

The University of Texas Elementary School
ANNUAL REPORT 2009-10



A YEAR IN REVIEW...



2009-10 was a year of great evolution for the University of Texas Elementary School. We moved from perfecting our craft to focusing on partnerships that will let us share our good work and best practices. Our founding principal and CEO, Dr. Ramona Treviño, now serves as the chief academic officer for the Austin Independent School District. As principal of the school for the past three years, I was thrilled to take on the role of executive director this year.

We feel right at home in our new position within the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement at UT Austin. UT Elementary School's mission to serve as a research-based demonstration school and a model for others is being realized through our work in the East Austin community and beyond. Pre-service teachers in the Urban Education Program — an ongoing collaboration between UT Elementary, the UT Austin College of Education, and AISD — are using **our best-practices manual**. In addition, through the Urban Education Program, we were able to provide Social and Emotional Learning curriculum resources and training to our partner schools in Austin ISD. They have seen tremendous results already.

We could not do this work without **dedicated demonstration teachers and staff** who fully appreciate our role to serve as teachers to students, parents, and other educators. Their passion and willingness to go the extra mile are vital to the achievement of our students and our mission. These teachers and our Little Longhorn students, who hunger for knowledge and give their best every day, are the reason we earned a **third "Exemplary" rating** this year. We thank The University of Texas and its colleges, schools, and units that not only support us but also allow us to provide a feedback loop on their research.

Likewise, we could not do the work of demonstrating and disseminating best practices without the generous donations and support of individuals, foundations, and corporations who believe in our mission. Thanks to you we are spreading best practices and helping to improve public education far beyond our own campus. We will continue to scale up our efforts to broaden that impact. We appreciate your dedication and commitment and hope you will continue to support our efforts.

– Melissa Chavez, M.Ed.
Executive Director

A MODEL FOR OTHER SCHOOLS...

The University of Texas at Austin has undertaken many initiatives to increase the number of students who are the first in their families to attend college. The University of Texas Elementary School is key to this effort. It is not only a community engagement initiative with the goal of **increasing the number of under-represented students in the college pipeline**; it is a model for other schools in East Austin and beyond. UT Elementary's administrators and teachers provide training to other teachers and help other elementary schools bridge the gap between theory, research, and practice.

As chair of the UT Elementary Management Board, I have seen firsthand the efforts of the school's staff to provide the instruction, intervention, and caring support that students need to succeed academically. By nurturing strong relationships between faculty, staff, parents, and students, former CEO Ramona Treviño and current executive director Melissa Chavez have developed a **robust community focused on learning**. Dedicated supporters and volunteers have also served to enhance the students' learning experience.

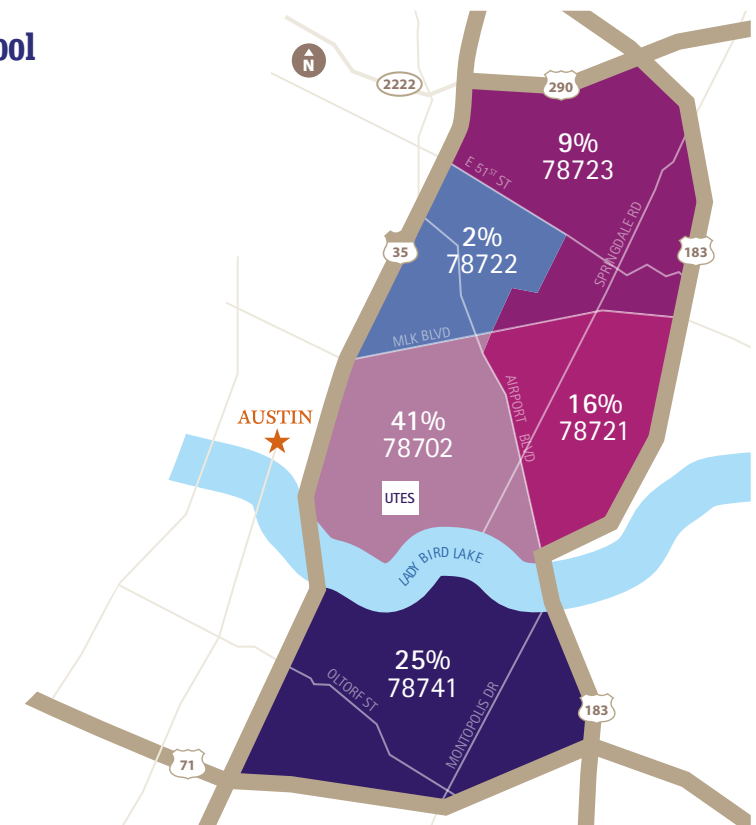
By sharing best practices, supporting students from underserved populations, and helping build communities of learners across East Austin, UT Austin gives students and teachers the tools they need for successful teaching and learning. And that speaks to the University's core purpose: **to transform lives for the benefit of society**. We are proud that UT Elementary is part of the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement and cannot wait until these students enter UT.

– **Dr. Gregory J. Vincent**
 Management Board Chair, UT Elementary School
 Vice President for Diversity and Community Engagement
 W.K. Kellogg Professor in Community College Leadership
 Professor of Law



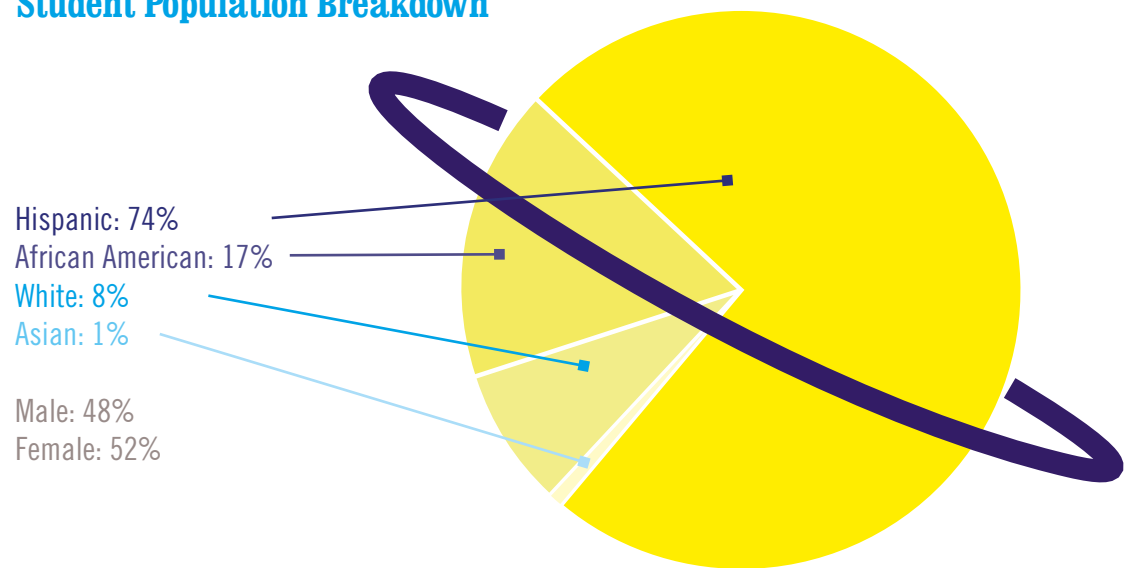
UT Elementary School Service Area

Map depicts ZIP codes and the percentage of students enrolled as of May 2010 who reside in each ZIP code.





UT Elementary School Student Population Breakdown



SHARING OUR BEST PRACTICES

UT Elementary worked throughout 2008 and 2009 on the creation of a **best-practices manual** and a **Social and Emotional Learning curriculum**. The manual was completed in fall 2009 and distributed to pre-service teachers in UT's Urban Education Program. By sharing our best practices in instructional techniques and a cutting-edge curriculum, we are helping to improve education.

The best-practices manual largely focuses on two innovative teaching methods: Response to Intervention (RTI), which dictates that each student should receive a level of instruction appropriate to his or her need, and Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), which teaches children concepts such as perception and detection of feelings in others.

Several of our teachers and administrators were selected to present chapters of the manual at the 2010 American Educational Research Association's national conference. This fall, UT Elementary will publish the manual as a book that will be marketed first to all school districts in Regions 13 and 20 and eventually to the nation. The book and its dissemination are made possible by support from the RGK Foundation, Powell Foundation, University Federal Credit Union, and University Co-op.

Implemented through the Urban Education Program, SEL contributed to the huge success of our partnerships with local schools. The campuswide focus on SEL programming promotes respect, problem solving, empathy, communication, and teamwork, in turn creating a caring, respectful school environment. Nancy Maniscalco is the principal at Govalle Elementary School, one of our partner schools. She believes the SEL curriculum and training provided by UT Elementary completely changed the culture of her school for the better. When asked about impact, she shared that the number of discipline referrals within the first six weeks of the school year dropped from 100 to six. After learning the curriculum, Govalle's students began to feel a strong sense of belonging and learned how to solve problems on their own. The Buena Vista Foundation, Klein Foundation, and Tapestry Foundation supported the 2009-10 SEL program at UT Elementary with both time and resources, and we are deeply grateful for their support.

The best-practices book, SEL curriculum, and other teacher resources — including subject-specific teacher blogs, video lessons from master teachers, and teacher resource links — will be available going forward as we build the infrastructure to share our best practices through our website. We thank the State Farm Foundation for its support of this undertaking.

HEALTHY FAMILIES INITIATIVE



Childhood obesity is a leading public health threat in the United States. The National Institutes of Health has called the increasing rate of obesity in young children a national epidemic, emphasizing the increased risk faced by minorities and children living in low-income and underserved communities. UT Elementary is working to change this.

In 2009-10 the school's Healthy Families Initiative continued to work with students and their families on important health-related projects inside and outside the classroom. In addition to increasing students' time spent in physical activity and improving understanding of good nutrition practices, the Healthy Families Initiative seeks to establish a comprehensive plan for reducing the trend of childhood obesity at UT Elementary and beyond.

The school expanded the core of the Healthy Families Initiative this year by providing 150 minutes of weekly physical education as recommended by the National Association for Sport & Physical Education (NASPE). An onsite wellness interventionist was also available to work with students during the school day on a more individual level, supporting them as they worked toward their goal of becoming more physically active and healthy.

The School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) has continued to lead a coordinated school health program to guide the school's local wellness policy. SHAC is currently working on an initiative to improve school meal nutrition. Additional events related to the Healthy Families Initiative, such as the annual Olympic Day, have focused on physical activity, nutrition, and mental wellness. Thanks to the gracious support of our donors, this year's Healthfest provided yet another fun and interactive way for our students to gain hands-on experience learning about healthy nutrition.

During the coming year the school seeks to expand the use of technology as a learning and assessment tool in physical education classes. This will allow teachers to more objectively analyze students' participation while also collecting consistent data for future research and more targeted education. Another ongoing initiative is the use of a three-tiered Response to Intervention (RTI) model used to promote physical activity and prevent obesity among our students. The RTI model continues to be documented and studied by faculty members at UT Austin and, if successful, may eventually provide a model for addressing these important issues in public schools across the nation.

UT Elementary School TAKS Passing Rates

As compared to statewide scores.



UT Elementary already boasts a longer academic day and year than most schools. In addition, we agree with the U.S. Department of Education that extending education outside of regular classroom time is both a necessary and integral part of our students' academic success. Programs such as tutoring, summer school, and Saturday academic enrichment camps are helpful to all students who yearn to reach their full academic potential.

While intervention for struggling students occurs in the classroom daily, some students require additional help outside class. Our teachers provide this assistance before and after school.

Our Saturday camps provide students hands-on opportunities to master grade-level skills and concepts while also incorporating test-taking strategies in an enjoyable way as optional preparation for the TAKS test. These camps have produced phenomenal results: For the second year they were available to all grades and subject areas the school achieved "Exemplary" ratings based on TAKS performance.

Summer school is another vital component to helping students jumpstart their next academic year. The program is open first to our most struggling students and then, if spots are available, to students who are performing at or above grade level. In summer 2010, thanks to a generous donation from the Klein Foundation, we were able to both double the number of students served in intermediate grades and enrich the program with physical education.

UT Elementary will continue these successful programs as a means of reinforcing the education of our students, giving them the necessary tools for successful academic careers far into the future.



THE WORLD ON A STRING

In fall 2009 UT Elementary School partnered with the University of Texas String Project to establish an after-school music program in East Austin. Incorporating the world-renowned Suzuki method, this program provides high-quality music education on the violin, viola, cello, and double bass to 28 UT Elementary students. Each student is given one small group master class lesson per week along with two hours of group instruction on Saturdays. In addition to individual recitals this first year, students held winter and spring concerts at the school and even performed at an Austin Toros basketball game. We aim to double the number of participants by next year.

TEACHER OF THE YEAR



Every teacher at UT Elementary is part of a team of professionals working together to make the school the best at what it does. But only one is selected annually by the faculty to receive the Teacher of the Year award. The individual chosen for this honor exemplifies that special blend of encouragement and expertise that is the hallmark of a master teacher. We congratulate art teacher **Lee Anne Gardner-Warrenfells**, the 2009-10 Teacher of the Year.

"I feel so honored," Lee Anne says. "To be appreciated by such an amazing, hardworking group of educators means so much. As an art teacher, the students are the ones who really make my efforts shine. Their work, whether it be a beautiful art project or an astute observation at the museum, demonstrates their individual creative spirits."

Along with Lee Anne, six others were nominated by their peers for the Teacher of the Year award: Coach Brian Dauenhauer, Ms. Vedia Miles, Ms. Eunice Tanco, Ms. Laila Wakim, Ms. Nefertiti Williams, and Ms. Danielle Zibilski. We thank each of them for their service and dedication to the school.

STAR VOLUNTEERS



Volunteer
Mary Juan
Harris,
"Miss Bee"

Our dedicated volunteers serve in a variety of capacities — mentoring, providing classroom support to a teacher, serving on a volunteer board, or even something as simple as helping judge a science fair. They make an enormous difference in the lives of our students and public education in general.

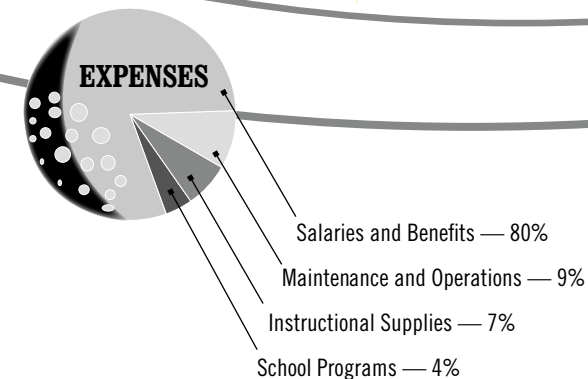
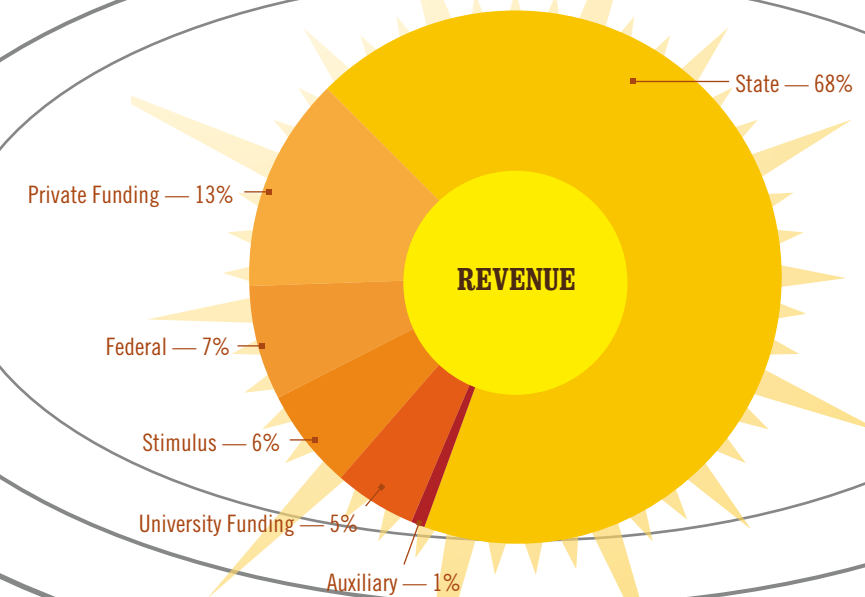
Mentors at UT Elementary are highly engaged and devoted volunteers who meet with a student every week. Mentors gain the satisfaction of being a positive influence on a student while increasing their community involvement by connecting with youth. Students benefit from having an additional consistent and dependable relationship with a caring adult. Students have often shown an increase in academic achievement, as well as improved behavior at school and at home.

Mentor Ryan Gauna says, "Mentoring is a reciprocal relationship: You will learn as much from your mentee as they will learn from you. From my first experience as a UT Elementary School mentor, a day hasn't gone by that I don't recognize the power that compassion and guidance have on a young child."

UT Elementary is able to accomplish many things because of the work of our partners and friends, and we are truly thankful for our wonderful volunteers.

UT Elementary School Revenue and Expenses

Unaudited figures from
September 1, 2009 – August 31, 2010



THANK YOU...

UT Elementary 2009-10 Donors

(Contributions received September 1, 2009 – August 31, 2010)

\$25,000+

The Dell Foundation
The KDK-Harman Foundation
The Klein Foundation
Tapestry Foundation of Mary Carmel & Thomas Borders
Anonymous

\$24,999-\$5,000

The Buena Vista Foundation
L & M Charitable Foundation Inc.
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West Austin Youth Association (WAYA)

\$4,999-\$1,000

1379 Sports
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\$999-\$1

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PHOTOS BY MARSHA MILLER

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Note: End of term indicated in parentheses.
Terms end June 30.



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Elementary School

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