

# 2017-2018 ANNUAL REPORT **THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**





## Letter from the Vice President

The University of Texas Elementary School is one of the jewels of the East Austin community and of the University of Texas. More than 15 years ago this public charter school opened to become a demonstration school for urban education as well as a training facility for pre-service teachers in the College of Education.

We are extremely proud of the school's progress through the years as it has developed into an outstanding teaching and learning community that serves a diverse population of students. Our exceptional team under the direction of Superintendent Melissa Chavez and Principal Nicole Whetstone provides students the types of science, mathematics, reading, health and social and emotional learning programs that aren't often offered in a traditional public school setting. The past few years we have enrolled former Little Longhorns at UT Austin in the fields of computer science, engineering and business. The students and their parents credit the solid background provided at UT Elementary as crucial to their success.

Please take the time to look at our brief annual report to learn more about the school's faculty, staff and programs. Feel free to schedule a tour of the school to see first-hand the type of joyous educational experiences that more than 300 students from East Austin have a chance to experience each year.

Sincerely,

Dr. Leonard N. Moore  
Vice President for Diversity and Community Engagement  
George W. Littlefield Professor of American History



## Letter from the Superintendent

We are experiencing an exciting time of transformation at UT Elementary School. It was such fun watching our Little Longhorns exploring their newly renovated classrooms and play areas on the first day of the fall 2018 semester.

With a covered sport court and freshly painted, fully equipped classrooms, our campus is more welcoming and accessible than ever before—and I can't thank our friends and supporters enough for making this happen! Within these pages, you can meet two of our proud supporters who are passionate about education equality and specialized learning programs.

We have also highlighted our award-winning teachers and staff who have helped UT Elementary reach 100 percent in the Texas Education Agency's "Met Standard" rating. Our teams strive hard to serve our students' needs and this achievement adds to the pride we take in our work!

While our campus was under construction, our faculty and staff were also working on some improvements of their own in two professional development summer training programs, which also included a book study project of "The Fundamental 5: The Formula for Quality Instruction."

Like their students, our teachers are eager to learn and build upon their skillsets—and their enthusiasm seems to be catching! I hope you enjoy reading more about our talented team of educators and reviewing some highlights from this memorable academic year. Thank you for your support and hook 'em!

Sincerely,

Dr. Melissa M. Chavez  
Associate Vice President and Superintendent,  
UT Charter School System

## Teacher of the Year

**NOURA WAKIM**  
THIRD GRADE MATH  
AND SCIENCE

Wakim is a UT Austin alumna who has dedicated more than five years of service to UTES. She is currently pursuing a master's degree in educational psychology at UT Austin and is also taking on the role of math interventionist for the 2018-19 school year.



## UT Elementary Now Offering Pre-K-5 Spanish Lessons

The United States is largely monolingual. In fact, only about 20 percent of the total population speaks a language other than English, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Eunice Tanco, a 15-year veteran teacher at UT Elementary School, wants to help change that statistic.

During the fall 2018 semester, she began teaching interactive Spanish lessons to Little Longhorns of all grade levels. In her classes, she's opening them up to a new world filled with colorful folk art, music, traditional folklore and spicy cuisine.

She's also incorporating technology into her teachings, showing students how to research historical facts and practice their Spanish-speaking skills. At times, she'll open the floor to the students, allowing them to freely discuss their thoughts on the daily lessons.

"I encourage debates and open discussions to increase their understanding of Latin-root languages," says Tanco, who teaches Discovering Languages and Culture. "They must also experience an assortment of activities and field trips throughout the year."

UT Elementary Superintendent Dr. Melissa Chavez says she is excited that the school principal Dr. Nicole Whetstone has provided the opportunity for all students to learn another language.

"Learning another language gives our children a competitive edge in career choices," Chavez says. "It helps them establish deep connections and cross-cultural friendships, boost brain/ language development and, most importantly, it provides them with post-secondary (college readiness) skills early."

## Staff of the Year

**JESSICA LOREDO-CARRIZALES**  
ADMINISTRATIVE  
ASSISTANT

Loredo-Carrizales has been awarded for her outstanding work for UTES. She greets everyone with a warm smile and is helpful to every staff member, parent and student.



# Nurturing the Inner Scientist

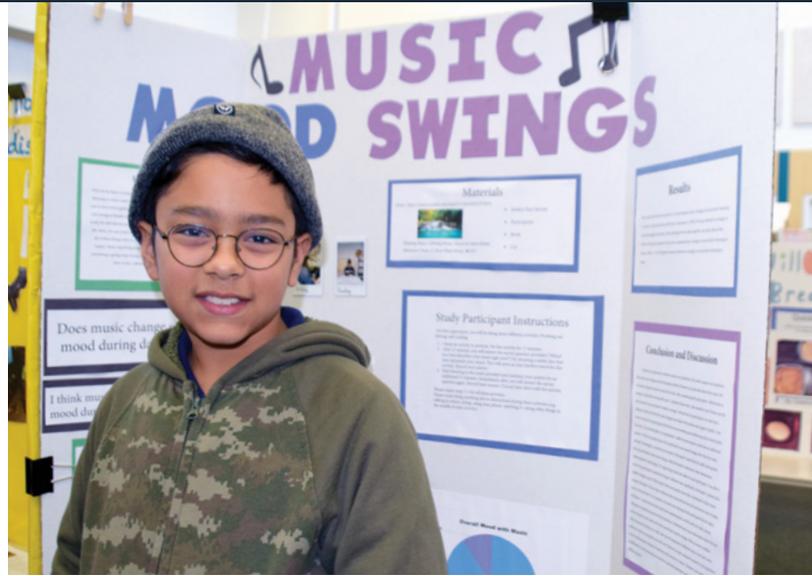
On any given day in UT Elementary's STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts and math) classroom, Little Longhorns are busily working on various activities—from building robots to exploring water harvesting systems. The school's dedication to the STEAM curriculum spurred UT Austin researcher Michele Mann to examine how the unique classroom environment helps facilitate science identity. She says the school provides a nearly perfect environment for nurturing the students' inner scientist.

The concept of science identity has become more important in recent years as there is a push to diversify the STEM fields.

"It is especially important for underrepresented students to have a strong science identity if they enter a STEM field in order to persevere," Mann explains.

Mann, who is working on a doctorate in science education, spent two academic years observing fourth- and fifth-grade UTES students in an ethnographic study examining how science identity is nurtured among young students in Scarlett Calvin's STEAM classrooms, and in school activities outside of the classroom.

Mann found the classroom environment, rich experiences offered to the students, and free time to play are factors that contribute to the formation of science identity. Examples include Rango, the class lizard, outdoor learning field trips and participation in science fairs.



She believes that the accepting environment fostered by the teachers and administrators and strong focus on student collaboration contribute to the positive environment for developing science identity as well.

"UT Elementary School offers so many valuable experiences that aren't necessarily available in other schools. The students truly value that," says Mann.



# The University of Texas Elementary School

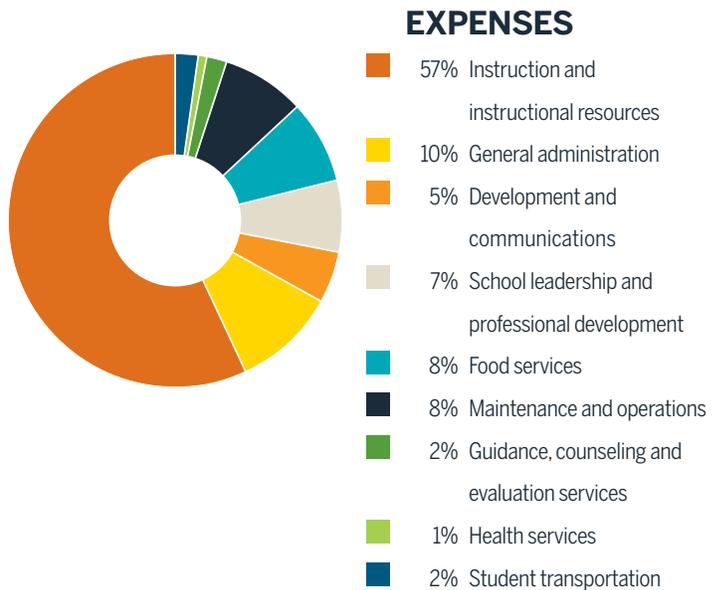
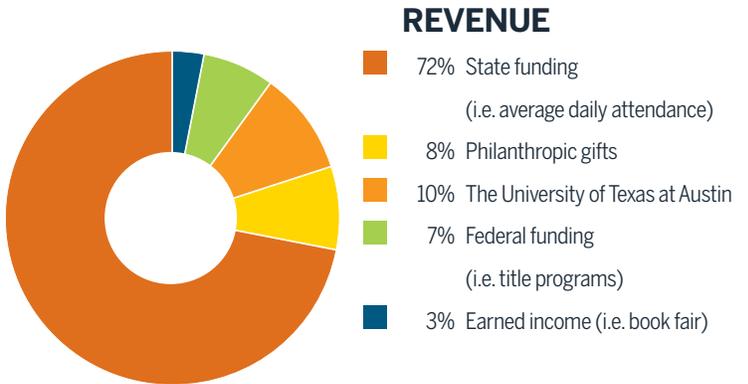
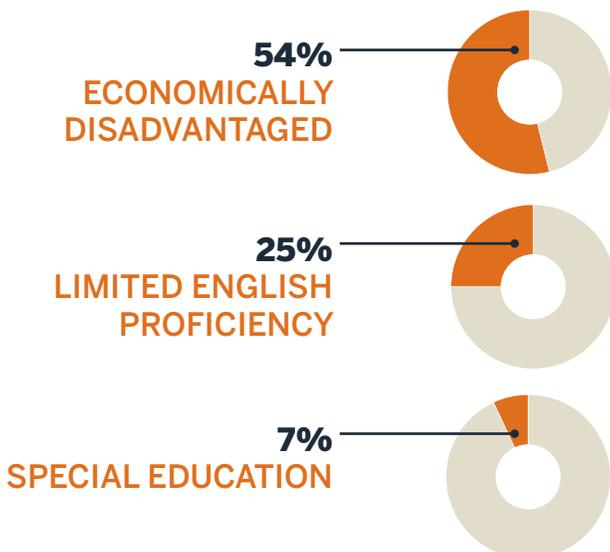
UT Elementary School was founded in 2003 as part of The University of Texas System's Every Child, Every Advantage initiative to support P-16 education. Operated by UT Austin, UT Elementary is an open-enrollment campus, free to students, with a lottery-based admission system. The school enrolls children in grade levels pre-kindergarten through fifth.

A unit within UT Austin's Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, UT Elementary serves as a research-based demonstration school. Not only does the school serve the children and families that come through its doors every day, it also trains the next generation of educators and disseminates best practices throughout the local, regional and national education landscapes.

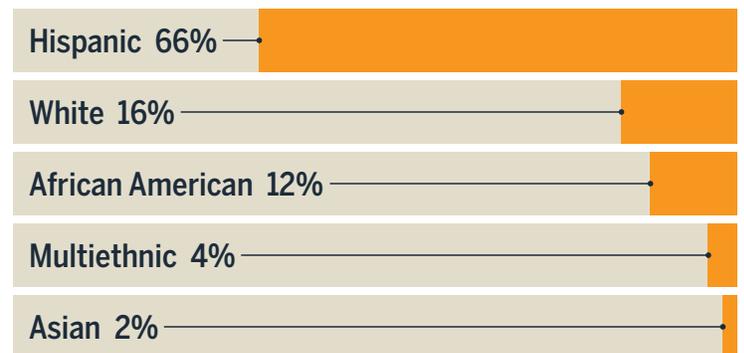
## Mission

1. To develop students into lifelong learners through rigorous, research-based curricula, individualized instruction, high expectations and a nurturing environment that includes parental and community involvement.
2. To provide opportunities for professional development and outreach for The University of Texas at Austin's academic unit.
3. To serve as a model of an exemplary educational program for diverse learners.

## Student Population Chart



## Student Demographics Chart



295 number of students served

# Friends and Supporters of UTES

## JAN AND DICK MCMILLAN

"UT Elementary is a wonderful school and it's a real pleasure being involved. It's one of our favorite places to visit when we're in Austin."



## SHERI AND JIM QUICK

"We saw that the children were very engaged and that they were working together in various activities. It's important to teach children how to learn in different ways, and to have them work in groups because they'll need those skills later in life when they're working with adults."



## New Semester, New Look!



Summer 2018 was a busy time of year for UT Elementary! All of the classrooms have been renovated, including updates to the floors, interior and exterior paint, new decking and modernized classroom technology.

These exciting new improvements were made possible by the generosity of our friends and supporters. We raise our horns to Jan and Dick McMillan, who provided \$250,000 to Phase I of the outdoor renovation project. They also provided \$250,000 to fund the Jan McMillan Family Endowment for Reading Intervention.

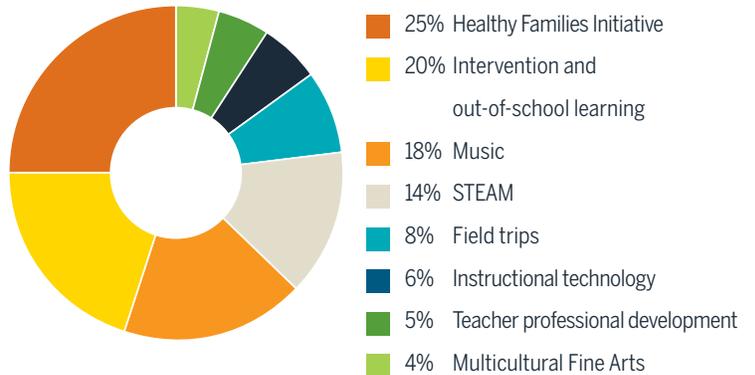
"It's important for young children to be outside, and I know the school does a lot of educational activities out in the play areas, so we hope these new additions will make the learning even more fun and enriching," says Jan McMillan.

More renovations are projected to be completed by fall 2019—including a large play area with a track and a new parking lot.

UT Elementary School relies on the generosity of individual, corporate and foundation supporters to offer innovative programming that sets our students on a path for success from Pre-K to Ph.D. and beyond.

## PHILANTHROPIC GIFTS

In 2017-18, philanthropic gifts supported the following areas:



If you wish to become a part of our work by investing in our mission, please visit [utelementary.org](http://utelementary.org) or contact us at 512-495-3300 or [ut.elementary@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:ut.elementary@austin.utexas.edu).



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