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# Mission patch winners ready for launch into space

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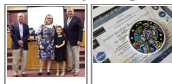
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Courtesy Photo ECISD Board of Trustees member Nelson Minyard (left) and Superintendent Tom Crowe (right) pose with mission patch winners Bonham eighth-grader Clara Long and Gonzales Elementary first-grader Paisley Valenzuela.



Posted: Thursday, May 10, 2018 5:30 am By Ruth Campbell rcampbell@oaoa.com



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Two Ector County Independent School District students will have their artwork launched into space in the form of mission patches. The patches will accompany an experiment from Falcon Early College High School to the International Space Station this summer.

The patches were created by Gonzales Elementary School first-grader Paisley Valenzuela and Bonham Middle School eighth-grader Clara Long. The girls were recognized at a recent ECISD Board of Trustees meeting.

"The Efficacy of Ideonella Sakaiensis in a Microgravity Environment" is the Falcon ECHS experiment. It looks at how the bacteria will decompose poly (ethylene terephthalate) in microgravity and compare it to Earth. Poly (ethylene terephthalate) or PET is used in fibers for clothing and containers for liquids and foods.

Ector County ISD was selected last year as 1 of 31 communities in the U.S., Canada and Brazil to be accepted into America's Space Program.

Eight ECISD campuses participated in the Student Spaceflight Experiments Program Mission 12 to the International Space Station. The program gives students the ability to design and propose real microgravity experiments to fly in low Earth orbit. In addition, each community had a chance to fly two Mission Patches to the ISS.

### More Information

- Student Spaceflight Experiments Program.

In November, a committee of primarily local scientists chose three student spaceflight proposals submitted to a national selection committee assembled by National Center for Earth and Space Science Education (NCESS), which will select one flight experiment proposal to be sent to the International Space Station this year, a news release said.

### Today's Edition



An astronaut aboard ISS will conduct the experiment, and after a typical four- to six-week stay in orbit, the experiment will be returned safely to Earth for harvesting and analysis by the school's student flight team, the release said.

Valenzuela, 7, said her patch has a Texas flag on the moon and a boy in a in a space suit that says ECISD.

"There are stars everywhere and the moon's kind of big a little bit," she said.

She added that when she found out she won the competition she thought it was "amazing" and "super-exciting."

Matching Valenzuela's feelings, Gonzales Principal Sunny Rodriguez said the school was also shocked.

"We didn't realize it was actually going to fly in space," Rodriguez said. "We thought it was kind of a consolation. When we found out that she actually won and that she's going to be representing ECISD and Gonzales Elementary, we were just super, super thrilled. She's a first grader. That's amazing. Out of all the kids in our school — everybody participated — and she's the one that won, so we're just really impressed with her."

Gonzales has 415 students in grades kindergarten through five.

She added that she hopes this will inspire students for next year to try a little bit harder and realize things like this can happen.

Long, 13, said she loves art and science and that this was the best thing she could do. She said she was really happy when she found out she won.

"I never knew something this important could actually be my patch going up into space," Long said.

She created her patch during art class, sketching it first. Long plans to go to Washington, D.C., for the Student Spaceflight Experiments Program National Conference in June hosted by NCESE and the Smithsonian's National Air and Space Museum.

"I knew what I was doing, but I had to look up what I wanted it to look like and how to do the stance for it, so it was easy and hard had to get the right proportions," Long said.

Bonham Principal James Ramage said the school is thrilled with Long's accomplishment. He added that this is an honor for her and her family.

"There are not that many students this happens to. She is a very talented young lady and very deserving ... We couldn't be more happy," Ramage said.

**Ruth Campbell covers education for the Odessa American. Reach her at 432-333-7765 or 432-333-7765 or [rcampbell@oaoa.com](mailto:rcampbell@oaoa.com)**

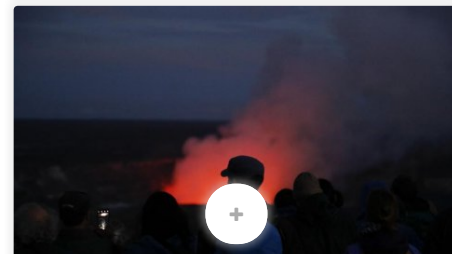


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