

# Board of Trustees

Meeting Date: 01/20/2026

## Executive Summary of Board Agenda Item

Subject/Title for Agenda Posting: Recommendation to approve Memorandum of Understanding between Meadows Center for Preventing Education Risk at University of Texas at Austin and Congressman Silvestre and Carolina Reyes Elementary School +

Justification Statement: The CAFE team will collaborate with an Local Education Agency (LEA) and the Meadows Center for Preventing School Risk at UT-Austin, with a high percentage of military-connected youth-to improve results for learners with disabilities.

Purpose of Agenda Item:  Information  Discussion  Action

Item Type:  Curriculum & Instruction  HumanResources  Business Services

Staff Responsible: Dr. Jessica Melendez-Carillo

*Signature of Requester(s)*

Dr. Jessica Melendez Carillo

Veronica Campbell

*Signature of Presenter(s)*

Cristina Pulley

01/12/26

*Business Services Approval (Initials)*

*Date*

### Agenda Summary:

The CAFE 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 CAFE 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 2025-26 academic year. CAFE offers, professional learning opportunities for educators and staff focused on effective communication, IDEA laws and procedures, and best practices for engaging families and managing conflicts. Opportunities for collaboration with Family CAFE 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. In support of this project, MCPER, Congressman Silvestre and Carolina Reyes Elementary School and Canutillo ISO make the following agreements and will provide a stipend to campus participants (\$1000 per person up to 6 people). Additionally, it will hire, train, and supervise all family coaches (up to 2 coaches will be hired as consultants to be paid up to \$2,000).

Approve to enter into Memorandum of Understanding between Meadows Center for Preventing Education Risk at the

RECOMMENDATION: University of Texas at Austin and Canutillo ISD-Congressman Silvestre and Carolina Reyes Elementary School.. +

PRIOR BOARD ACTION: NO

AWARDED: NA

AWARDED AMOUNT: NA

AMOUNT(S): NA

ACCOUNT NO(S):

NA

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

Other- Memorandum of Understanding

REQUESTING DEPARTMENT:

Slivestre and Carolina Reyes Elementary School

CONSEQUENCES OF NON-APPROVAL:

Will not engage in Memorandum of Understanding which benefits Canutillo ISD

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE:

Upon Board Approval

ATTACHMENT(S):  Memorandum of Understanding

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**Memorandum of Understanding**  
**Between the Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk (MCPER)**  
**and Congressman Silvestre and Carolina Reyes 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 an 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 2025–26 academic year.

CAFÉ offers:

- Professional learning opportunities for educators and staff 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 hour<sup>1</sup> 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 optional one-hour sessions proposed that will be offered to individuals from the campus team.

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 person to be paid out at the conclusion of the project sessions offered (anticipated to be prior to August 2026).
- 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, *Congressman Silvestre and Carolina Reyes Elementary School* will receive:**

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

**In support of this project, MCPER, Congressman Silvestre and Carolina Reyes Elementary School and Canutillo ISD make the following agreements:**

That MCPER will:

- Provide a stipend to campus participants (\$1000 per person up to 6 people).
- Observe all district and campus rules and policies.
- Maintain ongoing communication with campus/district liaisons.

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<sup>1</sup> 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 the Ohio team that is currently piloting the model, along with the Texas campus' input on what is feasible.

- Hire, train, and supervise all family coaches (up to 2 coaches will be hired as consultants to be paid up to \$2,000).
- Provide all professional development and project materials at no cost.
- Fully credit Congressman Silvestre and Carolina Reyes 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 personnel at the Congressman Silvestre and Carolina Reyes Elementary School will be receivers of the forementioned stipend:

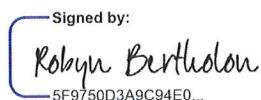
Nancy Campero, Teacher  
Daniela Armendariz, Teacher  
Stephani Romo, Teacher  
Deborah Valenzuela, Teacher  
Valerie Tolentino, Teacher  
Jessica Meléndez-Carrillo, Administrator

**Congressman Silvestre and Carolina Reyes Elementary School in Canutillo ISD will:**

- Identify up to six potential campus/district level participants to make up the campus team.
- 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.

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 Bertholon  
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2026-01-06 | 13:19:19 PST

Robyn Bertholon  
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