



SMALL STEPS NURTURING CENTER 2018-2019 Annual Report

Small Steps Nurturing Center's mission is to provide an exemplary early childhood program to instill and foster the social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and spiritual growth of economically at-risk children and their families. The progress described below would not be possible without the help of our many community supporters, and we are sincerely grateful for their generosity.

2018-2019 School Year Overview

- 177 students and 130 families
- 31 teachers at 2 campuses
- 19 percent of our students received transportation to and from school
- 59,806 nutritious meals and 24,501 snacks served to our students
- 3,805 hours of mental health intervention and consultation performed on site by therapists, therapy interns, and contracted therapists
- 40 students received individual or group counseling from social and emotional program staff
- 146 referrals for our families to area social service organizations
- All children received speech and language screenings, and 45 students received individual speech therapy
- 110 students received vision screenings from Prevent Blindness Texas, and 17 were referred for treatment
- 109 students received hearing screenings from The Center for Hearing and Speech, and 13 were referred for treatment
- 92.2 percent student attendance rate
- 91 percent student retention rate
- 90 percent teacher retention rate over the last five years
- Accredited by AdvancED-Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the oldest and largest educational accrediting organization in the world
- 1,657 tuition hours completed by families through education opportunities, volunteering, and parent engagement activities at school
- 564 volunteers served 4,727 hours

2018-2019 School Year Highlights

Outcomes Measurement

Small Steps recently partnered with the Texas Institute for Measurement, Evaluation, and Statistics at the University of Houston to conduct our first-ever program evaluation. Results of the study show that the positive impact on our students is evident both while they are at Small Steps and later during elementary school. Highlights include:

- Our students show meaningful gains in oral language skills while at Small Steps. On average, our two-year-olds begin Small Steps performing about one standard deviation below the mean in expressive and receptive vocabulary, and our kindergarteners perform, on average, at or significantly above the mean.
- At the end of kindergarten, Small Steps students are performing well within the average performance range on the Woodcock-Johnson Tests of Achievement as compared to a nationally representative sample.
- Preliminary results of grades 3, 4, and 5 STAAR reading and math performance indicate that the passing rates of Small Steps students are higher than the passing rates of the state and district as a whole.

Given that the majority of Small Steps students enter our program performing at least one year below developmental expectations for their age in many areas, these results are evidence that Small Steps is narrowing the learning gap for our students and helping them to enter elementary school ready to learn. Small Steps will continue to build on this data in future years.

Organizational Changes

Small Steps is committed to continuous improvement, and last school year we learned that it was time to make organizational changes. In order to provide our students and families with a consistent program across two campuses, we strategically and thoughtfully decided to restructure our leadership team starting in the 2018-2019

school year. One Program Director, Fran Goundry (formerly the Jensen Campus Program Director), now oversees the program at both schools. The 2018-2019 administrative leadership team included the Executive Director, Program Director, Director of Advancement, and Director of Finance and Strategic Initiatives. The new program leadership team in 2018-2019 was led by Ms. Goundry and included the new positions of Director of Education, Director of Family Support, and Director of Student Support.

Parent Education

Small Steps offered a robust parent education program which educated and encouraged parents to be involved in their children’s learning, well-being, and development. Parents were required to complete at least 10 tuition hours by attending parent education events and volunteering, and at least five of those 10 hours needed to be education opportunities. Many Small Steps parents exceeded the required 10 tuition hours in 2018-2019, and 15 parents completed more than 20 hours.

Small Steps offered multiple education classes on site on topics such as nutrition, budgeting, car seat safety, support in public school, internet safety, and immigration issues; we also held a series of classes for our new parents to teach them child rearing basics, such as the importance of bedtime routines and parent self-care. Starting last school year, parents could also earn tuition hours by attending community-led classes and events off site, including GED classes, online parenting courses, HISD magnet school tours, and parent-child bingo to encourage enriching activities at home. In the fall of 2018, our SET team started offering small group weekly intensive positive parenting classes (Triple-P) in both English and Spanish.

Nutrition Program

In the 2018-2019 school year, the Houston Food Bank provided lunches and snacks for our students two days each week. This community partnership allowed Small Steps to continue feeding our students nutritious meals and snacks and to stay within or under our budget over time.

Reading and Writing Curricula

Although our students have improved in several areas, last year’s test scores revealed gaps in reading skills in our kindergarten students. In response, after extensive research Small Steps started using the Lucy Calkins Reading and Writing curricula in the 2018-2019 school year. Both evidence-based curricula focus on short mini-lessons that offer opportunities for students to work together and individually. Our students will become independent learners and feel more capable when they leave Small Steps for elementary school.

Re-Accreditation

Small Steps is accredited by AdvancED-Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the oldest and largest educational accrediting organization in the world, and the accreditation process ensures that we are held to the highest standards as well as continuously improving our program. Small Steps went through the re-accreditation process in the 2018-2019 year; through rigorous self-assessment, we identified areas of strength and improvement. The evaluation team recommended Small Steps for re-accreditation, and we received final notification in June.

2018-2019 Financial Overview

The following is an overview of Small Steps’ income and expenses for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2019:

Contributions	\$3,386,604	
Term Endowment	131,091	
Program	5,630	
Gifts in Kind	<u>150,389</u>	
Total Income	\$3,644,314	
Program Expenses	\$2,930,217	82%
Management & General Expenses	291,017	8%
Fundraising Expenses	<u>355,196</u>	10%
Total Expenses	\$3,576,430	

All figures are unaudited. Audited figures for the 2018-2019 fiscal year will be available in late 2019.

2018-2019 Board of Directors

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Mark Burroughs rotated off the Board of Directors in December 2018.

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Executive Director

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