



## SOUTH SAN ANTONIO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

### Agenda Item Summary

Meeting Date: February 23, 2026

Agenda Section: Consent

Agenda Item Title: 2026-2027 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 2026-2027 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 2026-2027 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 2026-2027 School Year.

Purchasing Director and Approval Date: N/A

Goals: 2 and 3- SSAISD will recruit, develop, support, and retain effective teachers, principals, and other instructional staff. - SSAISD will ensure all students are provided a learning environment centered on their well-being that impacts their learning and success

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



# SOUTH SAN ANTONIO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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## *Early Childhood & Head Start*

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### **Approval of the SSAISD Head Start Transportation Waiver**

**Grant Number: 06CH012472-03**

**Grantee Name: South San Antonio Independent School District**

This document serves as an official confirmation of 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 February School Board meeting that was held on February 23, 2026.

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.

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*Printed Name of Board of Managers President*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Signature of Board of Managers President*

\_\_\_\_\_  
*Date*



**Head Start**

**Transportation Waiver**

**2026-2027**

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

South San Antonio ISD (SSAISD) respectfully requests a second-year waiver from the requirement to assign bus monitors to all Head Start transportation routes for the 2026–2027 school year. This request follows the successful and incident-free implementation of our initial waiver during the 2025–2026 academic year.

### Operational Justification

Our data indicates that transportation demand remains low, making the mandate for individual monitors logistically and financially unsustainable. Current figures show:

- **Low Enrollment Density:** Only 35–45 Head Start students across our four elementary campuses utilize district transportation.
- **Low Student-to-Bus Ratio:** This averages out to no more than nine students per bus, allowing drivers to maintain a clear and manageable environment.
- **Fiscal Responsibility:** Many families opt for independent transport for their children. Running separate Head Start and general education routes to the same campus is not a cost-effective use of federal or local resources, especially amidst ongoing district-wide staffing shortages and budget limitations.

### Proven Safety Mitigations

SSAISD has maintained a rigorous focus on student safety and compliance with Head Start Performance Standards. In the absence of a monitor, we have successfully implemented the following protocols:

- **Enhanced Restraints:** Students are seated in the front rows, in direct view of the driver, and secured with 3-point harness booster seats.
- **Verification Protocols:** Drivers utilize Head Start Authorization Forms for every child. No student is released unless an approved adult is physically present at the stop.
- **Technological Oversight:** All buses are equipped with surveillance cameras. Video footage is reviewed monthly by program administrators to ensure compliance and safety.
- **Specialized Training:** The district’s Safety and Transportation Specialists conduct annual mandatory training on Head Start Performance Standards for all transportation staff and the Director of Transportation.

The waiver granted last year allowed SSAISD to maintain safe, reliable transportation without compromising the quality of our instructional programs. Given the continued success of these safety measures and the persistent logistical challenges, we ask for your approval to continue this waiver for the 2026–2027 school year.

We appreciate your partnership and remain committed to the safety and well-being of our students. Please contact our office if you require further documentation or a site visit.

Sincerely,

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Dr. Hinojosa,  
South San Antonio ISD Superintendent

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Rebecca Herrera  
Program Administrator, SSAISD Head Start  
South San Antonio ISD