



UNITED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT AGENDA ACTION ITEM

TOPIC: Approval of Signed Letter of Support from Board Members as a requirement of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Cycle 9 Grant

SUBMITTED BY: Dr. Edith "Edie" Landeck **OF:** Grants Administration

APPROVED FOR TRANSMITTAL TO SCHOOL BOARD: _____

DATE ASSIGNED FOR BOARD CONSIDERATION: March 23, 2016

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the United ISD Board of Trustees approve a motion to provide a letter of support as a requirement of the 21st Century Community Learning Centers grant application for SGMS

RATIONALE:

This is a grant application requirement to get priority points when application is scored. Letters must represent a majority of the locally elected board and provide a detailed description of the specific challenges the community faces concerning sustainability and how community and board support will assist local efforts to sustain the program over time. Letters of support with original signatures AND a list of all elected board members, including those that did not sign or submit a letter, must be attached to the application.

BUDGETARY INFORMATION: None for Letter of Support, increased local support for the center as of years 2 through 5

BOARD POLICY REFERENCE AND COMPLIANCE:

UNITED INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



Board of Trustees

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President
District 2

Juan Roberto Ramirez
Vice President
District 6

Aliza Flores Oliveros
Secretary
District 3

Ricardo Molina, Sr.
Parliamentarian
District 1

Ramiro Veliz, III
Member
District 4

Javier Montemayor, Jr.
Member
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Member
District 7

Roberto J. Santos
Superintendent

201 Lindenwood Drive
Laredo, Texas 78045
Phone: (956) 473-6219
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March 23, 2016

Texas Education Agency
1701 North Congress Ave
Austin, TX 78701-1494

To Whom It May Concern,

Our district's most remote, isolated Title I middle school is Salvador Garcia Middle (SGMS), which is located in a very poor, remote area of Webb County characterized by substandard housing, limited access to transportation, limited resources, and neighborhoods that are home to high risk populations. SGMS students are plagued by a 98.94% poverty rate, discipline and behavior challenges, academic underachievement, poor extracurricular participation, and are often unable to receive academic help from their family due to a high rate of illiteracy among the adult/parental population.

United Independent School District is requesting funds to establish an ACE community learning center will be established under the 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant Cycle 9 from the Texas Education Agency. This ACE center will provide a program beyond the regular school day (after school and during summer) offering significant expanded learning opportunities to those students most in need of academic assistance as identified from standardized test scores and classroom grades in core academic areas, as well as those at risk due to behavioral issues, attendance, and failure to be promoted to the next grade level.

The proposed program will benefit participating students by providing opportunities on site and via virtual educational field trips for academic assistance and enrichment; offering a broad array of student services to include health screenings, counseling, recreation, and college/career readiness and support; literacy and educational programming for families to include opportunities for literacy and related educational development. All activities will be provided in a school-based, drug-free, supervised environment.

The specific challenges facing the SGMS and the wider United ISD community concerning sustainability are financial. The oil and gas industry downturn has majorly impacted the Webb County area: workers have lost jobs, employers have lost business and shut down, the school district has lost oil and gas mineral revenue, and the retail sales tax collected have decreased significantly due to fewer shoppers with less funds. United is facing a potential \$30-35 million dollar shortfall in the coming academic year; however, our most needy students at SGMS are our priority and need the ACE program the most.

As such, the Board of Trustees of United ISD listed by name in the left column of this letter, have committed to identifying and providing funding to sustain the SGMS ACE program over time, as the grant guidelines require the district to cover a three to five percent yearly decrease in funding for years 2 through 5 of the program operation. This ongoing yearly increase will be covered by district budget processes.

Additional funding to keep the center running after year 5 will be sought through private, local, state, and federal funding and community/other sponsorships. It is also expected that the oil and gas sector will begin to recover in the next few years, and that recovery will drive job growth and retail expenditure increases which in turn will support increased state and local funding. United ISD will seek partnerships with the local institutes of higher education and local government and community agencies to help enrich the program and offset program costs.

It is our sincere hope that this project receives funding through your agency in order to help meet the academic needs of the students at this most worthy campus. SGMS is a Title I schoolwide campus, with 97.93% economically disadvantaged, 44.31% Limited English Proficient (LEP), and 99.59% Hispanic students who live *Colonias* in a remote area along the border to Mexico. We support this project fully.

Sincerely,

The United Independent School District Board of Trustees

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