

February 6, 2018

TO: Board of Directors

CC: Dr. Donald Evans, Pasquale Scuderi, Maggie Riddle, Patricia Saddler, Natasha Berry

RE: Resources to meet the need; Balanced School Population

As the family members, teachers, and staff serving on the Longfellow Middle School Governance Council (SGC), we are writing to call your attention to the high needs of our students. We write because, as our fiscal agents, we need you to allocate resources to match this immense need.

Our School

We are proud that we have the highest middle school attendance rate, a goal that was set by our district leaders to ensure we can educate our students. We are proud that we have a culturally diverse staff to provide high-quality classroom instruction, a goal that was set by our district leaders. We are proud that we have embraced the Two-Way Immersion, AVID, Counseling, and other programs that celebrate diversity and nurtures the “whole child” as provided in our LCAP plan. We embrace every child that has opted to join the Longfellow family, and now we ask you to invest in ending the racial predictability of our students’ academic outcomes.

The Challenges We Face

A close look at the BUSD Academic Support Index (ASI) reveals Longfellow’s unique situation. Of all BUSD students, 67% have an ASI 2 or less, meaning these students come to school with “tailwinds” that can make success in school easier. The other 33% of all BUSD students are in the category of ASI 3+; meaning they face “headwinds” and will most likely need intervention and other supports to be successful in school. At Longfellow, the **inverse** to the entire BUSD district is true with 68% of our children facing ASI 3+ headwinds. This means the majority of our students are in need of Tier 2 support or greater as defined by the Response to Intervention (RTI) rubric. In addition, most of our students are English language learners, foster youth, or from low-income families. This high concentration of need requires a high concentration of resources which has not followed Longfellow’s student population. (**Please see Appendices A and B**)

Briefly:

- In sixth grade, Longfellow has 75 students in need of reading intervention support with resources to serve 31
- In 7th grade, 91 students in need of reading intervention support, resources to serve 15
- In 8th grade, 69 students in need of reading intervention support, resources to serve 5
- In math for all grades, 185 students in need, and the ability to financially serve 64

This flags for our school community that additional support; beyond the district’s baseline allocations, need to be in place to ensure that Longfellow students thrive.

We also find it important to note that staff turn-over has been high at Longfellow in recent years. We are concerned about this issue going forward. It's not uncommon for teachers to leave high-need, under-resourced schools. Experienced and effective teachers need to have the necessary resources available to provide the support their students need. New teachers need necessary coaching and collaboration time to hone their professional practice. Without adequate resources, teachers will burn out and seek teaching opportunities elsewhere.

Many schools are able to supplement the needs of their school through PTA funding. However, as a school with 58% of its population meeting criteria of low-income families, (the highest in the District) we also face a structural PTA fundraising barrier. Neighbouring middle school's ability to supplement student education and enrichment programs with PTA funds far outreaches Longfellow's ability. (**Please see Appendices C and D**)

Forging A Path To Success For Our Children

Just as it takes a village to raise a child; it takes a firm commitment, multiple funding sources, and the leadership of decision-makers to close the opportunity and achievement gap.

As elected leaders of our district, we call upon you to:

1. Allocate the additional financial resources that are necessary to support the academic progress of Berkeley students currently enrolled at Longfellow Middle School.
2. Practice a balanced school assignment approach at the middle school level that mirrors the district's elementary level practice -- where each school reflects the racial, ethnic, economic, educational, and linguistic backgrounds of our City, and reinforces our BUSD value "that diversity in our student population enriches the educational experiences of students". (**Please see Appendices C and D**)

Our school's team has a number of core program proposals for 2018-19 that we believe will help our students succeed. These include piloting a 7th period which can also create smaller class sizes, and offer more support classes. We aim to increase the ratio of IAs working in classrooms, provide more time for increased collaboration for teachers, fund a reading intervention teacher, and an additional/full time RTI and literacy coach.

We look forward to further discussing the details of these plans with you in late February/early March at a special Longfellow SGC meeting. We believe that the meeting would be most fruitful with the participation of two School Board members, a District BSEP and LCAP plan representative, and the Director of K-8 Schools. Please contact **Laura Kurre**, Longfellow SGC representative, at laura.kurre@gmail.com to coordinate this meeting date.

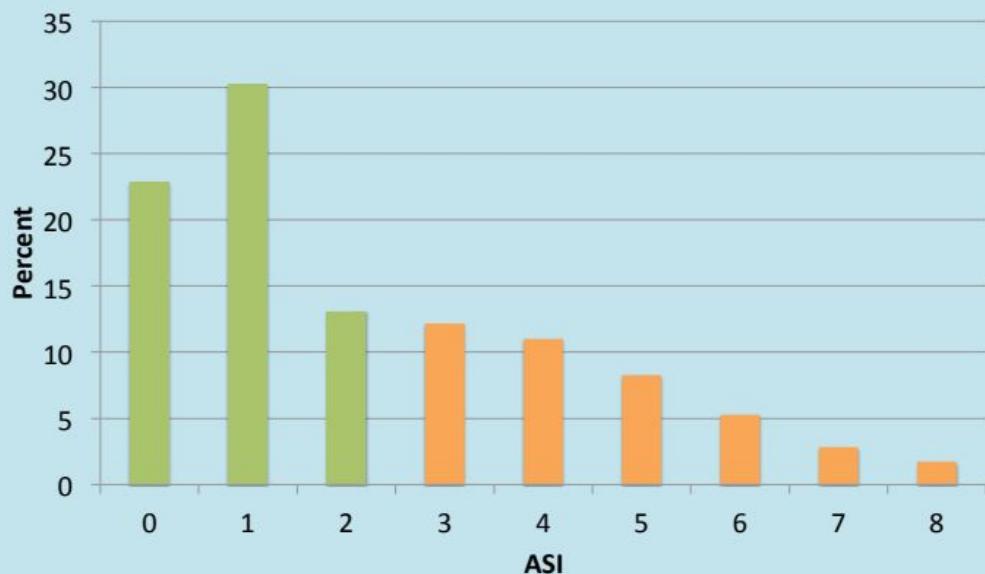
We appreciate your time and attention and look forward to working with you on these important issues.

Sincerely,

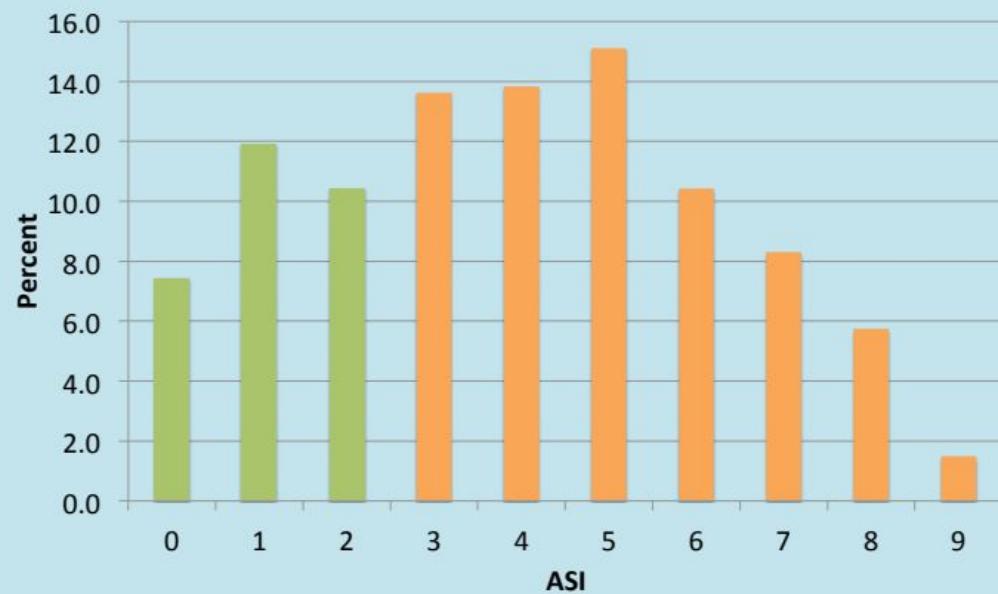
The Longfellow SGC

APPENDIX A - ASI (Academic Support Index) Data

BUSD District ASI Distribution

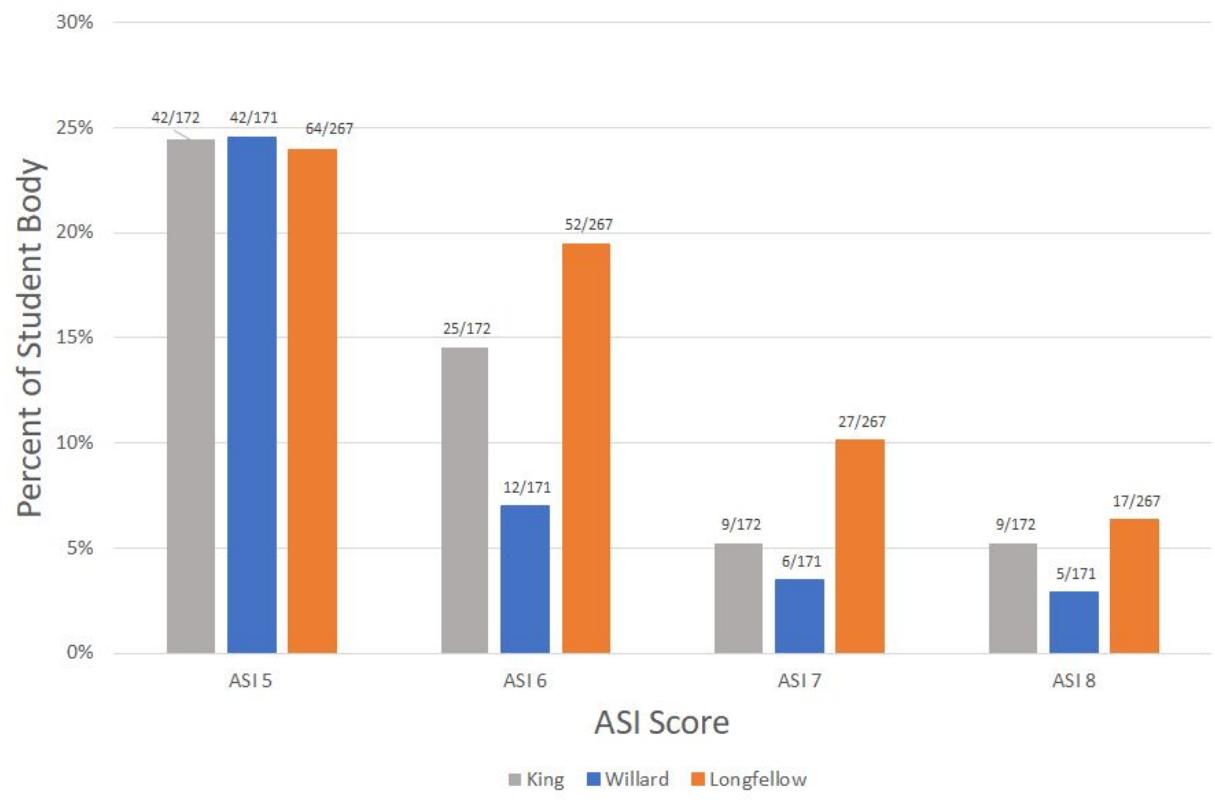


ASI Distribution at Longfellow



APPENDIX A (continued) - ASI (Academic Support Index) Data

Distribution of ASI 5-8 Students by School



APPENDIX B - Academic Data

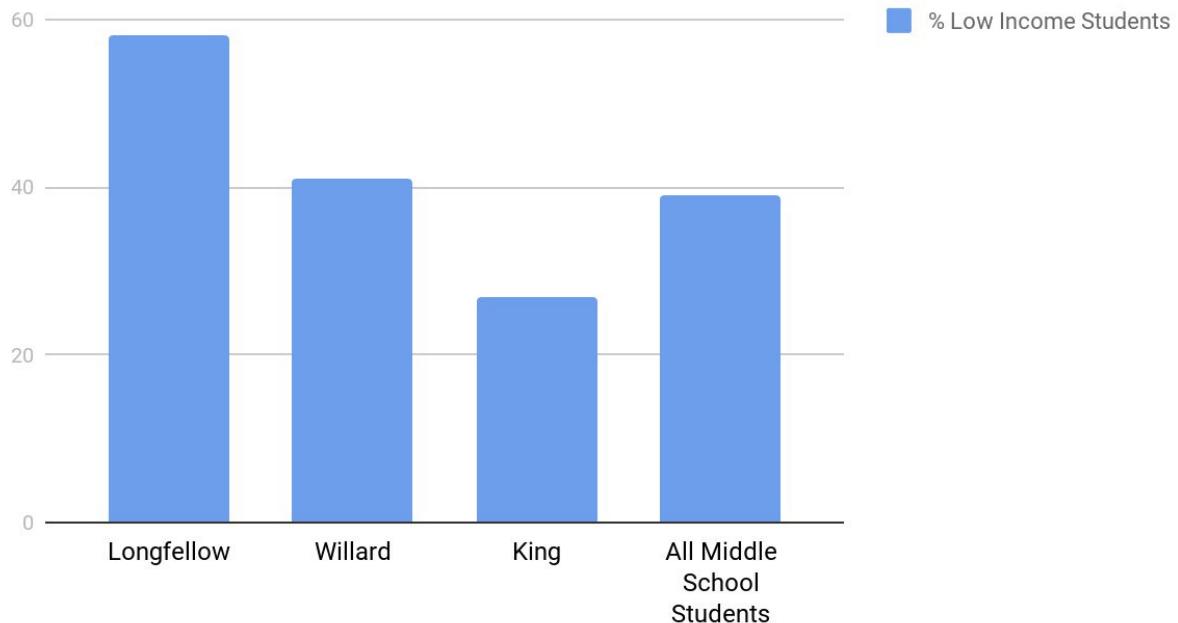
Students Entering Longfellow: Percent Proficient

Current 6 th Graders	LF ASI 0-2	BUSD ASI 0-2	LF ASI 3+	BUSD ASI 3+
SBA ELA	79%	83%	24%	28%
SBA Math	70%	78%	23%	25%

Special Education Students 2018 Illuminate Data	Percent to Population
King	10.9%
Longfellow	15.5%
Willard	12.7%

APPENDIX C - Socio-economic Data

Data Source: California School Dashboard (Fall 2017)



Longfellow PTA 2016-17

Total funds raised: **\$37,740**

Willard PTA 2016-17

Total Gross Revenue: **\$108,609**

Total Assets: \$110,354

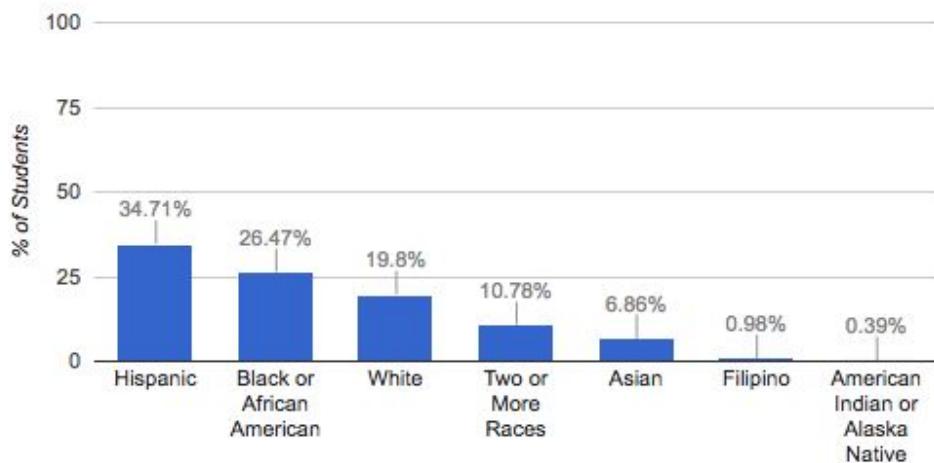
King PTA 2016-17

Total Gross Revenue: **\$173,008**

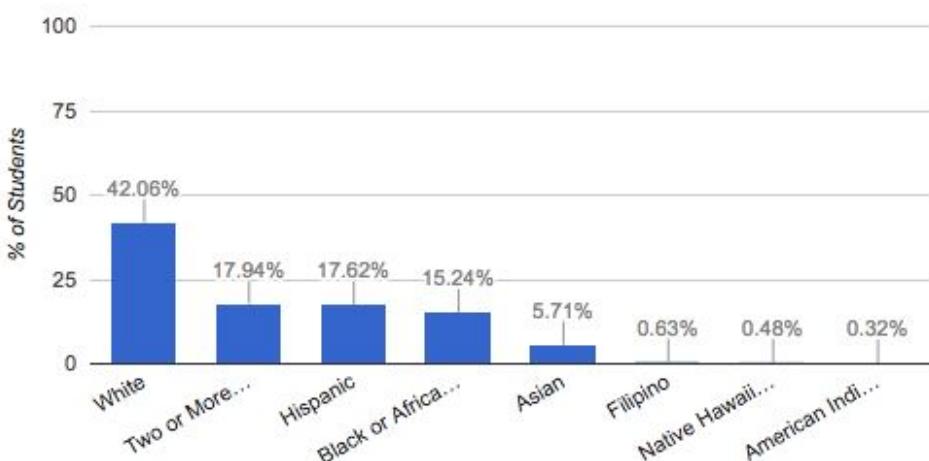
Total Assets: \$110,354

Appendix D - Numbers by Ethnicity at the 3 Middle Schools

Longfellow



Willard



King

