



SOUTH SAN ANTONIO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Agenda Item Summary

Meeting Date: June 16, 2025

Agenda Section: Consent

Agenda Item Title: 2025-2026 Head Start Transportation Waiver

From: Dr. Gutierrez, Deputy Superintendent

Additional Presenters if Applicable: Rebecca Herrera, Program Administrator

Description: South San Antonio ISD (SSAISD) requests a continued waiver for the 2025-2026 school year regarding the requirement for bus monitors on all Head Start buses. Low average ridership (under nine students per bus), coupled with ongoing staffing shortages and budget constraints, makes assigning monitors to each route unfeasible. SSAISD maintains a strong commitment to student safety through alternative measures, including front seating with 3-point harnesses, authorization forms for release, surveillance cameras, and comprehensive staff training. This waiver allows SSAISD to ensure safe, compliant transportation and efficient resource allocation given low demand and frequent independent family transport.

Historical Data: SSAISD respectfully requests the continuation of the Head Start transportation waiver for the 2025-2026 school year, referencing the successful and effective implementation of the initial waiver in 2024-2025.

Recommendation: Approve the Transportation Waiver for South San Antonio ISD for the 2025-2026 School Year.

Purchasing Director and Approval Date: N/A

Goal 3: SSAISD will ensure all students are provided a learning environment centered on their well-being that impacts their learning and success.

Goal 4: SSAISD will collaborate with parents and the community to ensure all students receive a high-quality education.

Funding Budget Code and Amount: No compensation or exchange of funds are necessary



Head Start

Transportation Waiver

2025-2026

Subject: Second-Year Request for Transportation Waiver – Bus Monitors
South San Antonio ISD – Head Start Program

Dear Office of Head Start,

South San Antonio ISD (SSAISD) respectfully requests reconsideration and approval of a second-year waiver from the requirement to assign bus monitors on all Head Start buses. This request follows the successful implementation of the initial waiver granted in the previous school year, during which our district maintained a strong focus on student safety and compliance with Head Start Performance Standards, despite ongoing staffing shortages and budgetary constraints.

Transportation data from the 2024–2025 school year indicates that only 30–45 Head Start students across our eight elementary campuses utilize district-provided transportation. On average, this equates to no more than nine students per bus, making it financially and logistically unfeasible to assign a bus monitor to each route. Compounding this challenge are district-wide staffing shortages and significant budget limitations, which prevent the hiring and retention of additional transportation personnel.

Despite these constraints, SSAISD has implemented a series of robust alternative safety measures to ensure a secure and supportive environment for all students who ride the bus:

- Head Start students are seated at the front of the bus, in clear view of the driver, and each is secured with a 3-point harness booster seat for enhanced safety.
- Each bus carries a Head Start Authorization Form for every child, listing authorized adults for student pick-up. Children are not released unless an approved adult is present at the designated stop.
- All buses are equipped with surveillance cameras, and video footage is reviewed monthly by program administrators for safety monitoring and compliance.
- The district's Safety Specialist and Transportation Specialist conduct annual training on Head Start Performance Standards and required transportation procedures with bus drivers, monitors (when available), and the Director of Transportation.

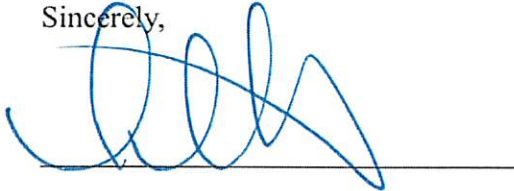
Additionally, the district continues to see low demand for transportation services, as many Head Start families opt to transport their children independently, particularly when siblings attend the same campus. Running two separate buses (Head Start and general education) to the same location is not cost-effective and places an unnecessary strain on both federal and local resources.

We remain steadfast in our commitment to student safety while ensuring instructional time is maximized and resources are allocated equitably. The waiver granted last year enabled SSAISD to maintain safe transportation practices without compromising quality or compliance. Given the

success of this approach, we respectfully request that the Office of Head Start grant a continuation of this waiver for the 2025–2026 school year.

We appreciate your understanding and ongoing partnership as we strive to meet the needs of our students while navigating resource limitations. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you require any additional documentation or clarification.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Dr. Hinojosa", written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Hinojosa,
South San Antonio ISD Superintendent

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Rebecca Herrera", written over a horizontal line.

Rebecca Herrera
Director of Head Start
South San Antonio ISD



SOUTH SAN ANTONIO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Early Childhood & Head Start

5622 Ray Ellison Blvd :: San Antonio :: Texas :: 78242 :: (210) 977-7365 :: Fax (210) 628-1800

Approval of the SSAISD Head Start Transportation Waiver

Grant Number: 06CH012472

Grantee Name: South San Antonio Independent School District

This document serves as an official confirmation for the approval of the SSAISD Head Start program Transportation Waiver in the South San Antonio Independent School District (ISD). The Transportation Waiver was thoroughly reviewed and approved during the Policy Council Meeting held on May 29, 2025.

To ensure proper acknowledgment and compliance, the approved action plan will also be documented with the Office of Head Start and entered into the Enterprise System. This procedure guarantees that all relevant stakeholders are informed and that the action plan aligns with the regulatory requirements set forth by the Office of Head Start.

Printed Name of SSAISD Board President

Signature of SSAISD Board President

Date