

**University of Texas Elementary School  
Management Board  
Austin, Texas  
October 28, 2025**

**Attendees**

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

**I. Call to Order and Establish Quorum**

*Dr. Lasher called the meeting to order at 11:33am and noted that a quorum was present.*

**II. Welcome and Recognition of Special Guests**

**III. Parent & Citizen Comments**

None at this time

**IV. Items for Consideration by Consent**

- a. Consider approval of the Consent Agenda.

Dr. Lasher let the board know that item 4 G Employee Information Guide will be removed prior to the vote.

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

*For – 11                      Opposed –      0              Abstain –      0              Absent – 4*

**V. Action Items**

- a. Consider approval of policy 1.206 Parental Engagement

Dr. Chavez explained that for action items a-f, UTES is using the model policies from the Texas Charter School Association and that these are legal policies which we are required to adopt them and to show compliance. Compliance will be an ongoing process and we have the guidance of UT Legal Affairs Office.

Dr. Chavez provided a synopsis of the changes from SB12.

- Amends Education Code Chapters 1, 11, 12, and 26
- Expands and clarifies parental rights for child rearing in regards to all aspects of education
- Soliciting parental input through an electronic portal, increased access to information on instructional programs, and required parental opt-ins for health services, human sexuality instruction, and mental health services and curriculum
- Expands parental rights regarding grievances, including a process for online submissions of grievances
- Prohibits Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in schools and requires board certification of compliance with DEI and Critical Race Theory (CRT) prohibitions
- Prohibits gender identity and sexual orientation instruction, forbids allowing related clubs
- Requires timely reporting of trustee information to TEA

Dr. Chavez spoke about Policy 1.206 Parental Engagement / Parental Rights requirement, our district action and the status. UT Elementary created parental consent forms that were all approved by UT Legal Affairs. The forms were sent to all parents this month and the forms are now part of the enrollment form packet. She explained that parents have to opt-in to campus-based health services including health education and mental health support. At UT Elementary, this means parents need to opt-in to our "Second Step" (our SEL) curriculum."

Dr. Chavez explained how the Parental Rights webpage was created for UT Elementary and she walked the board through the information on that webpage including the Parental Rights form provided by TEA.

Dr. Kallison and Dr. Lasher clarified that the consent forms required by this policy have been distributed and received from all but 11 forms (out of 308) and that those 11 non-completions are considered no's. Dr. Whetstone provided additional information on how the forms were distributed and how Principal Wilder made herself available to answer any parent questions.

Dr. Chavez explained that under Policy 1.206, we are also required to make parental documents and notices easily accessible on our website. Also, we are required to create a parent portal on the website and to prioritize parental comments on our board agendas. Item II has always been welcome special guests and public/parent comments has always been Item III on our agenda and will continue to be.

Dr. Chavez shared the UT Elementary website where she showed the parent rights page where all of the forms are available. She showed the Health Related Services Form which includes our student data privacy policy and our mental health services support and curriculum which includes an overview of the curriculum and questionnaire.

Dr. Lasher inquired about options for parents who say no. Dr. Whetstone clarified that each form contains multiple opportunities for parents to opt out. For example, parents who opt out of the health services portion that means any type of care that their child may need, including a band-aid, we would have to call the parent and ask them to come take care of it.

Kathy Armenta inquired about the social work intern services permissions on this form. Dr. Whetstone explained that we have always required parental permission for those services. The only new thing is the opting-in for the SEL curriculum.

Mark Williams asked how it is handled for parents who have opted out. Dr. Whetstone explained that there are not that many and that during those lessons, the students work on other things. Dr. Whetstone estimated that there are less than 3 for the whole school. She talked about the parent engagement that has been taking place including principal coffees and social work presentations for parents on the actual SEL lessons.

Dr. Chavez showed the Management Board page on the UTES website where the public/citizen comment submission and parent comment form can be found. Any parent comment received via the portal will be received by the superintendent and will be added to the agenda at the next scheduled board meeting. Dr. McCarty-Harris asked if the form could be anonymous and Dr. Chavez explained that this form cannot be anonymous because we need to ensure it is for parents and not the general public.

The final requirement is to schedule our board meetings outside of work hours. Dr. Chavez consulted the board officials and that beginning in the 2026-2027 school year, the meetings will be scheduled at new times. We do not believe holding the meetings at lunchtime will be acceptable to the TEA.

*A motion to approve was made by Dr. McCarty Harris and seconded by Mark Williams.*

*For – 11      Opposed – 0      Abstain – 0      Absent – 4*

b. Consider the approval of policy 2.114 Student Health Curriculum

Dr. Chavez provided the requirement for Policy 2.114 Sec. 4. She explained the actions our district will be taking, and that the actions are still in process.

Dr. Chavez explained that this policy is in process and it needs to be added to our employee handbook. Once the policy is created, the employee handbook will be brought before the board for approval. Then notices will be sent to all staff both physically and electronically and leadership will provide ongoing training to our staff to ensure compliance.

Mark Williams asked if there is state provided curriculum on student health (sexuality) curriculum at the elementary level. Dr. Whetstone explained that at the grade school level, the curriculum is really about human growth development and not about human sexuality. There is no reproductive units or gender identity. It is a simplified biology lesson. We use a state-approved curriculum, provide parents with the information we will be sharing and give

parents the opportunity to opt-out. These lessons are only taught in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade and that the PE Coach, School Nurse and Social Work staff help with the delivery of this topic.

Mark Williams asked about the students whose parents opt them out. Dr. Whetstone explained that parents have always had the opportunity to opt out of this topic and the opted-out students are provided with alternative activities in another setting (i.e., the library).

Mark Williams asked what is the response we are providing to teachers if they are asked a question by a student on these topics? Dr. Whetstone said that teachers have been trained to direct students to ask their parents. Additionally, parents will be notified of student questions and statements around these topics.

Starla Simmons inquired about how parents are being made aware of how this impacts their student's education? Dr. Whetstone explained that our staff wants to ensure that our parents have all of the information they need to make the best choices for their child's education and that is how we are framing these activities.

Kathy Armenta suggested a larger and more in-depth opportunity to provide parents with additional information on these changes. Dr. McCarty-Harris reminded everyone it is important that we show if this (policy) is impacting the success of our students.

Mark Williams raised a question about the role of the SHAC. That that committee has to bring committee member recommendations and curriculum recommendations to the board. Dr. Whetstone clarified that the SHAC will bring the recommendation to the board in January 2026.

*A motion to approve was made by Mark Williams and seconded by Dr. McCarty-Harris*

*For – 11      Opposed – 0      Abstain – 0      Absent – 4*

c. Consider approval of policy 4.212 Prohibition on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Duties

Dr. Chavez clarified that this policy prohibits the assignment of DEI duties to an employee or a contractor and our status in complete. UT Elementary has never had a DEI office, officer or assigned duties. As an academic unit of UT Austin, we have already been under DEI prohibitions under Texas Education Code 51.3525, effective January 1, 2024.

Dr. Kallison noted the exception of HBCU recruitment. Dr. Chavez reminded the board that we follow the hiring practices of UT.

*A motion to approve was made by Mark Williams and seconded by Dr. Estep*

*For – 10      Opposed – 0      Abstain – 0      Absent – 5*

d. Consider approval of policy 4.213 Instructional Requirements and Prohibitions

Dr. Chavez explained this policy is in process. The policy will be added to the employee handbook and will be brought before the board for approval. Once approved, notices will be sent to all staff both physically and electronically and district leadership will provide ongoing training.

Dr. Chavez explained Teachers cannot be compelled to discuss controversial topics. Teachers may discuss, but they must discuss it objectively and free from political bias. The other part is that schools cannot require, make part of a grade or issue extra credit for a student to work for any lobbying group, advocate at any governmental level for social or public policy or activism. A teacher may not make Critical Race Theory part of a course. Dr. Chavez reminded the board that UT Elementary has never included CRT in our instruction.

*A motion to approve was made by Mark Williams and seconded by Dr. Estep*

*For - 9      Opposed - 0      Abstain - 0      Absent - 6*

e. Consider approval of a resolution in support of compliance with Texas Education Code Sections 11.005 and 28.0022

Dr. Chavez explained to the board that this is a resolution that the board and superintendent are in compliance with Texas Education Code Sections 11.005 and 28.0022 - with the note that 2 policies are in process.

*A motion to approve was made by Mark Williams and seconded by Laura Estep*

*For - 9      Opposed - 0      Abstain - 0      Absent - 6*

f. Consider approval of District Vulnerability Assessment Full Report

The discussion was moved into closed session.

*A motion to approve was made by Dr. Kallison and seconded by Mark Williams*

*For - 8      Opposed - 0      Abstain - 0      Absent - 7*

## VI. Reports/Discussion Items

- a. Chair's report - Dr. Bill Lasher  
Combined with Executive Officer's report.
- b. Chief Executive Officer's report - Dr. Melissa Chavez  
None at this time.
- c. Superintendent's report - Dr. Nicole Whetstone  
Dr. Whetstone introduced Dr. Roberts who provided the 2024-2025 ESL report as required for the board to review.

Starting in the spring, TEA will require that we present a Special Education report to the board in addition to the ESL report.

Dr. Whetstone reported on current enrollment, free & reduced qualifiers, at-risk qualifiers, SPED qualifiers

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

Dr. Leal presented data on school safety and security committee that met on 10/23, school discipline report, semester health report, safety drills, gate/door checks, facilities financial report and she introduced

Andrea Menchaca presented on the services that we provide at our school: Student support services, teacher training and support. She also reported on our MSSW interns from 4 universities.

e. Strategic Planning Committee report – Mrs. Kathy Armenta

Kathy Armenta explained that the committee has met twice this semester and they are looking at developing our pages

Dr. Whetstone shared that our districts

f. Finance Committee report – Dr. Kal Kallison

Dr. Kallison introduced Jenny Davis who explained we are in the middle of our annual audit and it will be presented in January. We are also in a review for the Texas Department of Ag (food service). Then she provided our budget to actual statement, federal funding statement,

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

Dr. Whetstone presented the goals from their meeting and the topics they discussed.

h. Nominating Committee report – Dr. Alexandra Eusebi

None at this time

i. Development reports – Dr. Melissa Chavez

## VII. Adjournment

Dr. Lasher adjourned the meeting at 1:25pm