

**University of Texas Elementary School
Management Board
Austin, Texas
August 26, 2025**

Attendees

- Board Members:
 - Present: Dr. Kal Kallison, J E Johnson, Dr. Bill Lasher, Dr. Yulanda McCarty-Harris, Dr. Jennifer Smith, Kathy Armenta, Dr. Sarah Woulfin, Mark Williams, Dr. Katie Tackett, Jolie Kinyamahanga, Laura Torres, Starla Simmons, Dr. Laura Estep
 - Absent: Eddie Lopez, Dr. Alex Eusebi
 - Non-voting board associates present: Dr. Melissa Chavez, Lara Wilder, Connor Habhab
 - Non-voting board associates absent: Jeremy Chen
- Guests: Dr. Victor Saenz
- UT-UCS Staff: Bob Micks, Jenny Davis, Dr. Nicole Whetstone, Sharon Yarbrough, Dr. Autumn Leal-Shopp, Giovanni Cantoran

I. Call to Order and Establish Quorum

Dr. Lasher called the meeting to order at 11:35 AM and noted that a quorum was present.

II. Welcome and Recognition of Special Guests

Dr. Lasher informed the board that recent legislation mandates that board members who are participating online must have their cameras on.

III. Citizen Comments

IV. Items for Consideration by Consent

- a. Consider approval of the Consent Agenda.

A motion that the Consent Agenda be approved was made by Dr. Kallison and seconded by Dr. McCarty-Harris

For – 13 Opposed – 0 Abstain – 0 Absent – 2

V. Action Items

- a. Consider approval of a 2025-2026 Budget amendment
Dr. Kallison reminded the board that the SY 25-26 budget was approved in April but new funding has been appropriated by recent legislature. The result of HB17 resulted in a modest increase of about \$280,000 but much of that is mandated for certain expenses including teacher salaries. Did not cover the increase in cost for their benefits. We have cost sharing with our sister school districts and we were able to reduce the deficit by that sharing. Jenny Davis explained that while costs are being shared, the level of services at the school are remaining the same. HB2 included the Teacher Retention

Allotment and we had 19 teachers who received the increase for teachers with 5 + years of experience, 1 teacher with 3-4 years and 2 not eligible because they have been teaching less than 3 years. There was also a change in the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA) that comes with additional funding for qualifying teachers.

Dr. Lasher asked how many teachers participate in the TIA?

Dr. Whetstone answered around 12.

Ms. Davis explained that there will be changes coming next year on how special education funding is weighted. We will know more after the first of the year. Another cost share is that UTPD has agreed to pay for our office for another fiscal year.

Mark Williams asked about the increases as they relate to the funding being on a biannual.

Ms. Davis explained that many of the changes do not start until the 26-27 school year.

Dr. Saenz wanted to highlight that the teacher salary increases are permanent but only funded through the 26-27 school year.

A motion to approve was made by Kal Kallison and seconded by Sarah Woulfin

For – 13 Opposed – 0 Abstain – 0 Absent – 2

b. Consider the approval of the HB 1605 Local Review of Instructional Materials

Dr. Whetstone explained the new mandate for the state HB05 is to increase transparency with parents. Parents can request a local review of classroom materials. We have created a form for parents to make the request. If the request qualifies, the request will be put before the board. Parent request submission window opens on 9/1/25. TEA has put out rubrics for the review committee to use to complete this process.

Dr. Lasher asked how will parents know?

Dr. Whetstone said it will go out in the Thursday folders to parents.

Dr. Lasher asked how many parents might we expect?

Dr. Whetstone said we don't really know.

J.E. Johnson asked the scope of what the request could be?

Dr. Whetstone said it could be anything from the granular to the overview. She explained that the board has already approved the instructional materials and we only use approved, research-based materials.

J.E. Johnson asked if it is for something that was said in the classroom.

Dr. Whetstone explained it has to be a material used in the classroom: a book, etc.

Mark Williams asked if we have to report requests back to TEA and if there is cost gathering considerations by TEA?

Dr. Whetstone explained that yes, we will have to report back to TEA but the process is not created yet so we do not know if it will include cost gathering considerations. This begins September 1, 2025.

Amendment we adjust the reporting that the parent review instead of going to the full board, it will go to the education and research committee of the board.

A motion to approve was made by Mark Williams and seconded by J E Johnson

For – 13 Opposed – 0 Abstain – 0 Absent – 2

- c. Consider approval of a research project, “Supporting Curriculum Literacy in Teacher Education”

Dr. Whetstone explained that there are multiple research proposals on desk this year. All of the proposals have been reviewed by the Research and Education Committee of the board before they are presented here.

Dr. Melissa Wetzel is proposing to study the teacher -in-residence who is currently working in Pre-K.

A motion to approve was made by Kal Kallison and seconded by Dr. McCarty-Harris

For – 13 Opposed – 0 Abstain – 0 Absent – 2

- d. Consider approval of a research project, “Project ALIGN: Examining the Efficacy of Aligning Core Content-Area Reading Instruction and Small Group Reading Intervention for Students with Reading Disabilities”

Dr. Whetstone explained that this study is being done across the state working with our 5th grade ELAR/SS teacher and our 5ht grade reading interventionist. This is one of two studies with the Meadows Center.

A motion to approve was made by Bill Lasher and seconded by J E Johnson

For – 13 Opposed – 0 Abstain – 0 Absent – 2

- e. Consider approval of a research project, “Computer Assisted Collaborative Strategic Reading (CA-CSR)”

Dr. Whetstone explained that this is a computer-assisted version of a program that was created by Dr. Sharon Vaughn, also of the Meadows Center.

A motion to approve was made by Kal Kallison and seconded by Yulanda McCarty-Harris

For – 13 Opposed – 0 Abstain – 0 Absent – 2

VI. Reports/Discussion Items

- a. Chair’s report – Dr. Bill Lasher

b. Chief Executive Officer's report – Dr. Melissa Chavez

Dr. Chavez shared with the board many of the legislative updates. SB12 is a very big bill and we are still waiting for TEA guidance. Dr. Chavez shared slides that were produced by the TEA with the board. We may need to take action on some of these items in September on certain items including certifying DEI and CRT prohibition compliance. The bill also has requirements around the adoption of a Parental Engagement Policy and we will bring those before the board following guidance from both TEA and UT Legal Affairs.

HB 1522 concerns board meetings and open records; SB 204 is a training for the board on parental rights, SB13 concerns library content. More legislation will be discussed at the board training on 9/3/25 and as they become available.

c. Superintendent's report – Dr. Nicole Whetstone

She shared information about Convocation and Key note speaker Matt Pope and first day of school photos. UTES is pretty full; we have 306 students and we are full in Pre-K. More information will be shared at our October meeting. With HB 1481 the new cell phone bill, phones have not been an issue at our school. We have updated our parent handbook to reflect the new law. The Cowboys mentoring program has been very successful at UTES over the past 2 years. They typically come twice a week but they also help with events as needed. We do have a Neighborhood Longhorn program here. Some of our participants have received scholarships, tickets to games and even summer camps. The Board Retreat will be on 9/5 at the Pickle Research Facility: maps and parking passes to come. Hold 9/23 for a possible board meeting.

d. Health & Safety/Facilities report – Dr. Katie Tackett

Dr. Leal shared our new of UTPD officer, that we now have code access for law enforcement to access our doors. She shared who is on our safety committee from both UT as well as the community. She shared our SY 24-25 safety numbers. TEA has scheduled a District Vulnerability Assessment on 9/4/25.

e. Strategic Planning Committee report – Mrs. Kathy Armenta

Mrs. Armenta said they are meeting on 9/17 mainly to review our strategic plan priorities.

f. Finance Committee report – Dr. Kal Kallison

Jenny Davis reviewed the budget to actuals for the 24-25 school year. The fiscal year ends 8/31. Next, she discussed our grant funding report.

Dr. McCarty-Harris asked about federal funding cuts.

Jenny said that our federal funding was released.

g. Education and Research Committee report – Dr. Sarah Woulfin

None at this time.

h. Nominating Committee report – Dr. Alexandra Eusebi

None at this time

- i. Development reports – Dr. Melissa Chavez
None at this time

VII. Adjournment

Dr. Lasher adjourned the meeting at 1:12 PM