



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS UNIVERSITY CHARTER SCHOOL
2021-2022 ANNUAL REPORT



The University of Texas
University Charter School



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MESSAGE FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT **Dr. LaToya Smith**

Dear University of Texas Charter School System Family,

The University of Texas at Austin recently kicked off a 10-year strategic plan to increase the university's positive impact on the world. One of the most visible ways we have an impact within Texas is the UT Charter School System (UTCSS).

With 22 campuses that serve children and teens most in need of educational support, the UT Charter School System is fulfilling a vital role in the state. Most UTCSS students are highly mobile and considered at-risk. More than half are economically disadvantaged; more than a third are in foster care and almost 41% are in need of special education services.

We hope you will be inspired as you read about the work of the UTCSS team in the 2021-2022 annual report. Please join me in applauding Associate Vice President Dr. Melissa Chavez, Superintendent Dr. Nicole Whetstone and the highly effective cadre of faculty and staff as they change the lives of Texas students who deserve our support and attention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "LaToya C. Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "LaToya" being more prominent.

Dr. LaToya C. Smith

Vice President for Diversity and Community Engagement

Professor of Practice, College of Education, The University of Texas at Austin



MESSAGE FROM THE ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT **Melissa Chavez**

Dear UT University Charter School Families, Partners and Supporters,

As we reflect over the past year, the common theme seems to be change. And change is good.

Thanks to ESSER Funding, we were able to bring on an Extended Learning Coordinator, a College and Career Transition Coordinator and a Social-Emotional Learning Coordinator to work with all of our campuses. The Extended Learning Coordinator will lead educational programming, including after-school tutoring, weekend programs and an expanded summer school program. The College and Career Transition Coordinator is facilitating postsecondary information for our students, staff and parents across our district, including holding college and career fairs. Our new SEL Coordinator is increasing SEL opportunities in the classroom, expand offerings to teachers and families, and to oversee the social work interns offering direct service to students.

There have also been changes in the district. In the spring of 2022, our campus at Dell Children's Center (Austin) opened. For the 2022-2023 school year, three new campuses will open: Boysville (San Antonio), Clearfork Academy South (Cleburne) and Cross Creek (Austin). Dr. Nicole Whetstone, who was the Deputy Superintendent, is now the Superintendent of the UT Charter School System, and I remain the Associate Vice President overseeing the UT Charter School System.

Change is also a constant in life. Our teachers and school leaders are using our changes as opportunities to improve the academic programs we provide to students. We are grateful to our facility partners and Advisory Board who help guide our decisions to serve the children of Texas in the most comprehensive and compassionate ways available.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melissa M. Chavez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Melissa M. Chavez, Ph.D.

*Associate Vice President, The University of Texas Charter School System,
The University of Texas at Austin*

UT-UCS 2021-2022 Faculty & Staff Recognitions

For the 2021-2022 school year, UT University Charter School named two teachers as Teacher of the Year: Mark Chen and Deborah Davidsen. In their respective nominations, both Mr. Chen and Ms. Davidsen were commended on their collaborative spirit with their fellow faculty in addition to their dedication to serving each student with the utmost consideration and care.

TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Mark Chen



Mark Chen is a special kind of person. With 36 years as a classroom teacher, he has always gravitated toward students who are experiencing life circumstances that are beyond the norm. In addition to traditional schools, Mark has taught in both men's and women's prisons, where he truly feels he was very successful at connecting with his students. At UT-UCS, Mark teaches at The Refuge for DMST, where he serves girls who have been exploited through sex trafficking.

Mr. Chen credits his teaching team for adding to his love of teaching. "Being a teacher is not a 'Lone Ranger' job. You can reach more students as an education team." Mark explained that he can talk to his team to learn what is working for each individual student and implement those strategies. He added: "I love my students and it is the support of my team; Dr. Ruiz, Mr. Ronnie, Ms. Hodges, and Kris Ann that makes teaching a joy."

TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Deborah Davidsen



Deborah Davidsen is a teacher at the Texas NeuroRehab Center (TNC) with almost 25 years of classroom experience. Deborah decided to become a teacher because she knew she wanted to make a difference and that "few jobs have as direct an impact on creating a better society as the profession of teaching."

When asked what she likes about being a teacher, Ms. Davidsen answered: "I love the uncertainty of teaching. My favorite part of teaching at TNC is knowing that each day holds something new for me. The learning environment is structured so that I can watch my students grow both emotionally and academically every day. As a result, I'm able to share in my students' unique perspectives, experiences, and ideas."

UT-UCS 2021-2022 Faculty & Staff Recognitions

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

Stacy Swenson

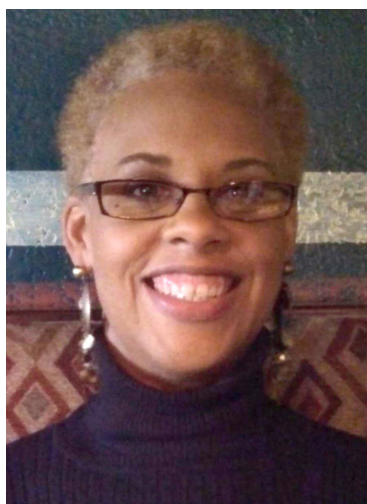


UT-UCS Special Education Team: Stacy Swenson (with flowers) with (Top row): Rhonda Washington, Bree Davison and Janina Roberts (Bottom row): Shanika Ingram, Julie Josel, and Dr. Melissa Chavez

Stacy Swenson, LSSP, is the 2022 UT-UCS Rookie of the Year. Stacy comes to our district after having worked with our partner, the SAFE Alliance. "I spent a good part of my professional career working with families and children that have experienced recent trauma at the SAFE Alliance." Stacy worked in their School and Child Development Center for 12 years, and during this time, she saw UT-UCS's LSSP team, and she started researching how to be an LSSP. "I discovered that it was a great blend of many things that I love. It combines my love for working with children and families, but also building connection and helping children feel successful in school."

STAFF OF THE YEAR

Edie Todd



Edie Todd, UT-UCS's Staff of the Year, is a registrar for our San Antonio campuses, and she understands how vital her role is as well as how unique it is. When asked about her job, Edie explained: "I have spent a lot of time cultivating relationships with the districts and schools that we receive students from and send students back to. The majority of the schools are very understanding and supportive of what we do and want the best for their students. I have personal cell phone numbers and email addresses of several registrars that I deal with on a weekly basis."

Edie also understands her role in helping students understand their academic needs during times of fluctuation. "I am usually the first person new students meet with on the campus, so I try to explain the program to them. I reassure them that we will work with them to keep moving forward with their education during their time with us."

Registrars are critical to schools. Because schools are, in part, funded by student attendance and achievement, keeping those records are vital to all schools, and their accuracy is incredibly important to every student.

UT-UCS 2021-2022 Faculty & Staff Recognitions

DISTRICT ADMIN OF THE YEAR

Bob Micks



Bob Micks is one of the first people all staff meet with when they join our team. Bob is the Director of Human Resources in addition to other tasks he has undertaken as part of the district staff. In addition to ensuring that all of our HR paperwork is completed, he is the liaison for both of our boards and holds roles in our finance team as well as operations.

Bob's nominators repeatedly said that his calm nature and quick response time make him a valuable asset to the team. Everyone knows that Bob can be relied on and that he will be there when we need him. He was also commended for his ability to handle sensitive and urgent personnel needs with speed and care. Everyone in our districts; faculty, staff and administrators are sincerely grateful that we have Bob to work for us.

DIRECTOR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

Janina Roberts



Dr. Melissa Chavez and Janina Roberts

Janina Roberts is the Director of Special Education, where she oversees the team of LSSP and ARD Facilitators as well as all of the layers of documentation that accompany compliance. Her work is very important and must be completed with timeliness, accuracy and a sincere concern for what is best for the student. Janina exemplifies this ethic as one of her nominations stated: "She always is helpful and keeps students and families first."

Another nomination stated: "She is not only a manager but truly embodies the quality of an effective leader; she is consistent, supportive, a strong listener, problem solver, and lifelong learner as she works towards her doctorate." The UT Charter School System is very lucky to have Janina leading our SPED Department, and we look forward to when we will call her Dr. Roberts.

FACILITY PARTNER OF THE YEAR

Clearfork Academy



Clearfork Academy and their founder and CEO, Austin Davis, are the 2022 UT-UCS Partner Facility of the Year. Annually, UT-UCS recognizes our partners who work with our district to incorporate education as a priority in their program and strengthen our partnership to benefit the young people we both serve.

Clearfork Principal Jennifer Pendleton said that they were nominated because: "Clearfork Academy puts education first for their students. It took us quite a bit of time to find an additional teacher this past year for the campus. The CFA staff stepped up and helped Ms. Mema in the classroom so she was able to successfully help all the students in their academics. They played an integral part in keep-

ing our school running smoothly and the boys learning. CFA administration and staff are quick to respond and work tirelessly with UT Charter Schools to pivot and adjust as needed to make sure their students are receiving the support and education they deserve."

Clearfork Academy is a residential treatment program for adolescent boys between the ages of 13 and 18 years old who struggle with substance abuse or addiction and the accompanying mental health and behavioral issues. Clearfork Academy is UT-UCS's most northern campus, located in the Fort Worth area and is overseen by Principal Jennifer Pendleton.

Learning Opportunities & Unique Experiences

Student Activities

UT-UCS's partner facilities all have relationships within their local communities that allow each campus to provide our students with holistic learning opportunities and unique experiences.

Pathfinders Ranch at the Burck Center for Youth in Driftwood is one of our oldest UT-UCS facility partners. For many years, one of their local partners has provided their youth with goats that are shown at the annual Hays County Livestock Show. The students learn to “show” the goats in the competition, and this year nine of their goats “made the sale.” Proceeds from the sale are pooled and distributed to the students when they leave the ranch.

Methodist Children's Home (MCH) has a campus in Waco and a 500-acre Boys Ranch just outside the city. On the ranch, the boys benefit from the learning the skills associated with managing livestock, including caring for the horses, and a stocked pond. In April, the MCH Boys Ranch hosted a Wildlife Day in partnership with Texas Parks and

Wildlife where MCH students participated in hands-on “stations” at the ranch. There was a horsemanship station, where some students rode a horse for the first time; “Taste of Wildlife” with beekeepers and honey producers from Misbeehaven; a fishing station at the pond with a game warden from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department; and a Wildlife Art Contest.

In the spring of 2022, the **Texas NeuroRehab Center (TNC)** hosted a Career Fair. Dr. Lucy Velez, UT Charter School System's College and Career Transition Coordinator, organized the fair and did an amazing job. There were presentations from Austin Fire Department, Austin Community College (ACC) Horticulture, ACC Photography, East Side Pedal Pushers, and TNC's own Ms. Jamie presented over careers in the art field.

These extracurricular activities greatly benefit the mental health and personal growth of the students. We are grateful for our creative partners.



Pathfinders at the 2022 Hays County Livestock Show



Austin Fire Department demonstrates a fire hose at TNC

Graduation

High school graduations are always a time for joy. These events culminate the perseverance of the student and the acknowledgment that they have reached the milestone of earning their high school diploma. However, some graduates of UT-UCS have overcome more barriers than most students to reach their goals.

Due to the typical short-term placement of youth in our district, it's not as common for students to finish their secondary education while enrolled with us. UT-UCS has a mobility rate of 90.6%, which means that almost 91% of our students flow in and out of our district throughout the school year, and the majority of those students are with us for periods less than 90 days. Therefore, when one of our students graduates from one of these limited placement campuses, it has a little deeper meaning.

We frequently hear from our partners, teachers and guardians that the limited timeframe and the incredibly positive support system provided by our partner facilities motivates our students to finish their coursework so that when they return home, they hold their diplomas and will move on to the next phase of their lives.

For the Spring 2022 semester, UT-UCS celebrated graduations at seven campuses: Laurel Ridge Formative Years at High Point, Settlement Home, SJRC, Munday, Methodist Children's Home, University High School and Clearfork Academy. Laurel Ridge Formative Years at High Point has been a UT-UCS campus since 2015 and this spring held their first graduation in January with a second in May. Three graduates from Laurel Ridge are now on to their postsecondary endeavors!

We congratulate all of our graduates and greatly appreciate the support of our partner facilities.



Laurel Ridge Formative Years at High Point Spring 2022 Graduate

UT-UTCS Financial and Student Data

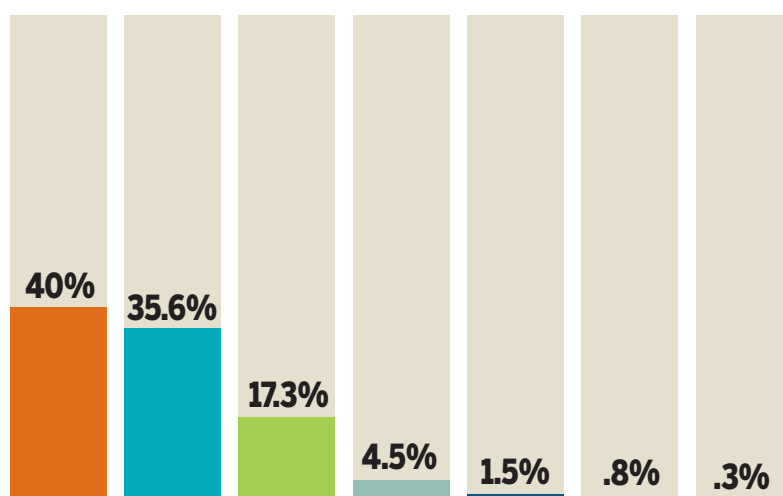
REVENUE & EXPENSES

| | |
|---------------------|-------------|
| State Funding | 84% |
| Federal Funding | 16% |
| \$11,956,061 | 100% |



| | |
|--|-------------|
| Instruction | 61% |
| School Leadership | 17% |
| General Administration | 10% |
| Guidance, Counseling and Evaluation Services | 5% |
| Data Processing Services | 3% |
| Development | 2% |
| Maintenance and Operations | 2% |
| \$11,136,006 | 100% |

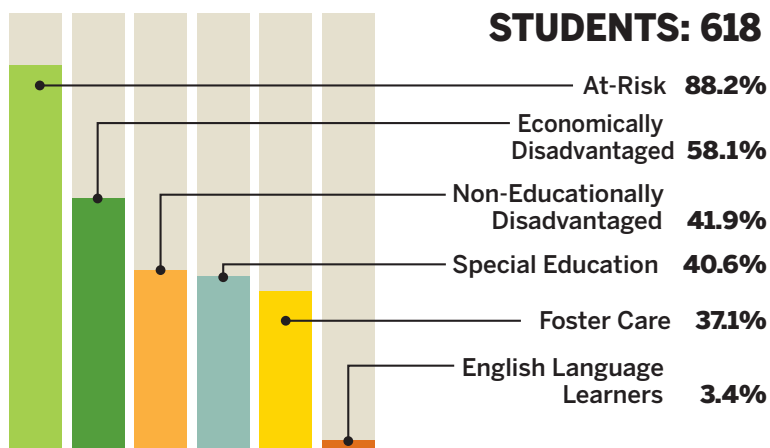
STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS



- 40% White
- 35.6% Hispanic
- 17.3% African American
- 4.5% Two or more races
- 1.5% American Indian
- .8% Asian
- .3% Pacific Islander

STUDENT POPULATION

MOBILITY: 90.6%



STUDENTS: 618

Data based on 2020-2021 Texas Academic Performance Report available from the Texas Education Agency.



The University of Texas University Charter School

UT-UCS MISSION

The University of Texas–University Charter School's mission is to provide access to effective educational opportunities for unique learners by creating safe environments and holding high expectations for all.

UT-UCS VISION

In full partnership with our communities, the University of Texas–University Charter School's vision is to provide the best educational system for students with specialized learning needs in unique settings where each student will achieve academic, social and emotional success.

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

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