed direct instruction lessons and differentiate each component according to student

needs.

Technology is the cornerstone of the classroom. Students prepare for the demands of 21st-century job skills through daily access to laptops and project-based learning, where students have the autonomy to choose topics they're interested in, as well as the format to present their findings.

Teachers at Longfellow focus on student success and monitor the progress of each student through daily or weekly DOLs. They monitor student progress not only at the end of a lesson but throughout it as well by aggressively tracking students during the independent practice to make sure that they understand the concept taught. They also monitor student's progress through weekly data meetings to check to see if they are on track to meet their goals for the end of year assessments.

### **1c. Mathematics**

The Math department at Longfellow believes in facilitating a student-centered classroom with more student-led discussions, higher-order questioning where students create their own math problems. The students receive exposure to multiple representations of both problems and solutions using various response strategies while teachers incorporate student voice into every lesson. The teachers regularly integrate real-life application of math concepts into their instruction. All Longfellow students are required to take Pre-AP math classes, taught at an accelerated pace. Seventh-grade students take the eighth grade math State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness (STAAR) test. The eighth-grade students take Algebra I and earn high school credit upon passing the STAAR End of Course Exam. The accelerated pace approach allows students to graduate high school with college credit, therefore, setting them up for success in science, technology, engineering, and mathematical fields.

To eliminate the gaps for incoming students, teachers utilize Professional Learning Communities to discuss all three grade levels' Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) and how they align with one another to design and present rigorous and well-aligned lessons. By utilizing this model, teachers are aware of the schema that students should have coming into their grade-level. For struggling students, academic support to improve their achievement is also readily available as early as the middle of the first six weeks. These academic supports include small group instruction, targeting tutoring, and individualized learning strategies.

The teachers incorporate technology into their math classrooms, which contribute to student motivation and engagement. Students use Chromebooks to track their progress and goals from data generated through exit tickets and demonstrations of learning. Teachers also track data daily to monitor and target students who are lacking the necessary skills to achieve their academic goals. Students that are not meeting grade-level expectations receive targeted small group instruction and attend tutoring twice a week.

In all math classes offered at Longfellow, exploration is a critical aspect in making the lessons interactive and applicable to real life. The Math department combines strategies that make the classrooms a safe space by seating students heterogeneously, which allows them to share ideas, collaborate, and challenge one another. The department gives the students problems and encourages a productive struggle with student-led discussions to aid in their understanding, reinforce their knowledge of a topic, or to get them excited about a new skill. By doing so, teachers are giving students more autonomy in the way they understand the lesson, which helps their comprehension of the topic. Students create math problems to develop their skills and thought processes further.

### **1d. Science**

At Henry W. Longfellow Career Exploration Academy, all students are enrolled in a Pre-AP or high school level science course every year of middle school. Students in the eighth take one of two high school courses: Astronomy or Physics. The goal of an education in science is not merely the teaching of facts, but the training of students' minds to explore and understand foundational science concepts, including matter and energy; earth and space; force, energy, and motion; and organisms and environment. The science department practices vertical alignment of the curriculum so that students can delve deeper and deeper into the core principles of modern science as they advance through their years at Longfellow.

Teachers use a variety of interactive and experimental instructional approaches in their classrooms. To crystallize abstract concepts and link them to students' tangible experiences in the real world, teachers utilize both physical and conceptual model-building and online simulations.

In both the 6th and 7th-grade science classrooms, students apply the use of maker space lessons to learn the content in a fun and exciting way to maximize intellectual and emotional engagement. For example, teachers conduct inquiry-based lessons in which students are given an assortment of supplies and challenged to complete a task using those materials with minimal guidance from the teacher. This process enhances the students' learning by allowing them to take ownership of their education. Specific examples of maker-space learning would include: building 3D models of plate tectonics; manipulatives that demonstrate weathering, erosion, and deposition; and working models that show and allow students to explore the implications of Newton's laws. In 8th grade Physics, students participate in labs designed to engage their curiosity and scaffold them to new understandings of how the laws which underlie reality inform their daily lives. These processes described above enable the students to understand and apply abstract concepts covered within the curriculum.

Students are formally and informally assessed several times throughout the six weeks using various methods. Teachers can use this data to create specialized lessons and activities for students who are struggling to understand concepts. Students who need additional guidance attend a science-based tutoring camp to help them succeed.

#### **1e. Social studies/history/civic learning and engagement**

In the Social Studies department at Longfellow, students engage in an environment of collaboration, challenge, and relevancy through instruction that fosters 21st-century learners with meaningful dialogue relating to the real-world.

In sixth grade, incorporation of the TEKS occurs through interactive classroom activities and structures, including technology integration. The students experience learning through the exposure of diverse cultures spanning all regions of the world. The students engage in deep dives through topics such as the holocaust, religion, wars, culture, exploration, and current events.

In seventh grade, the students learn about the history of Texas and how it has impacted their lives today as citizens of the state. The students participate in a civic-based yearlong project that strives to answer the question, "What can I do to make a difference in my community?" This project includes interaction with members of local and state government and executing a plan to answer the thesis question.

In eighth grade, students study the foundations of the United States in which they have opportunities to participate in cooperative learning that assists students in forming their own opinions to determine the impact history has today. Daily opportunities for peer-to-peer discussions allow students to put their knowledge and skills to the test in their culminating class capstone projects.

Teachers use formative and summative assessment data to identify students who are struggling and offer targeted interventions as needed.

The social studies teachers use the curriculum to support college-ready learning and readiness while having students employ literacy skills in their daily practices of reading, writing, problem-solving, critical thinking, and collaboration. Cross-curricular projects for students also allow them to understand that real-life work will integrate with all levels of industry and, as a result, connect their learning between the subjects they take in school. The educational practices at Longfellow Career Exploration Academy allow for the growth, expression, and learning that will be vital to students in their development and discovery of current and future interests and abilities that will assist them in finding their career path.

## **1f. For secondary schools:**

Longfellow allows all seventh and eighth graders to take courses that will expose them to a variety of careers. Three hundred students are enrolled in one to three career courses each year. The classes include design and modeling where students discover the design process and learn different types of sketching techniques; the science of technology where students apply the concepts of physics, chemistry, and nanotechnology to do various projects; an architecture internship where students use math to learn the basics of architecture, including measuring with proper tools, drafting blueprints, and using software to render 3D models; a medical internship where students use biology to learn about medical careers, including measuring vital signs, diagnosing patients and the functions and parts of the brain; engineering-based classes with a focus on aerospace and physics as students create flying machines through reverse engineering; information technology in which students create an original app that addresses a community need; principles of arts, audio/video technology and communications where students learn the importance of target audience, to draft and create a storyboard and script for a specific audience, creating a magazine ad, a how-to video, and stop-motion animation; and principles of business, marketing, and finance where students create a year-long business plan, creating their own product or service. The course covers information on entrepreneurship, including opportunity recognition, market research, finance, and marketing.

## **1g. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:**

### **2. Other Curriculum Areas:**

Longfellow offers a variety of elective courses for all students. Students attend these classes daily as part of a block schedule, which consists of four elective courses per year.

One hundred ninety, seventh, and eighth-grade students participate in the Spanish program. Collaboration with other content teachers, particularly in Science and Technology, has supported the acquisition and reinforcement of essential skills in multiple content areas. Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS)-based language acquisition competencies emphasized in the program include: speaking, listening, writing, and reading.

The physical education program uses a curriculum designed to encourage vigorous activity, foster cooperation, and creativity, emphasize safety and stimulate desirable social development. Teachers cover physical education TEKS while integrating content subjects whenever possible. Also, teachers help students develop a lifelong interest in recreational activities and sports and help promote acceptable standards of social attitudes and good sportsmanship. There are currently 180 sixth, seventh, and eighth-grade students that take physical education three times per week.

The health education program provides all 225 seventh and eighth graders enrolled in the course with the knowledge and skills necessary to promote and maintain the physical, mental, emotional, and social health. The curriculum motivates students to improve and maintain their health, prevent disease, and reduce risky behaviors through several cooperative learning strategies aligned with state-mandated TEKS.

Longfellow band offers a unique experience for its students through four primary TEKS strands: music literacy, creative expression; historical and cultural relevance; critical evaluation, and response. Approximately 150 students participate in the Band program developing music literacy in reading music notation, composing, and performing. Through their experience in performing styles, genres, and music from various historical periods, students understand the relevance of music to history, culture, and how it relates to other academics.

The core curriculum integrated throughout the visual arts program currently consists of 198 students who meet all TEKS and developing a portfolio that demonstrates progress. The curriculum explores a variety of art movements ranging from Prehistoric to Contemporary Art. Students are encouraged to interpret and critique works with their peers through cooperative learning structures. Regular practices include twenty-first-century skills such as creative problem solving and team building.

In the dance course, approximately 100 students in sixth, seventh, and eighth grade gain experience in ballet, modern, jazz, tap, social, and cultural dance. This program exposes students to many dance forms and helps them realize dance can be a part of a healthy lifestyle at any age. Through the implementation of the TEKS dance standards, students are allowed to develop body awareness, experience movement skills, and explore dance elements and choreographic processes and improve self-discipline and healthy bodies.

Technology applications is a required course for all 150 sixth-grade students that focuses on digital technology skills. The class covers six strands of the TEKS: creativity and innovation; communication and collaboration; research and information fluency; critical thinking; problem-solving and decision making; digital citizenship; and technology operations and concepts. The course provides students with information about computers, operating systems, networks, the worldwide web, and digital citizenship.

### **3. Academic Supports:**

#### **3a. Students performing below grade level**

Longfellow believes that all students can reach or exceed grade-level expectations with targeted support. At the beginning of each school year, teachers evaluate data to set goals for all students, including students performing below grade level. Teachers analyze student strengths and areas for growth. This information is utilized throughout the year as teachers plan for and differentiate instruction for students performing below grade level.

The campus has incorporated a variety of instructional strategies and methods to ensure that students performing below grade level meet or exceed their academic progress goals. Teachers utilize cooperative learning techniques that allow students to interact with their peers and the curriculum to improve learning outcomes. These techniques ensure that all students are accountable for learning resulting in increased self-esteem, motivation, and confidence for struggling learners. Teachers scaffold learning for struggling learners and incorporate a variety of differentiated learning techniques such as, instructional playlists which personalize learning for students. Teachers use hands-on learning activities, flexible grouping, handouts, and resources that reinforce concepts.

Teachers use universal screening assessments, district assessments, and weekly demonstrations of learning to monitor student progress throughout the year. Weekly data meetings analyze results from demonstrations of learning from the previous week. Teachers identify students who are performing below grade level on the standards for that week. An in-depth analysis, including question and student response analysis, is conducted to determine misconceptions. The plan developed includes identifying new instructional strategies and differentiated and small group instruction. Teachers reassess students on the standard and review progress during the next weekly data meeting. Struggling students attend weekly tutorials that are individualized and targeted to meet the needs of each learner. Small group instruction allows the teacher to provide more individualized attention to students.

#### **3b. Students performing above grade level**

The challenge with students who are above grade level is to ensure that instruction is differentiated and extended to allow students to engage in the curriculum at a higher level so that they meet or exceed student progress goals set by the state. Longfellow has implemented a variety of research-based instructional strategies and methods to challenge students, both high achieving students and those performing above grade level.

All teachers utilize cooperative learning techniques. These techniques allow students to interact with their peers and the curriculum to improve learning outcomes for all. Teachers incorporate project-based learning, which enables students to explore real-world problems that align with state standards and deepens learning. Teachers plan differentiated and extension lessons that allow students choice in how they engage in and learn the content.

Students who overall perform above grade level still need to receive targeted support in areas that they may

not have yet mastered. To measure learning outcomes and progress goal attainment for students above grade level, teachers administer demonstrations of learning one to two times per week to measure mastery of each standard taught that week. Weekly data meetings analyze results from demonstrations of learning. Teachers identify students who are performing above grade level but are not meeting their progress goals on specific standards, as well as misconceptions the students may have. Teachers utilize this data to provide interventions based on standard performance to ensure that students above grade level meet progress goals. Students performing above grade level are challenged further by engaging in teacher-developed playlists, which allow students to participate in instructional activities that extend their learning. At times, students performing above grade level need additional support outside of the classroom. These students receive targeted tutoring as needed.

**3c. Special education**

**3d. ELLs, if a special program or intervention is offered**

English learners (ELs) make up 40% of the student body. Longfellow sets high expectations for all students regardless of their special population. With targeted support, the school believes that ELs can succeed in advanced course work. All ELs take Pre-AP classes for math, science, social studies, and language arts. One of the challenges for an English Learner is the transition from bilingual classes in fifth grade to receiving all instruction in English in sixth grade. While 94% of ELs are performing at or above grade level on the Spanish Reading state assessment, the language gap emerges when they transition to Longfellow. In addition to language arts, sixth-grade students are placed in an additional block of Reading to help support their transition from bilingual classes. Teachers utilize data from language placement tests and data from the Texas English Language Proficiency Assessment System to identify areas of strength and growth as it relates to language acquisition in the areas of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Teachers utilize this data when planning instruction and interventions.

As part of the lesson planning process, teachers identify the English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) and address them in each lesson. Teachers utilize a variety of research-based techniques and instructional strategies that improve student language acquisition. These techniques and strategies include using visuals to reinforce vocabulary and concepts, interactive notebooks, scaffolding instruction, sentence frames, and cooperative learning techniques, which help students engage verbally with peers and increase language acquisition in the area of speaking.

English Learners are assessed weekly and monitored during weekly data meetings to determine whether they are mastering content standards. Any EL, which is not meeting content standards, receives additional support in the form of targeted small group instruction and tutoring.

**3e. Other populations (e.g., migrant), if a special program or intervention is offered**

## **PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE**

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### **1. Engaging Students:**

Longfellow Career Exploration Academy is a safe and supportive environment that provides numerous opportunities for students to succeed, which has resulted in positive student achievement outcomes. Most of the students have high expectations for themselves, which includes the goal of being accepted into a magnet high school. While at Longfellow, parents, teachers, and administrators work together to help them achieve that goal.

All Longfellow educators are trained in social and emotional learning (SEL) and give students opportunities to practice using strategies for self-management, responsible decision-making, relationship skills, social awareness, and self-awareness. In each class, teachers and students collaboratively develop a respect agreement outlining emotional and social safety expectations. This activity helps students take ownership of the classroom and their behavior. Students attend advisory class four days a week, where they are engaged in SEL through a school-provided program. Focusing on SEL has created a positive culture where all students feel valued and supported.

In addition to the SEL program for students, the educators identify a “Student of the Month” in each grade level, which acknowledges individual academic and overall student excellence. Teachers also meet with grade-level colleagues once a week to discuss any possible student concerns to intervene early to help students be successful. During this meeting, each teacher writes a note of affirmation and encouragement to a student that is then mailed to the student at home, resulting in each member of the student body receiving at least one note from a teacher. As a result of the positive school culture, students are motivated to excel in academics, and parents are encouraged to support student progress.

Students have opportunities for leadership through the Longfellow Ambassador Program. Students from all grade levels serve in this program, providing feedback to school administrators on a variety of school matters. Ambassadors serve on school committees alongside faculty and staff, such as the Student Incentives Committee, Site-Based Decision-Making Committee, and the CATCH committee (Coordinated Approach to Child Health), which promotes physical activity and healthy food choices to students and their families.

Longfellow offers a variety of clubs to our students, with club time being held twice a month during the school day. Clubs are run and sponsored by the teachers, and they include a cooking club, calligraphy club, debate club, robotics, soccer, just to name a few. Clubs allow students to develop and practice skills outside the academic setting, thereby creating successes that will follow them throughout their lives.

### **2. Engaging Families and Community:**

Longfellow has developed successful strategies to gain trust and build relationships with the families served. Partnering with families and the community is key to supporting the academic achievement of the students.

The school engages, educates, and empowers the families to not only participate but assume leadership roles and give voice to the educational process. The school utilizes an electronic program for families to ensure campus educators have regular, two-way communication about academic programs and school-wide activities for growth and development. Parents use an online system that allows access to student academic information to support their student’s educational journey.

Longfellow has a robust and dedicated Parent Teacher Association (PTA) that has established social media pages to keep parents informed about school information, events, and ways to be engaged with the PTA and the school. This organization is successful in bringing the community together for projects such as extra-curricular activities, and college and career nights to facilitate school-wide student successes. The PTA also partners with teachers to reinforce classroom curriculum through field trips and instructional materials.

Parents and community members serve on the Site-Based Decision-Making Committee (SBDM). This committee hosts quarterly meetings to establish campus goals and provide input regarding budget, school safety, and code of conduct procedures. The parent center at the school links parents to educational services on campus and throughout the district. Monthly coffee with the principal, evening talks with the principal, and project-based learning evenings allows parents and the community to be involved in the success of the students. Parents that are unable to attend the meetings with the principal can still access the information through the live streaming of the meeting. The community liaison, school counselor, school nurse, and administrative staff work each year to identify school strengths and needs to develop campus goals for improvement by receiving input from parents through the campus improvement committee.

Longfellow has established a dad's engagement program whose mission is to bring dads and students together to celebrate each other and to introduce and reinforce the character-building concepts they have learned throughout the year. Fathers and male role models are consistently engaging in meaningful relationships with children and positively impacting the school and their community.

### **3. Creating Professional Culture:**

Teachers and administrators work collaboratively to develop a professional culture dedicated to the profession and the students they serve. The school acknowledges that teaching is one of the hardest and most demanding jobs, with that in mind, the school has created a culture of support and encouragement for all professionals. New teachers attend a New Teacher Academy that prepares them for their tenure in Dallas Independent School District (District). New teachers attend orientation at the campus level, including training in the "Longfellow Way" of excellence. They are assigned a mentor teacher for their first two years at Longfellow. The mentor program helps new teachers build relationships with colleagues and gives them support and encouragement that is vital for their success.

Feedback and coaching are instrumental in providing an additional level of support for teachers. Throughout the school year, administrators conduct classroom observations. Face-to-face feedback offers an opportunity for teachers to self-reflect and work collaboratively with administrators to identify high leverage action steps that improve teaching practices. In addition to school administrators who serve as instructional leaders on campus, the school employs a campus instructional coach who provides support in the form of ongoing feedback, model lessons, co-teaching, lesson planning, and resources.

Assessment results and student needs determine professional development at the school. Professional development topics are driven and presented by teachers to their colleagues in a way that is both beneficial and applicable to their classroom. Professional development topics that teachers have implemented at the school include personalized playlists, cooperative learning structures, project-based learning, and technology integration. The implementation of these topics has increased student engagement and academic performance, as indicated by summative and weekly formative assessment data. In addition to district and campus training, all Longfellow teachers attend weekly professional learning community (PLC) meetings. During meetings, teachers examine student data from formative assessments and participate in additional professional development that is content-specific. Educators share instructional practices and resources to enrich and accelerate instruction for all Longfellow learners effectively. Teachers continually reflect on their teaching and learning, which has led to a growth mindset culture throughout the campus. Having many layers of support for teachers allows them to focus on improving their instruction and impacting student learning.

### **4. School Leadership:**

The Henry W. Longfellow leadership model focuses on recognizing the strengths and contributions of every member that makes up the school. Every person, regardless of their title, is expected to develop their leadership potential. It begins with the principal, assistant principal, and instructional coach working together as a united instructional team. As an instructional leadership team, they support different departments and grade levels by working collaboratively with teachers to ensure the success of all students. A comprehensive organizational structure helps to develop the leadership capacity of all stakeholders. Each

grade level and department has a representative that meets regularly with the administrators to align campus goals and priorities to ensure student achievement. All support staff, including teacher assistants, media specialist, office staff, counselor, nurse, and community liaison, meet weekly to discuss how to best support the teachers, students, and the families. The principal supports the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) by meeting monthly with the board to plan programs and activities that will enhance the experiences for the students and the families. The SBDM committee, comprised of community, business, and campus leaders, serves as an advisor to the principal and contribute to a collaborative decision-making process.

All members of the school community are encouraged to think out-of-the-box, share ideas and opinions, and to be engaged in the decision-making process. Each person is empowered to try new strategies to make a positive difference. The campus has implemented a student ambassador program to meet the goal of developing leadership skills in all students. Students in this program make decisions that impact the student body as a whole. They serve as representatives during campus-wide events by guiding visitors and parents throughout the campus. Student ambassadors take an active role in all established school committees. They provide input and report the decisions back to the student body.

Longfellow educators and students understand the importance of building effective teams to achieve excellence. Teachers and students aspire to lead in their areas of influence. This leadership philosophy empowers teachers to recognize their capabilities and to use those talents to develop innovative lessons and course offerings that inspire academic excellence. Campus leaders model collaboration, respect, and responsibility as a reliable model to follow. The leadership focus that includes all stakeholders has resulted in exemplary student academic outcomes at the campus level as reflected on the STAAR assessments, PSAT, district-wide assessments, and school distinctions.

## **PART VI - STRATEGY FOR ACADEMIC SUCCESS**

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Longfellow measures success not only by meeting academic goals but by equipping the students for success long after they leave the school. Cooperative learning has served as the one strategy that has been the most instrumental to the school's success.

Cooperative learning stems from the belief that learning is not an isolated process. Longfellow students work together and are responsible for their teammates' learning, as well as their own. There is a positive correlation between individual and team success through cooperative learning. Although teachers plan interactive, cooperative learning experiences throughout the day, students are still held accountable for doing their share of the work and for mastery of the material to be learned. As teachers plan cooperative learning activities, there is an equal level of participation required from each member of the group. Cooperative learning allows for many student interactions during the period. This level of communication throughout a student's day and across all classes enhances the learning process and makes learning interactive, engaging, and memorable.

The developmental characteristics of middle school students make cooperative learning a good-fit teaching strategy. Middle school students need to socialize, be a part of a group, share feelings, receive emotional support, and learn to see things from other perspectives. The Longfellow goals are consistent with the goals of cooperative learning. It is a peer-centered approach that promotes academic achievement and builds positive relationships.

All staff was not only able to see the pedagogy behind cooperative learning but also experience it for themselves as active participants in a full day of professional development. Throughout the school year, teacher teams make time during their professional learning communities to embed the various structures into their lessons. It has been a campus-wide priority that not only appears in the campus improvement plan; it guides the instructional decisions teachers make. The planning and buy-in from Longfellow educators results in the improvement in the students' social and academic skills.

Cooperative learning is what has served as the primary catalyst for accomplishing the school's goals and preparing students for becoming a positive influence on the world around them. Cooperative learning strategies have allowed students to see themselves as active members in their classroom while learning to develop lifelong skills that encompass communicating, building and maintaining trust, providing leadership, and managing conflicts.