

Board of Trustees

Meeting Date: 09/22/2026

Executive Summary of Board Agenda Item

Subject/Title for Agenda Posting: Approval Memorandum of Understanding between the Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk (MCPER) and Jose H. Damian Elementary School, Canutillo ISD (CISD) Regarding The Center to Advance Family Engagement for Marginalized Learners (CAFÉ)

Justification Statement: The CAFÉ team seeks to collaborate with an LEA with a high percentage of military-connected youth, which is one of the priorities in a grant sponsored by the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).

Purpose of Agenda Item: ☐ Information ☒ Discussion ☒ Action
Item Type: ☒ Curriculum & Instruction ☐ Human Resources ☐ Business Services

Staff Responsible: Dr. Jesica Arellano

Signature of Requester(s)

Dr. Jesica Arellano

Signature of Presenter(s)

Cristina Pulley

Business Services Approval (Initials)

Date

Agenda Summary:

A team with the Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk (MCPER) at The University of Texas at Austin acting in partnership as a subaward of the University of Cincinnati is investigating a technical assistance and professional development model. The CAFÉ team will team with a Local Education Agency (LEA) with a high percentage of military-connected youth—to improve results for learners with disabilities. CAFÉ will develop, pilot, and refine an LEA model that ultimately empowers family members to advocate for their children's needs and take an active role as decision-makers in their children's education. The CAFÉ team will support a campus team in learning more about special education and how to increase parent engagement. The ultimate goal of increasing family engagement is to improve results for learners with disabilities. Up to six school campus/district level personnel are sought to participate during the 2026–27 academic year. CAFÉ offers:

- Professional learning opportunities for educators, staff, and family designed coaches focused on effective communication, IDEA laws and procedures, and best practices for engaging families and managing conflicts.
- Opportunities for collaboration with Family CAFÉ coaches to ensure that district/campus services offered/provided are responsive to families' needs.
- Family-friendly resources to build understanding of IDEA rights and supports available for students with disabilities.

RECOMMENDATION:

Administration recommends that the Board of Trustees approve the Memorandum of Understanding between Meadows Center for Preventing Education Risk and Jose H. Damian Elementary School as presented.

PRIOR BOARD ACTION: AWARDED: AWARDED AMOUNT:

AMOUNT(S): \$1000 (stipend will be provided to CISD receipt under this Memorandum of Understanding)

ACCOUNT NO(S):

PROCUREMENT METHOD TYPE: (3 Quotes, Cooperative Contract Quotes, Sole Source, Formal Bid)

REQUESTING DEPARTMENT:

CONSEQUENCES OF NON-APPROVAL:

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE:

ATTACHMENT(S): ✓

Memorandum of Understanding



**Memorandum of Understanding
Between the Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk (MCPER)
and Jose H. Damian Elementary School, Canutillo ISD (CISD)
Regarding The Center to Advance Family Engagement for Marginalized Learners (CAFÉ)**

A team with the Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk (MCPER) at The University of Texas at Austin acting in partnership as a subaward of the University of Cincinnati is investigating a technical assistance and professional development model. The CAFÉ team will team with a Local Education Agency (LEA) with a high percentage of military-connected youth—to improve results for learners with disabilities. CAFÉ will develop, pilot, and refine an LEA model that ultimately empowers family members to advocate for their children's needs and take an active role as decision-makers in their children's education.

The CAFÉ team seeks to collaborate with an LEA with a high percentage of military-connected youth, which is one of the priorities in a grant sponsored by the US Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The CAFÉ team will support a campus team in learning more about special education and how to increase parent engagement. The ultimate goal of increasing family engagement is to improve results for learners with disabilities. Up to six school campus/district level personnel are sought to participate during the 2026–27 academic year.

CAFÉ offers:

- Professional learning opportunities for educators, staff, and family designed coaches focused on effective communication, IDEA laws and procedures, and best practices for engaging families and managing conflicts.
- Opportunities for collaboration with Family CAFÉ coaches to ensure that district/campus services offered/provided are responsive to families' needs.
- Family-friendly resources to build understanding of IDEA rights and supports available for students with disabilities.

This is a model demonstration project. A model demonstration project is a real-world, practical application of a new method, strategy, or program designed to be evaluated and then shared or scaled up if successful. A model demonstration project is meant to be flexible to allow for the LEA partner to provide feedback so that the project activities can be adjusted to best suit the participants and their community. These projects are used to test a concept in a "typical setting" to see if it works, generate evidence of its benefits, and show how to replicate it elsewhere. There are no human subjects as in a research project. Instead, the collaborating school campus agrees to partner to test and evaluate the proposed model which includes

three-two hour¹ virtual and/or face-to-face professional development sessions that address the following topics:

- Project overview
- Communicating with families
- Empowering families

Additionally, there are three follow-up one-hour sessions proposed that will be offered to individuals from the campus team and the family coaches.

Furthermore, the CAFÉ team, in consultation with the campus team will identify, train, supervise and pay up to two family coaches who will serve as an additional liaison available to family members of students with disabilities with or without military-connectedness who may seek support in working with their school campus/district on how to advocate for their children's needs and take an active role as decision-makers in their children's education.

Treatment of intellectual property rights will be determined between the Parties through mutual consultation and agreement on a case-by-case basis, consistent with principles of existent laws of the United States.

Campus/district participants will receive the following for their participation:

- \$1,000 stipend per campus team (up to six members) to be paid out at the conclusion of the project sessions offered (anticipated to be prior to August 2027).
- \$2,000 stipend per campus identified family coach (up to two) to be paid out at the conclusion of the project sessions offered (anticipated to be prior to August 2027).
- Access to the CAFÉ website (<https://thefamilycafe.org/>) and all resources.
- Access to and support from the CAFÉ team.
- Access to and collaborative opportunities with CAFÉ family coaches.

The participating campus, *Jose H. Damian Elementary School* will receive:

- Reimbursement for cost of substitutes to cover instructional staff during professional development participation.

In support of this project, MCPER, *Jose H. Damian Elementary School* and Canutillo ISD make the following agreements:

That MCPER will:

- Provide a stipend to campus participants (\$1000 per person up to 6 campus team members and \$2,000 per person for each campus coach).

¹ The Texas CAFÉ and campus team will collaboratively adjust the proposed length and number of sessions to meet the partnering site's campus team's availability and needs based on lessons learned from implementation in Ohio and in Texas site 1, along with Texas site 2's input on what is feasible.

- Observe all district and campus rules and policies.
- Maintain ongoing communication with campus/district liaisons.
- Provide all professional development and project materials at no cost.
- Fully credit Jose H. Damian Elementary School and Canutillo ISD as a partner in published materials (with prior permission).

Both Parties agree that all financial agreements necessary to implement this MOU must be negotiated and will depend upon the availability of funds. Neither party shall have any financial obligation to the other party based on this Agreement.

The following individuals at ***Jose H. Damian Elementary School*** will be receivers of the forementioned stipend of \$1,000 as a participating member of the campus team.

1. Maria Castillo; mmcastillo@canutillo-isd.org
2. Heather Atherton; hatherton@canutillo-isd.org
3. Analy Gomez; anagomez@canutillo-isd.org
4. Melissa Ferandez; mharder@canutillo-isd.org
5. Patricia Lopez; plopez@canutillo-isd.org
6. Anali Luna; aluna@canutillo-isd.org

The following individuals at ***Jose H. Damian Elementary School*** will be receivers of the forementioned stipend of \$2,000 as a designated campus family coach.

1. Chelsea Anchieta; canchieta@canutillo-isd.org
Marilu Villegas; mari12385@yahoo.com

Jose H. Damian Elementary School in Canutillo ISD will:

- Identify up to six potential campus/district level participants to make up the campus team.
- Identify time for the professional development sessions with time allotted for continued action planning, and completion of project documentation and evaluations:
 1. Session 1 and 2, four hours; October 28th-7:45-3:30
 2. Session 3, two hours; November 9th- 7:45-3:30
 3. Session 4, one hour; December 7th- 7:45-3:30
 4. Session 5, one hour; January 13th- 7:45-3:30
 5. Session 6, one hour; February 17-7:45-3:30
- Allow campus participants time to attend professional development sessions during scheduled times.

- Promote the project to campus families with students with disabilities with and without military-connections.
- Provide feedback about the model and project materials by completing pre-and post-session evaluations.
- Promote collection of team/coach project related interactions to help the external evaluator to identify impact.

This Memorandum of Understanding will be effective as of the last date of signature below and will remain active for one year thereafter.

Agreed by:

Signed by:

Robyn Bertulon

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Office of Sponsored Projects

The University of Texas at Austin

osp@austin.utexas.edu

2026-09-01 | 14:04:30 PDT

Dr. Josue Borrego

Superintendent of Schools

Canutillo Independent School