

# ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



The University of Texas at Austin  
University of Texas  
Elementary School



# Leadership Quotes



*“The Little Longhorns are a shining example of how the University can build a sense of belonging among a variety of communities. UT Elementary students and their families, no matter their life experience or background, are provided with opportunities to envision themselves being successful at The University of Texas at Austin.”*

**Dr. LaToya Smith**

Vice President for Diversity and Community Engagement; Assistant Professor of Practice, College of Education

*“The partnerships that have been created by UT Elementary over the past 20 years have provided many mutually beneficial opportunities for the University and the Austin community. Innovative education models, including those for special needs children, have been provided to our students while their outcomes are valuable research data for UT.”*

**Dr. Melissa Chavez**

Associate Vice President, the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement; Executive Director, the University of Texas Charter School System



*“UT Elementary has the expertise and dedication to provide programs to improve our students’ learning opportunities and academic outcomes.”*

**Dr. Nicole Whetstone**

Superintendent, UT Charter School System

# UT System Regents Visit UT Elementary



*From left to right: Community supporters Pat Oles and Mickey Klein, Regent Jodie Jiles, Associate Vice President Melissa Chavez, Regent Stuart W. Stedman and Superintendent Nicole Whetstone.*

UT Elementary was delighted to host a tour for two Regents from The University of Texas System (UT System). In late May 2022, Regents Jodie Lee Jiles and Stuart W. Stedman toured our campus along with our longtime supporters Mickey Klein and Pat Oles. The regents, who are both from the Houston area, were in Austin to attend a UT System meeting and took time to visit with our staff and students.

The UT Elementary School was chartered by the UT System as the first university-sponsored charter school in Texas. The chancellor and regents have been integral partners with our school over the years, and we are incredibly grateful for their support.

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND BOOK STUDY

Every year, faculty and staff from UT Elementary and UT University Charter School partake in a year-long book study and accompanying professional development. These activities are some of the ways that our school districts remain leaders in incorporating best practices into our classrooms.

For the 2022-2023 school year, the book chosen was “What Happened to You? Conversations on Trauma, Resilience and Healing” by Bruce D. Perry, M.D. Ph.D. and Oprah Winfrey. The book study was led by Michelle Maikoetter. Ms. Maikoetter is a Certified Child Trauma Fellow in Dr. Perry’s Neurosequential Model as well as the Chief Program Officer at Cal Farley’s Boys Ranch in North Texas. At the convocation in August 2022, Michelle laid the groundwork for the model that staff will be learning with a very engaging and participatory presentation.

Additionally, Andrea Menchaca, UT Charter School System’s Social and Emotional Coordinator led workshops on Dr. Perry’s

“Neurosequential Model in Education.” Dr. Perry’s model explains how our brains take in and respond to information and stimuli, providing guidance on how to best educate – not just children who have had traumatic experiences – but all children.



*Michelle Maikoetter speaks at the UT Charter School System Convocation in August 2022*

# Strategic Planning Kick-Off



Jeanne Klein at Strategic Planning Kick-off in May 2023

UT Elementary began the process of creating our five-year Strategic Plan for 2023-2028. The committee was comprised of: UT Elementary Management Board Members, a representative of The University of Texas System, community supporters, parents, faculty and staff. The committee met several times throughout the year to provide guidance on the goals and ac-

tions that UT Elementary will follow when implementing programs and projects.

UT Elementary is grateful to our committee members. Their time, experience and expertise will guide our school so that it can continue to serve as a national model and be worthy of Texas' flagship institution.

## UT ELEMENTARY STRATEGIC PLANNING LEADERSHIP TEAM

**Dr. LaToya Smith,**  
Vice President, UT Austin

**Mark Williams,**  
Board Member

**Dr. Nicole Whetstone,**  
Superintendent

**Dr. Jennifer Maedgen,**  
Senior Associate Vice President, UT Austin

**Dr. Randa Safady,**  
Founder, Vice Chancellor, UT System

**Dr. Autumn Leal,**  
Assistant Superintendent

**Dr. Melissa Chavez,**  
Founder, Associate Vice President/Executive Director

**Mickey and Jeanne Klein,**  
Supporters

**Jenny Davis,**  
CFO

**Dr. William Lasher,**  
Founder, Chair of the Management Board

**Dr. Shasta Buchanan,**  
Board Member

**Dr. Andrea Holman,**  
Parent

**Kathy Armenta,**  
Chair of Strategic Planning Committee,  
Board Member

**Rae Ann Banda,**  
Staff/Parent

**Joyce Jurado,**  
Parent

**Dr. Kal Kallison,**  
Board Member

**Maria Figueroa,**  
Teacher



# Research at UT Elementary: Can STEM be Incorporated Into the Humanities?

Two of UT Elementary's founding directives were to 1) include a stand-alone Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) class for every student and 2) to facilitate research conducted by The University of Texas at Austin. These directives are coming to life with the work of Dr. Emma Gargroetzi.

Dr. Emma Gargroetzi is an Assistant Professor of STEM Education in the College of Education. In 2022, Emma was selected as a National Academy of Education/Spencer Postdoctoral Fellow for her research in Transdisciplinary Civic Learning and Collaboration.



UT Elementary Board Member Starla Simmons helps judge the Science Fair

In this research, she hypothesizes that if elementary and secondary teachers from different disciplines (e.g. Humanities and STEM) work together in both local and national collaboratives to create cooperative lessons, it can improve student engagement in literacy, mathematics and civics.

An example of Dr. Gargroetzi's work was seen in UT Elementary's 2023 Science Fair. STEAM teacher, Scarlett Calvin, worked with students to have their science fair projects focus on a community problem. Students studied community issues in their Social Studies class and then used the scientific method to research an issue of their choice.

Ms. Calvin said: "It was a pivotal time in my teaching practice to work with Dr. Gargroetzi and our other teachers and researchers on the Transdisciplinary Civic Learning and Collaboration Project. It allowed me to collaborate in ways I had not before as well as consider and apply new approaches to learning that students were very passionate about."

Dr. Gargroetzi's work builds on some of the research that was the foundation for UT Elementary. Earlier research showed that STEM education helps students see the connections between Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. Dr. Gargroetzi's work is the next step – a STEM/STEAM connection to other disciplines, including the Humanities and Civics.

UT Elementary is happy to be part of this research project in partnership with the UT College of Education. We look forward to when Dr. Gargroetzi publishes her work and can share the best practices she finds because *What Starts Here Changes the World*.

## RESEARCH PROJECTS ON THE UT ELEMENTARY CAMPUS

The following research projects were conducted at UT Elementary during the 2022-2023 school year:

- "Effectiveness of Leveled Literacy Intervention Intermediate" by Dr. Sharon Vaughn and doctoral student Sarah Fishstrom
- "Transdisciplinary Civic Learning: Supporting Student Learning, Identities, and Engagement at the Intersection of STEM and the Humanities" by Dr. Emma Gargroetzi
- "Developing Teacher Self-Efficacy Utilizing Culturally Responsive Teaching: A Design Study Focused on the Academic Achievement of Culturally Diverse Learners" by doctoral student Janina Roberts
- "The Impact of Teaching Social Emotional Learning Using Audio Stories (Podcasts)" by doctoral student Elizabeth Brown and Superintendent Dr. Nicole Whetstone

# From Little Longhorns to Big UT



From left to right, Jasmin King and Wynter Winston, both UT Elementary, class of 2012, and UT Austin, class of 2026.

In 2015, Jasmin King and Wynter Winston were in fifth grade at UT Elementary. They had become friends over their years as classmates, but they knew they had to forge their own way into the world. Wynter focused on her love of dance. After leaving UT Elementary, she enrolled in fine arts academies for middle and high school allowing her to follow her passion. Jasmin, who had discovered her love of digital arts while creating stop-motion animation videos in UT Elementary’s STEAM class, enrolled in schools that combined access to technology and rigorous academics. In May 2022, Wynter graduated from the Fine Arts Academy at McCallum High School and Jasmin from Austin High School.

Both students worked hard— inside the classroom and out. Their diligent efforts enabled them to earn acceptance into The University of Texas at Austin for the fall of 2022. Attending “Big UT” was their dream come true. To top it off, Jasmin and Wynter also became roommates. Now, up on the Forty Acres, the two Little Longhorns are living their big dreams at Big UT.

## LITTLE LONGHORN TENACITY: COLLEGE ENROLLMENT AND PERSISTENCE

UT Elementary is a Title I school because over half of our student body have consistently come from low-income households.

When comparing postsecondary activities (training, college or university) of UT Elementary alumni with comparable regional and state low-income graduates, UT Elementary students have consistently higher rates of postsecondary enrollment (both two and four-year) and equal rates of college persistence as compared to Central Texas and statewide students.

Postsecondary Enrollment			Postsecondary Persistence		
UTES	Central Texas	TX	UTES	Central Texas	TX
68%	41%	47%	78%	76%	75%

State and Central Texas student data for high school graduates from 2015 to 2019 sourced from the University of Texas Education Research Center and aggregated by the E3 Alliance. UT Elementary alumni college data is from the National Student Clearinghouse. Persistence rates are measured by the number of postsecondary students who return for a second year.



# UT Elementary Faculty and Staff Win Accolades

Every spring, UT Elementary faculty and staff nominate colleagues to be recognized as the Teacher of the Year, Rookie of the Year and Staff of the Year. Additionally, this year, an award was given for New Teacher of the Year. The difference between “New Teacher” and “Rookie” is that “Rookies” are new to UT Elementary, not teaching, and “New Teachers” are in their first year in a classroom.

*“Working in any kitchen, you’re usually behind the scenes and your work goes unnoticed, so to be nominated was huge. To actually be recognized and get the award is priceless.”*

## STAFF OF THE YEAR

**Nicole Stevens**  
Assistant Food  
Service Supervisor



## TEACHER OF THE YEAR

**Jennie Noonan**  
Kindergarten



## ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

**Katie Dryer**  
Fourth Grade ELA &  
Social Studies

*“I am so grateful to have been recognized as this year’s New Teacher of the Year. Getting to work with UT Elementary students and staff each day is a privilege. I am thankful for the staff community here and how we support each other. My colleagues and the support they gave me helped my first year be successful. I am fortunate to be able to work with the students at UT Elementary.”*

## NEW TEACHER OF THE YEAR

**AJ Marks**  
Music and Orchestra



# Visualize Graduation Society



Little Longhorns  
Big Dreams

## VISUALIZE GRADUATION SOCIETY

Levels of Support

DOCTORATE	MASTERS	BACHELORS
\$25,000	\$12,500	\$5,000
\$5,000/yr	\$2,500/yr	\$1,000/yr
\$417/mo	\$208/mo	\$83/mo

UT Elementary’s Visualize Graduation Society (VGS) is a multi-year giving society for those who have pledged to invest at least \$1,000 per year for a period of five years or more. VGS members play a critical role in helping UTES fulfill its mission as a research-based demonstration school that sets students on a successful path from Pre-Kindergarten through Ph.D.

Funds provided by VGS members directly support UT Elementary’s Margin of Excellence Programs, a set of additional initiatives and classes that exceed basic Texas educational standards. Many schools, especially more well-funded ones, provide these additional classes predominantly as after-school programs or for a portion of their student body. UT Elementary and our school framers believe that these initiatives should be provided to every student so they may experience the benefits that this educational foundation provides. Margin of Excellence programs are not included in our state funding. As a result, UT Elementary must fundraise approximately \$150,000 every year to support these initiatives.

UT Elementary’s Margin of Excellence Programs are:

- Spanish Language and World Cultures
- STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math)
- Music Programs (including General Music, Music Production and Orchestra)
- Social and Emotional Learning

To learn more, join our VGS giving society, or support our annual spring fundraiser, please contact Sharon Yarbrough, Director of Development and Communications, at [sharon.yarbrough@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:sharon.yarbrough@austin.utexas.edu).



# 2023 Visualize Graduation Society Members



## DOCTORATE

Sherry Melecki

## MASTERS

Sammy Antoun  
Lou Ann & Bill Lasher  
Molly & Ed Sharpe  
Mallory & James Shaddix  
Christina & Andrew Smith  
Linda & Mark Williams

## BACHELORS

Melissa Chavez  
Barbara & David Gamble  
Wilmeter Haynes  
Alice & Keith Maxie  
Shannon Hudnall  
Janice Slagter  
Ramona Treviño  
Ronnie Volkening

## UT ELEMENTARY ANNUAL FUND DONORS

### \$10,000 +

Jeanne & Mickey Klein  
Jan & Richard McMillan  
Sheri & James Quick

### \$5,000 TO \$9,999

Buena Vista Foundation  
Julie & Pat Oles  
The Texas Cowboys

### \$1,000 TO \$4,999

Martha Coons  
Friends of the University  
HNTB  
Lawrence Huang  
The University of Texas System  
The University Masonic Lodge  
Foundation  
West Austin Youth Association  
Westside Group

### UP TO \$999

Berkeley Stoltz-Alarcia & Javier Alarcia  
Corby Alfred  
Asha Lakshmi Allam  
American Heart Association  
Kathleen & Richard Armenta  
Lisa Avra  
Amy Beebe & Nick Anderson  
Leslie Blair  
Patricia Bonner  
David B. Bourland  
Mary Ann & Rick Carney  
Craig Clark  
Kathleen Daniels  
Jenny Davis  
Nada Dorman

Angela Doucette  
Roosevelt Easley  
Patsy Edwards  
Regina & Felipe Estrada  
Clarice Evans Gatlin  
Tyrrell Flawn & John Howe  
Heidi Johnson  
Laura Johnson  
Kal Kallison  
Lonnie Limon  
Alexandra Loukas  
Robert Lum  
Elizabeth Maloch  
Guillermo Martinez  
Ginni Mithoff  
Elizabeth Myers

National Park Trust  
Rebecca Palmer  
Jason Poon  
Greg Roberts  
LaToya Smith  
Michelle Robinson Spencer  
Menthola Stevenson  
Strawbridge Studios  
Sharon Vaughn  
VISA Inc.  
Suzanne Wallen  
Melissa Wetzel  
Robert White  
Stockton Williams  
Helen M. Wormington  
Sharon Yarbrough

# The Beuerlein Legacy of Educational Equity

An endowment is a gift that allows a program you believe in to be funded in perpetuity. This type of gift has a long-lasting impact on the program and people it serves. UT Elementary is the proud recipient of the newly established Laura and Steve Beuerlein Endowment for Educational Equity. The Beuerlein's' gift will support the learning and sharing of best educational practices in alignment with UT's motto: What Starts Here Changes the World.

For many years, the Beuerlein's have been supporters of UT Elementary. "UT Elementary has the unique opportunity to help improve our community and bolster the University's role in doing so. We also believe that aspiration and ambition come in many different forms and across the entire spectrum of humanity; we hope to provide equitable educational opportunities to those who sincerely seek them," says Laura Beuerlein.

The Beuerlein's chose to dedicate their gift to educational equity because "We've seen the transformational power of education to help people achieve better outcomes for their lives. Education is the single most important avenue for aspiring, capable young people to effect change in their lives and for their communities. We believe that personal aspiration and ambition need to be met with institutional knowledge and discipline in order to form capable individuals and produce meaningful results."

Laura and Steve added: "We are grateful for the opportunity to assist in leveraging UT Austin's educational expertise and Austin's



*Laura and Steve Beuerlein*

underserved communities to achieve a more just and equitable society." UT Elementary and the Little Longhorns are grateful to have the Beuerlein's as an integral part of our school community!

## THANK YOU TO OUR CURRENT ENDOWMENT HOLDERS:

- Bradley Bourland UT Elementary School Library Book Fund
- Criaco Family Endowed Excellence Fund
- Ira and Muriel Maxie Endowment
- Jan McMillan 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
- Laura and Steve Beuerlein Endowment for Educational Equity

Endowments expand our offerings and secure the future of these programs for years to come. To establish an endowment with UT Elementary, or for additional information, please contact: Sharon Yarbrough, Director of Development and Communications, at [sharon.yarbrough@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:sharon.yarbrough@austin.utexas.edu).



# Dr. Lasher Honored with the Dan Burck Visionary Award

The Dan Burck Visionary Award was established in 2017 to honor long-standing supporters who have made a remarkable commitment to the success of UT Elementary School. Presented at UT Elementary's Annual Giving Event, the award is named after R. D. (Dan) Burck (1933-2015). As UT System Chancellor from 2000-2003, Mr. Burck was instrumental in establishing our school and setting it on a path for long-term success. Every year, school leaders recognize a school champion who shares in Chancellor Burck's vision and commitment. In spring 2023, the UT Elementary community unanimously chose to honor Dr. William F. (Bill) Lasher.

*"Dr. Lasher cares about the success of our school, both operationally and academically."*

**Dr. Melissa Chavez**



*Dr. William F. Lasher at Dr. Seuss Day 2023*



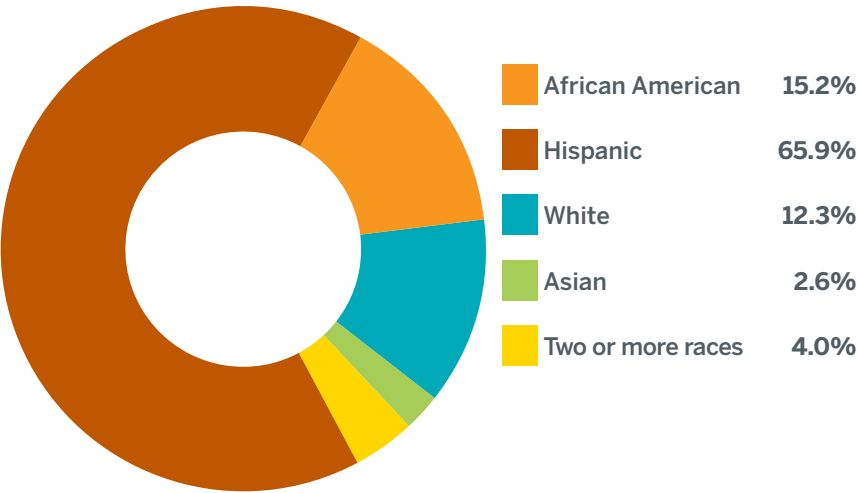
*Dr. William F. Lasher with Dr. Nicole Whetstone*

Dr. Lasher has been involved with UT Elementary since before it opened. Dr. Lasher, who was in the Provost's Office at the time, served as the liaison between The University of Texas System that created UT Elementary and The University of Texas at Austin that would oversee the school. He has been involved with the UTES Management Board, especially the Finance Committee, ever since.

"Dr. Lasher was unanimously chosen for this award because he has provided consistent and significant support since our school's inception. Dr. Lasher cares about the success of our school, both operationally and academically. He has continually served on board as a shining example of how board members share their expertise, provide oversight and guidance, and represent our school in the community," says Dr. Melissa Chavez, associate vice president and executive director of the UT Charter School System.

# Financials and Demographic Information

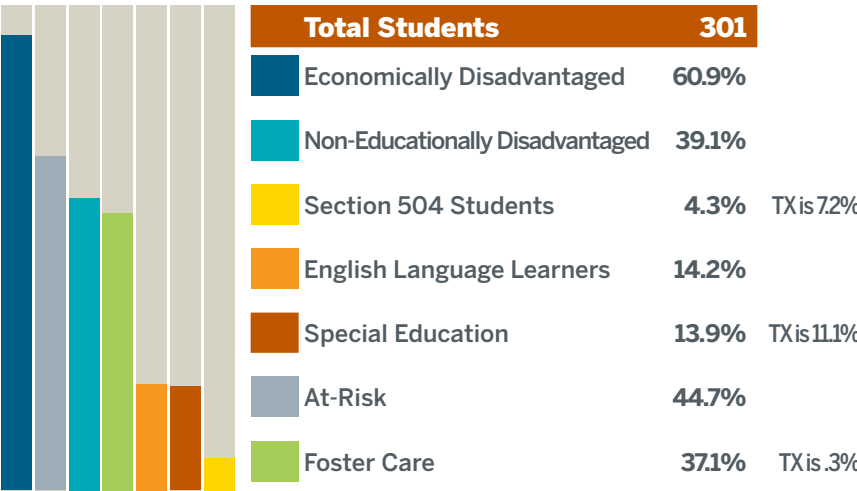
## STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



State Funding	66%
Philanthropic Gifts	6%
UT Austin	7%
Federal Funding	19%
Earned Income	2%
<b>\$4,335,436</b>	<b>100%</b>



## STUDENT POPULATION



Instruction and Instructional Resources	60%
School Leadership- and Professional Development	11%
Guidance, Counseling and Evaluation Services	<1%
Health Services	1%
Food Service	7%
General Administration	7%
Maintenance and Operation	8%
Security and Monitoring Services	<1%
Data Processing Services	1%
Development	4%
<b>\$3,878,420</b>	<b>100%</b>

Financial information is based on the 2021-2022 audited financials and the Texas Academic Performance Report.

Additional financial and academic information is available on our website under the Public Information section.



## 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.

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VISIT US ONLINE AT  
[www.utelementary.org](http://www.utelementary.org)

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## THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 2022-2023 MANAGEMENT BOARD

Sherry Field, Ph.D., Chair

J.E. Johnson

Mark J. Williams

Kathy Armenta, Ph.D.

James Kallison, Ph.D.

Nicole Whetstone, Ph.D.,  
Superintendent (Non-Voting)

Shasta Buchanan, Ph.D.

Bill Lasher, Ph.D.

Melissa M. Chavez, Ph.D.,  
Associate Vice President  
and Executive Director (Non-Voting)

Debra Cantu, Ph.D.

Jessica Loredó

Felipe Estrada

Victor Saenz, Ph.D.

Jennifer Maedgen, Ph.D.  
Senior Associate Vice President  
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Alexandra Eusebi

Starla Simmons

Cynthia Franklin, Ph.D.

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