



uplifteducation

annual report

2017



## Uplift Education Network for 2017-18



### On The Cover

Uplift Heights scholars Gerardo Cuenca, Whitney Butler, and Jailyn Dukes pose in front of the Margaret Hunt Hill Bridge which spans the Trinity River, connecting downtown Dallas to West Dallas. Uplift Heights Preparatory was established in 2010 in the long-overlooked West Dallas neighborhood. Now seven years later, the school operates on two campuses and educates over 1,700 scholars. Uplift Heights is proud to be a part of the area's revitalization and regularly participates in community activities.

## From Yasmin

As we close out our 2016-17 school year and embark on the 2017-18 school year, I have so many things to be proud of and to share with you. Uplift Education continues to achieve success academically and raise the bar higher each year. This past year, our seniors posted the highest network ACT average in our organization's history at a 22.5 with 62% of our seniors achieving a college-ready ACT score. As in years past, many of our high schools were recognized nationally as top public schools in the nation, and once again, we achieved 100% college acceptance. Our graduates are continuing to persist in college and earning degrees at a rate over seven times the national average for low income students.



Equally as important as academic achievement is the fact that our scholars are growing into mature, compassionate, and globally-minded citizens, due in part to our International Baccalaureate® focus. IB® helps our scholars understand the importance of reaching out and becoming involved. Our schools are becoming extensions of the neighborhoods in which they reside, and the impact and creativity is being felt far beyond our walls.

This year's report is dedicated to the communities that have welcomed and supported our scholars and schools.

Sincerely,

*Yasmin Bhatia*

Yasmin Bhatia, CEO



# Making Their Mark

Uplift Luna Secondary opened its doors in Deep Ellum in 2010. A neighborhood known for its music, food, and tattoo shops was an unlikely location for a school, but over the years the school has connected with the area and its tenants and has become a fixture of the small community.

This past year the Deep Ellum Foundation reached out to Uplift Luna’s graphic design teacher, Aaron Garcia, with a proposal for Uplift Luna scholars to showcase their art on banners that would be displayed throughout the neighborhood. Mr. Garcia loved the idea of inspiring his fledgling graphic design scholars to connect to the community.

“We were just starting to learn Photoshop and then we were approached with this task,” said 12th grader Guadalupe Ledezma. “We learned along the way, and Mr. Garcia guided us by showing us different skills.”



The class went out into the neighborhood for inspiration and each scholar developed an art piece that reflected the rich history, culture, and diversity of Deep Ellum.

“I’ve always been very passionate when learning about different cultures, and Deep Ellum hosts so much diversity,” said 12th grader Estrella Rojas. “The merchants are all very nice to us in the area and understand that we are in school. I wanted to make sure to display everyone from cooks to business owners, rockers, bikers and more. I wanted to show the unity that Deep Ellum has.”

Four art pieces were selected that each demonstrated a piece of Deep Ellum in a unique way. Banners were displayed all summer on the lamp posts in the community, and are now placed on a rotating calendar to make regular appearances.

Uplift extends a big thanks to the Deep Ellum Foundation for the opportunity to collaborate within the community and help our scholars become globally-minded citizens!



Uplift Luna Secondary scholars Jocelyn Jimenez, Jazmin Roque, Guadalupe Ledezma, and Estrella Rojas had their designs chosen for banners that are regularly displayed on the streets of Deep Ellum in Dallas.

Read more about their story by visiting our blog, [Uplift Voices](#).

# The IB® Link



If you've been connected with Uplift Education for any length of time, you are probably familiar with our push to become one of the largest International Baccalaureate® districts in the nation. Why IB®? An International Baccalaureate® education combines academic rigor with social and emotional growth, creativity, and global thinking. IB® helps scholars become not only problem-solvers, but also people who understand community, connection, and how they are a part of it all.

This past year we added nine more schools to our list of authorized schools, and ALL of our non-Diploma Programme high schools began their path toward DP authorization. International Baccalaureate® is a proven factor in our formula for success.



## Scholars earning an IB® Diploma...

- ... have the potential to earn up to 24 college credit hours.
- ... are able to pass IB® exams and earn college credit 86% of the time vs. 49% passing rate on AP exams in Texas (*Texas Education Agency, 2011*).
- ... have higher college acceptance rates, especially to top colleges and universities.
- ... are more academically prepared for the rigors of a college course load, have the ability to manage their time better, and are prepared for exam-based grading systems.
- ... have a better grasp on career options and interests due to research and practical participation during high school.
- ... are excellent communicators, critical thinkers, and self-starters.
- ... graduate from 4-year institutions at a rate of 79% vs. 39% for those without an IB® diploma. (*Bergon, 2015*).



## 85%

of Uplift primary and middle schools will be IB® authorized by the end of 2018.

## 100%

of Uplift schools open five years or more are either IB® authorized or in the candidate phase.

## 100%

of Uplift high schools are authorized or in the candidate phase to offer an IB® Diploma.



The International Baccalaureate® is transformational for our scholars as they learn to engage, communicate, and become critical thinkers. To see IB® in action, watch our IB® playlist on our YouTube channel. [youtube.com/uplifteducationvideos](https://youtube.com/uplifteducationvideos)

# Glouring & Growing



Uplift continues to increase the number of scholars we serve—17,500 for 2017-18—while maintaining quality instruction and a high level of achievement. As we successfully preserve our close-knit community schools with a local connection, our national notoriety continues to make headlines. This year we had four high schools earn a Gold rating from U.S. News and World Report, and six of our high schools were recognized nationally by The Washington Post. Uplift North Hills and Uplift Summit International were ranked in the top 25 in the nation!

Record-setting test scores, distinctions from the Texas Education Association, and increasing growth on primary and middle school assessment tests have highlighted a banner year.

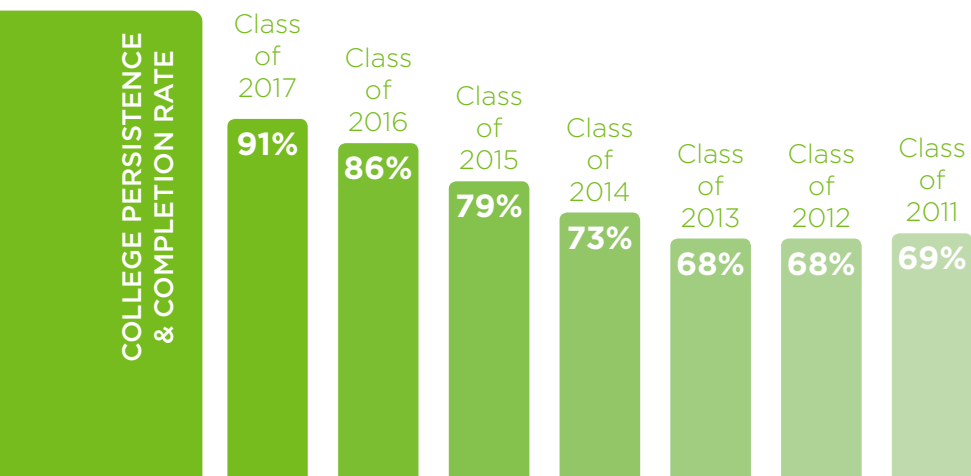
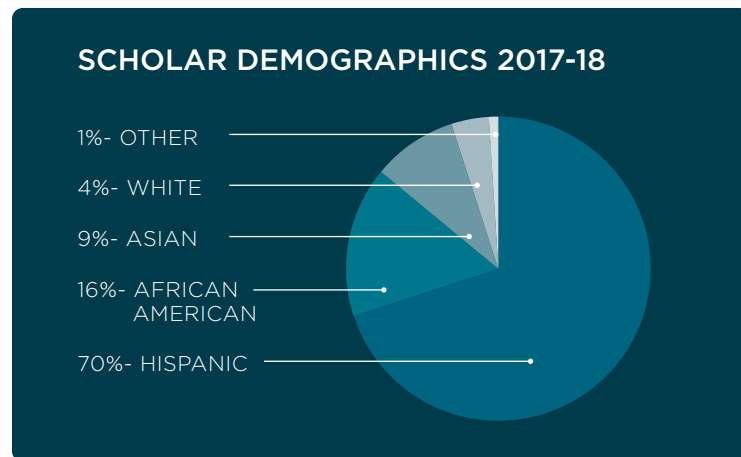


**37**  
primary, middle, and high schools serve the D/FW metroplex on 19 campuses for 2017-18.

**6**  
cities contain Uplift schools and support school choice options for families.

**22.5**  
was the average score on the ACT by the Class of 2017 (highest in our organization's history).

**62%**  
of the Class of 2017 scored at or above the college-ready benchmark on the ACT college entrance exam.



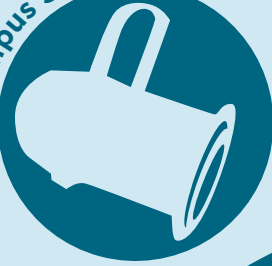
**76%**  
of Uplift graduates are currently enrolled in college. The graph shows the percentage of our graduates who are either enrolled in college or have earned a degree.

**519**  
scholars graduated in 2017 from seven high schools.

**\$64M**  
in scholarships and grants were earned by the Class of 2017.

**64%**  
of the Class of 2017 are first generation college attendees.





# Paint The Town



When Will Harpham, Uplift Williams high school art teacher, was contacted by an artist friend about creating a mural for her studio in West Dallas, he immediately thought the project would be a perfect way for his scholars to practice their art and connect with the community.

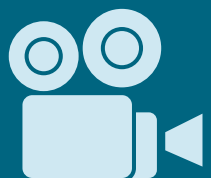
The scholars started the project by researching the history of West Dallas and its culture. Each section of the mural featured a different painting that reflected something unique, from cowboys and cacti to Bonnie and Clyde.

Sixteen scholars were chosen as “lead designers.” Those winning artists took the lead on creating the themed sections of the mural, and another 60 scholar volunteers helped paint the mural as a community service project.

Not only did the scholars learn about the history and culture of West Dallas, but they also became a lasting part of a vibrant community and connect with the citizens of the area.



Measuring over 100 feet long, the outdoor mural took several weeks to complete and is titled “The Fabric of Dallas.” It was featured as part of this year’s Art Walk West and can be viewed at 2345 Hardwick Street in Dallas.



Uplift Williams scholars Luis Guerrero, Alexis Jimenez, and Marlene Calzada were three of the artists on “The Fabric of Dallas” mural. To view the scholars in action, watch the Community Connection playlist on our YouTube channel. [youtube.com/uplifteducationvideos](https://www.youtube.com/uplifteducationvideos)

# Social & Emotional Learning

At Uplift, developing our scholars socially and emotionally is equally as important as developing them academically. It is our goal for our scholars to be prepared academically for college while also becoming globally-minded citizens who are caring, principled and open-minded.

By connecting our scholars with the community around them and exposing them to a variety of cultural opportunities, we give them the life skills to be comfortable in college and sensitive to the needs of others. Our social and emotional learning programs don't stop with our scholars, but continue to our staff and the community at large. Browse the next page to learn how some of our programs are moving us forward in the field of social and emotional learning.



A Safe Space is a place where anyone can relax and be able to fully express himself or herself without fear of being made to feel uncomfortable, unwelcome, or unsafe. Bullying and harassment are not acceptable. Many of our teachers have undergone Safe Space training and several of our campuses have organized Safe Space groups to foster an atmosphere of inclusion.



Our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training is a multi-year phased training for teachers and staff to help them create an environment of involvement, respect, and connection. This foundational training is underway and will eventually roll out to all staff.



We are proud to be named as one of the pioneer districts to implement Rosalind Wiseman's *Owning Up* curriculum. *Owning Up* teaches young people to understand their individual development in relation to group behavior, the influence of social media on their conflicts, and the dynamics that lead to discrimination and bigotry.



# Clean and Connect

Uplift Pinnacle has existed in Oak Cliff since 2011 as a primary school. When the decision was made to expand the school to middle and high school, a new Oak Cliff location was secured for the expansion. Uplift Pinnacle Middle School opened in its new location this fall with 6th and 7th grade at the corner of Camp Wisdom and I-35E.

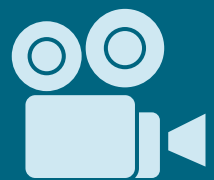
Rachel Harris, Director of Uplift Pinnacle Secondary, knew that even though the school was just a few miles from the original campus, they would be newcomers in the neighborhood. “We wanted to reach out and help the neighborhood around us,” said Ms. Harris, “and give our scholars an opportunity to do some community service.”

Last spring the scholars and their families met at Glendale Park and spent the morning picking up fallen branches, paper, and candy wrappers left after a recent Easter egg hunt. It was a success and the scholars wanted to continue the project, so another park cleanup was held in November at Twin Falls Park with even more scholars and family members participating.



“This ties directly to our core value of community,” said Ms. Harris. “The scholars and families enjoyed it so much that we wanted to make this a recurring project and an official relationship.” Working with the Parks and Recreation department, the school signed a Beautification Agreement with the City of Dallas in which they committed to helping or serving at a City of Dallas park at least two times a year.

Thanks to Uplift Pinnacle scholars and families for turning a “trashy” situation into a lasting community connection.



Uplift Pinnacle Secondary scholars enjoy “hanging out” at one of their recent park cleanup projects. To view the scholars in action, watch the Community Connection playlist on our YouTube channel. [youtube.com/uplifteducationvideos](https://youtube.com/uplifteducationvideos)



# Looking Ahead

## New Schools

In order to support the growing demand for the high quality public education Uplift provides, we will be adding 7,000 new seats to the network over the next three years. The focus of our new school expansion will be in Fort Worth, where in the next four years six new schools will be added to provide additional choice for families. Additionally, we plan to triple our number of ISD partnership schools in the next five years.

In the 2017-18 school year we opened Uplift White Rock Hills Primary in east Dallas with Kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grades. We also opened a new campus for Uplift Pinnacle Secondary in south Oak Cliff. Both of these new schools will grow by adding a grade level each year to provide a full continuum of education.

## A Model for Innovation

Our goal is for 70% of our graduates to earn a college degree within 6 years of graduation. We know that's no small task, as it is seven times the national average for low income students. We also know that to accomplish this goal takes more than strong academic foundations. For scholars to persist in college, they must be prepared academically, emotionally, socially and financially. We have connected programs in place to address all of these needs for our scholars and families.

To learn more, visit [uplifteducation.org/model](http://uplifteducation.org/model).

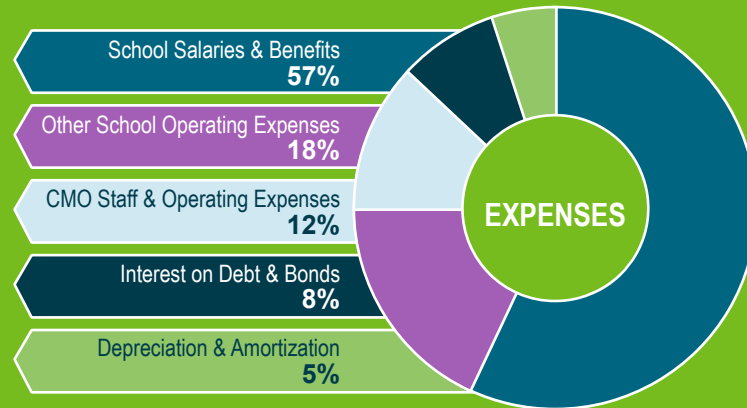
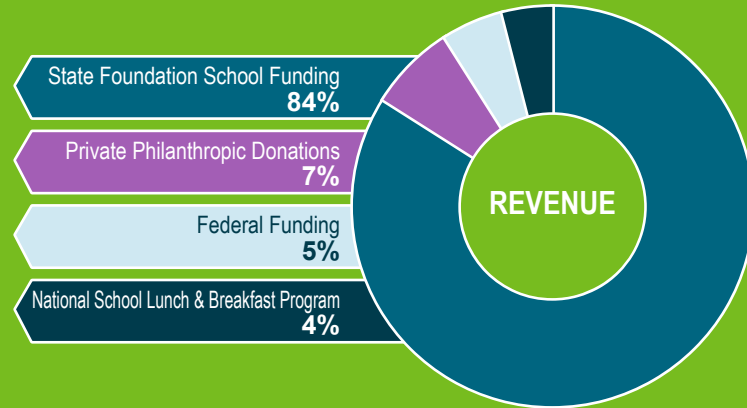


# Financially Sustainable

As in years past, Uplift maintains its investment-grade rating and continues to find innovative ways to bridge the funding gap created by state policies for charter schools. During the 85<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislative Session Uplift Education benefited from several bills that will provide additional financial support in the next biennium. We anticipate an added revenue of approximately \$4 million annually which will help support Uplift's ability to pay market rate salaries for our teacher and staff. It will also help provide the necessary resources to achieve our goal of college success for our graduates.

## Financial Summary for Fiscal Year 2017

*Note: Not final audited numbers. Final audit will be available in January, 2018.*



# Board & Donors

We thank our Board of Directors for the 2017-18 school year who will help guide the strategic direction of our network.

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Without the generosity of our donors, Uplift would not be able to provide an education for the 17,500 scholars enrolled in 2017-18. We extend a heartfelt thank you to the following donors for their generous 2016-17 gifts and lifetime donations over \$25K to support Uplift's mission.

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# Get Connected

Investing in Uplift Education accomplishes more than just opening new schools! We work to develop globally-minded scholars who are college-ready, and who stay on track to earn a college degree. While we have an amazing team of teachers and support staff, we also know that our goal cannot be reached without the support of community partners and volunteers. Uplift has a variety of opportunities to work with our schools and scholars, whether you simply spend 30 minutes reading to a child or share your life experience as a mentor to a high school scholar.

We hope you will consider not only sharing your time and talent but also investing financially in Uplift. Your dollars will be used to continue the development of new practices to further increase scholar achievement and, best of all, we will share those results with others so the impact can multiply. Annually, Uplift receives 20,000 applications for 2,500 scholar spots. Your dollars will provide access to high quality education for North Texas' highest need families.

## To volunteer, contact:

Cassie Hubbert  
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[www.uplifteducation.org/donate](http://www.uplifteducation.org/donate)

**Be a part of our mission.  
Be a part of our community.**



# See More Stories

We invite you to visit our YouTube channel and watch the Community Connection playlist for more stories about our scholars and how they are connecting to the community to become globally-minded citizens.

**Visit [youtube.com/uplifteducationvideos](https://youtube.com/uplifteducationvideos)**



▶ Uplift Heights Primary's West Dallas Community festival connects scholars to the members of their communities, and educates the community on what Uplift Heights has to offer. With face painting, a live DJ, and plenty of food, the festival was a hit with everyone who attended.



▶ The International Fall Festival is one of Uplift Summit's longest running annual traditions. The event encourages parents and community members to come to the campus, cook food reflective of their cultural, and partake in festival fun, including a haunted house and dancing.



▶ Uplift William's AP art scholars created some buzz after they partnered with Nature Nate's honey to design some "sweet" packaging and marketing pieces.



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