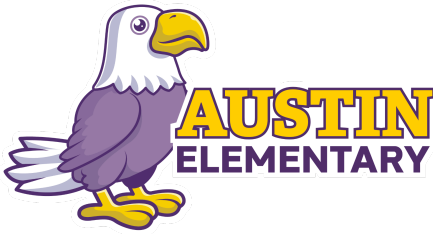


Pecos-Barstow-Toyah

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



Alicia Mitchell
Austin Elementary Principal

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"Inspiring and Empowering For Excellence"

Principals' Institute - Schools Transforming Learning Designation Program

Nominee Campus Name: Austin Elementary

School District: Pecos Barstow Toyah ISD

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Superintendent: Brent Jaco

Overview and Background:

Welcome to Austin Elementary School in Pecos, Texas. Pecos Barstow Toyah ISD is a consolidated district in far west Texas, located between Midland and El Paso. Our Early Childhood campus serves our very youngest learners in the district - PreK 3, PreK 4, Kindergarten, and First Grade. We currently have three bilingual classes at each grade level.

We have 608 students enrolled on our campus. Three years ago, thanks to an approved bond election, we moved into our amazing new facility and have been learning how to strategically use our new think spaces and open exchange spaces in each grade level pod. This is where several groups of students meet with their learning facilitators each day during WIN Time.

Last spring, the Pecos Barstow Toyah ISD Board of Trustees voted to move to a four-day instructional week during the 2025-2026 school year. Fridays are designated as "Independent Learning Days" when students are encouraged to catch up on their reading assignments and class work at home. Once a month, teachers meet for targeted Professional Development opportunities on that designated Friday.

This new adventure has had several amazing benefits for our students and staff members. Our student attendance has dramatically improved with the four day week. Student engagement and enthusiasm has increased as well.

Focus Area: Our campus reflects the principles articulated in Article Five of the Visioning Document as we provide high levels of student engagement and encourage natural curiosity for our young learners. Teachers and administrators share a commitment to providing meaningful student tasks that include hands-on, real world learning. These activities are designed for students to practice skills in small groups during our WIN Time each day. We are a National Showcase School for Capturing Kids' Hearts, and the student engagement, nurturing relationships, and affirmations are a part of our campus culture in all that we do. Our five campus initiatives are Safety & Security, Capturing Kids' Hearts, PLCs, Fundamental Five, and PBIS. All of our decisions for students center around these five areas of focus.

Work: With the additional instructional time each day, we intentionally built in one hour of WIN Time where all of our staff are involved in providing "What I Need" time for all students in small group settings. Our librarians, counselors, tutors, coaches, Art, Music, & STEM teachers, and all paraprofessionals are engaged in this unique, transformational time each

day where students are divided into small groups. These groups include time for intervention, enrichment, targeted skill development, and individual projects for all of our young scholars.

From 3:00 - 4:00, nothing else happens on campus except these small groups of students. WIN Time is truly a beautiful sight to behold. Students hear from a new professional educator in a different setting at a time of the day when they could become tired. This provides "right on time" support from the homeroom teacher on the day's lessons - targeting specific skills and knowledge where students might have misconceptions or confusions.

Because it is later in the day, the change of pace, new people, and high levels of enthusiasm lead to greater student engagement. I call this time of day "the golden hour" on our campus. It has been truly transformational. Having close communication with the homeroom teachers, small group leaders are able to provide time to either intervene or enrich students according to their individual needs.

Since we are the only Early Childhood campus in our school district, we are literally building the foundation for our students' educational journey. Our students are learning to read, write, and solve math problems on the foundational level. This is a responsibility that we take seriously.

Results: Austin Elementary students and teachers exemplify commitment and meaningful engagement in all aspects of learning. Our struggling learners receive extra support. Our advanced learners have time for extension projects. Small groups are the key to student growth and success. The four day school week has afforded us this unique opportunity to use the final hour of our school day to inspire and encourage all students to overcome obstacles and succeed. WIN Time has ignited enthusiasm among our teachers and staff as well. Ideas for interventions and enrichments have sparked amazing creativity and innovation among our teachers and staff members. Not only have our students grown academically, they have also shown growth in their behavior and character development. This WIN Time has definitely been an intentional change for our campus culture, bringing new life to the final hour of the school day. The students and staff are very grateful that they have this designated daily time to focus on both intervention and enrichment opportunities. Our struggling students as well as our high flyers receive intentional time in small groups for high levels of student engagement each day.