



ANNUAL REPORT 2018-2019



The University of Texas at Austin
University of Texas Elementary School



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
UNIVERSITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
2018–2019 ANNUAL REPORT

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MESSAGE FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT
Leonard Moore

UTES REFLECTS THE UNIVERSITY'S MISSION TO SERVE

For 17 years, UT Elementary School has been helping the university meet its core mission of service to the people of Texas. Under the leadership of Superintendent Melissa Chavez and Principal Nicole Whetstone, UT Elementary is able to offer a high-quality curricula to more than 300 students each year, including the kinds of specialized instruction that is often seen only in private schools, including music, STEAM, Spanish and social-emotional learning. The school has always served as a demonstration school for best practices in urban education and provides a venue for pre-service teachers from the College of Education to learn in an inclusive and educationally progressive environment.

In March, of course, comprehensive education became more difficult as the pandemic forced all schools to transition to online teaching and learning. UT Elementary rose to the challenge, however, with Dr. Chavez, Dr. Whetstone and members of their team quickly adapting curricula and teaching to an online format. Because more than half of the UT Elementary students are from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, many lacked the internet and computer capability needed for daily online learning. The administrators provided hotspots and laptops to families in need. By early April, all classes were online and running smoothly.

Dr. Chavez also ensured administrators at UT Elementary and within the entire UT Charter School system received needed professional development to stay abreast of the rapidly changing education landscape. The development coursework focused on Leading in a Time of Uncertainty, Managing Culture Remotely and Agility During Disruption.

We are grateful to the entire team at UT Elementary School for ensuring high-quality instruction continued during the 2020 spring and early fall semesters. There is no greater way to serve the state than by providing educational equity for our children.

Sincerely,

Leonard N. Moore

*Vice President for Diversity and Community Engagement
George W. Littlefield Professor in American History*



MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT
Melissa Chavez

UT CHARTER SCHOOL SYSTEM FACES PANDEMIC WITH TRAUMA-SENSITIVE STRATEGIES

In educational pedagogy, there are practices around creating a trauma-sensitive classroom and providing trauma-informed education. The basic concept is that teachers and caregivers need to approach their students being mindful that the student may have been through a life experience that was traumatic, and that this experience may have a significant impact on how the child develops and how they behave in a classroom.

For many years, UT-University Charter School has incorporated trauma-sensitive strategies in our classrooms. Our teachers have been specifically trained on how to create trauma-sensitive classrooms and lessons so students can build trusting relationships with teachers, they are taught to recognize their feelings through social-emotional learning and that their feelings are recognized and valid.

As a result of COVID-19, all of our students have experienced some level of trauma. From the loss of routine to seeing a family member ill, all of our children are feeling the real effects of trauma and our educators are part of the healing process for their developing minds. Recognizing that a global pandemic is a traumatic event in the life of a child, our schools are taking prescribed steps to care for the safety of our students and teachers but also allowing the grace to adapt to the necessary changes and the space for individual growth.

I am very proud of the strength and resilience that has been exhibited by the families, teachers and staff of UT Charter Schools—including UT Elementary School—during the global pandemic. As we follow our well-developed reopening plan to cautiously and incrementally bring our students and teachers together again, we will continue to incorporate trauma-sensitive education in every classroom.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melissa M. Chavez". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Melissa M. Chavez

Superintendent, UT-University Charter School System



TEACHER OF THE YEAR
Carly Kennedy
Third-Grade Math and Science Teacher

Growing up in a family of teachers, Carly Kennedy made it a point to explore different career paths, but yet she kept coming back to teaching. Some may even say that the passion for education runs in her DNA.

After high school, she went on to earn dual degrees in special and general education, and a master's in multicultural special education from the College of Education at UT Austin. A proud Longhorn, it only felt natural for her to teach at UT Elementary located just across the interstate from her alma mater.

Now well into her fourth year at the school, she has been recognized as the 2020 Teacher of the Year. Many of her colleagues commend her for the level of respect she brings to her students and fellow staff. In the classroom, she emphasizes mutual trust and self-accountability to help her Little Longhorns learn and grow.

"They are children and they are learning," Kennedy says. "It is OK to not be at your best every day, but students should bring their 'best self' – whatever it is that day – to the classroom."

Walk into Kennedy's classroom and it may appear that students are playing games as they laugh and bounce rubber balls off the floor. But they're really piecing together the order of the solar system and understanding the concept of solar and lunar rotations. This is just one example of how she incorporates hands-on learning into her teachings.

She hopes her students will come away from her class with a better understanding of math and science, subjects that are often intimidating for young learners.

"In math, students become investigators," Kennedy says. "They learn patterns and create their own resources and guides that they can take home. This has helped students take ownership of their learning. I'm always happy to hear them say, 'I love math now! It's a game.'"

Kennedy's nominators all agree that her inspirational, creative teachings, and her commitment to fostering an inclusive, respectful learning environment earn her the title of Teacher of the Year.



STAFF OF THE YEAR

Nurse Kelly Aguillon

As we salute our invaluable health care workers serving on the frontlines, we also raise our horns to Nurse Kerry Aguillon, who is going above and beyond to keep all of our Little Longhorns safe and healthy.

During the COVID-19 outbreak, she swiftly enacted new safety protocols and prevention measures for all students and staff. With more than 30 years of nursing experience, Aguillon brings a wealth of knowledge to the school, where she is revered by her colleagues as a champion of health and wellness and lead “boo-boo healer.”

During her three years of service at the school, the Belton, Texas native has taken great joy in working at a school that prioritizes the students’ total wellbeing.

“I love being connected to our future generation,” says Aguillon, who previously served as the Quality and Safety Program Coordinator at the “Big UT’s” University Health Service. “The opportunity to support individual health needs and impact wellness by caring and sharing life-lasting principles is an honor and a blessing. It’s a fun environment which brings joy to the work day.”

Aguillon’s road to nursing dates back to her high school days when she would rush home to watch M*A*S*H, a TV show that focused on a U.S. Army frontline surgical unit. She soon became a member of Health Occupation Students of America to get her start in a profession that would soon lead to a long, rewarding career.

“I began working at community hospitals during the school day, which sealed my interest in caring for people of all ages and a desire to pursue nursing as a profession,” she says.

Throughout her career, Aguillon has always followed the teachings of the famous Crimean War Nurse Florence Nightingale: “Let us never consider ourselves finished nurses...we must be learning all of our lives.”

“As nurses, we follow the guiding principles of Florence Nightingale,” she says. “Learning does not end; each day something new is learned, and there are few days alike.”



ROOKIE OF THE YEAR
Emelinda Baillo
Special Education/Dyslexia Teacher

Emelinda Baillo’s passion for special education stems from her early childhood days growing up in Cagayan de Oro City, located on the southern island of the Philippines.

On her daily walks to her school in the city, she would see school-age children with disabilities on the streets.

“Schools and teachers were not equipped to serve these types of learners,” Baillo says. “Even my childhood friend had a child with disabilities and was left to herself to teach him as the public school system didn’t have a place for him in overcrowded general-ed classes. This situation really sparked a burden in my heart and the need to help them.”

When she learned about a special education program at the University of San Carlos, she immediately seized the opportunity to answer her true calling. After completing her degree, she went on to pursue her master’s in special education and childhood education at Touro College and University System in Manhattan, New York City.

Now with two of her own children attending the Cockrell School of Engineering at the “Big UT,” she is happy to join the Longhorn family at UT Elementary.

“What I love the most about teaching at UTES, aside from the culture of having high expectations of learning for all students, is the thought that I am giving back to the university that has so richly blessed my family,” she says.

The joy of teaching special education, she says, is giving back to those who are facing similar hurdles and challenges that she endured while growing up in an impoverished mountainside community of the Philippines. Her goal is to make the biggest, most profound impact on her students so they, too, can maximize their full potential.

“My experience has taught me that to make a profound impact, I need to continually reflect on my performance and hone my knowledge and skills using effective, proven research,” Baillo says. “It has everything to do with my commitment and ability to help and reach out to all students with varying needs.”

NOW OPEN!

UTES Playfield

Thanks to our generous donors, another dream for UT Elementary School has come true! Our students now have a wide field for playtime and outdoor activities—including soccer, relay races and our annual Field Day.

We are also happy to announce the completion of a staff parking lot, which offers safe and secure parking in a convenient area.

Now we are looking forward to more campus improvements including shaded structures for the classroom decks and playscape, and new additions to the playground. The school is also planning for its community legacy through personalized and sponsored tiles for the wall around the playscape, the installation of benches featuring memorial plaques, and the “Orchard Walk” to line the trail on the east side of the campus.



Students participate in the annual Field Day.

NEW ENDOWMENT

Horns Up!



We raise our horns to UT alumnus Richard Simon for establishing the Richard L. Simon Excellence Fund to help our school deliver its mission. This gift will provide annual funding for programming in perpetuity.

Mr. Simon joins the list of UT Elementary endowment holders who have made an investment in the futures of the children we serve.

- **G. Bradley Bourland UT Elementary School Library Book Fund**
- **Criaco Family Endowed Excellence Fund**
- **Ira and Muriel Maxie Endowment**
- **Jan McMillian Family Endowment for Reading Intervention**
- **Randy and Lisa Ramirez Dissemination of Educational Best Practices Endowment**
- **Sheri Schember Quick and James Campbell Quick Endowed Excellence Fund for UT Elementary**
- **Richard L. Simon Excellence Fund**

For more information on UT Elementary endowments, please visit:

<https://utelementary.org/support-us/endowments-for-ut-elementary/>

MENTOR SPOTLIGHT

Mickey Klein

Since graduating from UT Austin in the early 1960s, Michael “Mickey” Klein (B.S. Petroleum Engineering '58, LLB '63) has been a longtime supporter of his alma mater. When he learned about UT Elementary School, he and his wife Jeanne—also a proud UT graduate (B.S. Special Education '67)—soon became involved with the school and supported its efforts to teach to the spirit of every child.

“As a consequence, they inspire me, teach me, make me happy—and every day when I leave, they have given more to me than I have to them.”
—Mickey Klein

Now well into his 14th year of volunteering at UT Elementary, Klein meets with fourth- and fifth-graders on a weekly basis for mentoring sessions. Together, they work on semester-long projects and explore an array of discussion topics. Last year’s group of student mentees—Bader, Corinna, Noah and Sophia—all agreed that the small group setting benefitted their studies and boosted their confidence.

“My desire is to impart some of my life experiences and knowledge to the younger generation in the hope that I can inspire them to get a deeper understanding of the world,” Klein says. “As a consequence, they inspire me, teach me, make me happy—and every day when I leave, they have given more to me than I have to them.”

For years to come, all of the students who work with Klein will remember feeling special and being heard.



Mickey Klein mentors fourth graders Noah, Bader and Corinna.

A BIG DREAM COMES TRUE

Valerie Flores



UTES ALUM HEADS TO LAW SCHOOL

While attending UT Elementary, Valerie Flores learned many life lessons that served her well long after graduation. The best takeaway of all, she says, was the confidence in her ability to get admitted into her dream school.

“It was instilled in all of us that if we wanted to be a ‘Big Longhorn’, we could,” says Flores, who holds the distinction of being the first UTES alum to graduate from UT Austin. “We heard it from our teachers, from our parents, and it was really impressed on all of us during the field trips we took to the UT Campus.”

After fifth-grade graduation, Flores was determined to become a Longhorn—even if it meant taking a detour along the way. Prior to enrolling at UT Austin, she had to meet a set of requirements through the Coordinated Admissions Process (CAP), which included attending a UT System school for a year and achieving a 3.2 or higher GPA. Despite this minor setback, Flores stayed the course, excelled in her classes at UT San Antonio and achieved her goal.

“If you want it bad enough, you can do it,” Flores says. “Little Longhorns might face challenges such as not knowing if college is a possibility be-

cause of financial stress. Or perhaps they are struggling in school and the frustration has them thinking they should just give up. Well they should know it never gets any easier and that the only way to get through it is to persevere!”

Now Flores is ready to embark on her next big challenge as she prepares for law school in fall 2021. She discovered this path while taking a class taught by William Kelly, director of the university’s Center for Criminology and Criminal Justice Research.

“I am interested in going to law school because I have learned about problems that are created and perpetuated by corrupt systems that exist in this country, which can be improved through better policy,” Flores says. “I hope to use my law degree to later become an advocate and a changemaker.”

Looking back at her academic journey, Flores attributes much of her success to her supportive mother and her teachers at UT Elementary. She’s also grateful for the instructors who instilled lifelong lessons in health and wellness including Brian Dauenhauer “Coach D,” Ms. Post and Ms. Tran.

“Ms. Post was the sweetest, kindest teacher ever,” Flores says. “I was struggling and she taught me how to believe in myself, and how to be patient with myself. As Little Longhorns, we believed we could accomplish our goals if we had someone behind us telling us that we could.”

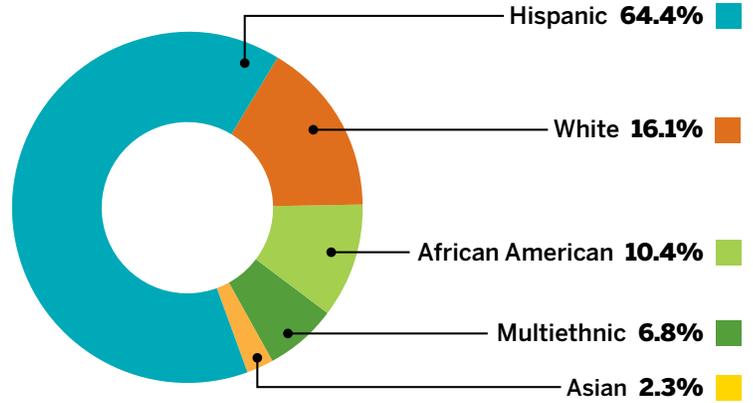
REVENUE & EXPENSES

| | |
|---------------------|-------------|
| State Funding | 73% |
| UT Austin | 9% |
| Philanthropic Gifts | 7% |
| Federal Funding | 7% |
| Earned Income | 4% |
| \$3,476,388 | 100% |

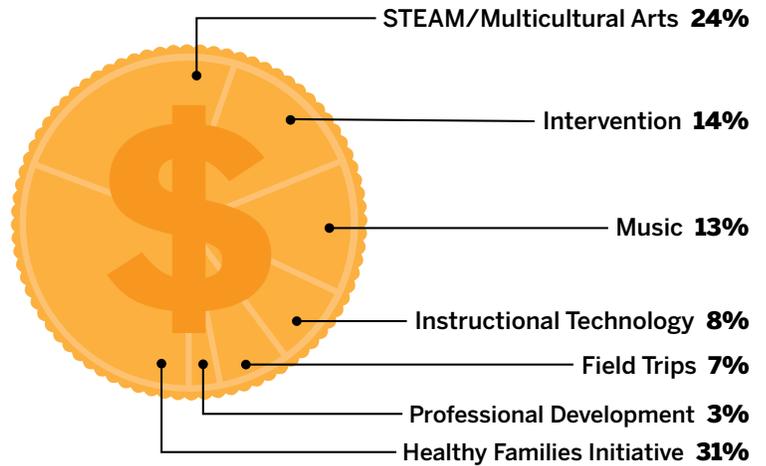


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| Instruction and Instructional Resources | 60% |
| General Administration | 10% |
| Maintenance and Operations | 9% |
| Development | 7% |
| School Leadership and Professional Development | 6% |
| Guidance, Counseling and Evaluation Services | 3% |
| Food Services | 2% |
| Student Transportation | 2% |
| Data Processing Services | 1% |
| Health Services | 1% |
| \$2,861,007 | 100% |

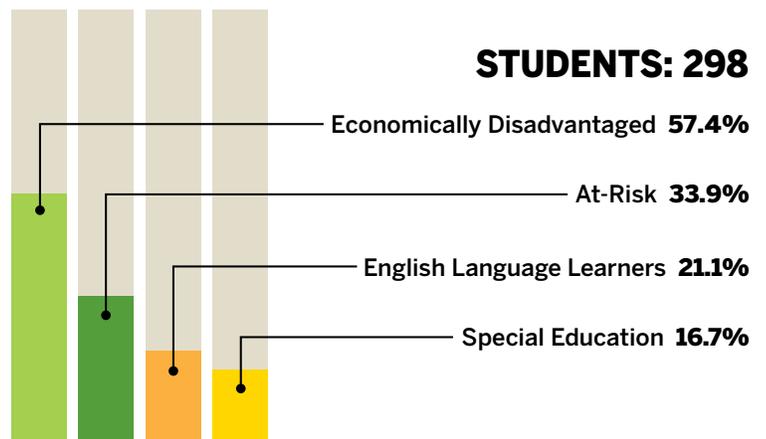
STUDENTS DEMOGRAPHICS



PHILANTHROPIC GIFT EXPENDITURES



STUDENT POPULATION



Data based on 2018-2019 Texas Academic Performance Report available from the Texas Education Agency.



The University of Texas at Austin
University of Texas Elementary School

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 units; and
3. To serve as a model of an exemplary educational program for diverse learners.

VISIT US ONLINE
<https://utelementary.org>

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The University of Texas at Austin
**Division of Diversity and
Community Engagement**

The University of Texas Elementary School is a unit within
the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement at The University of Texas at Austin.