



# SOUTH SAN ANTONIO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Agenda Item Summary

**Meeting Date:** April 19, 2023

**Agenda Section:** Consent

**Agenda Item Title:** Approval of Head Start Cost of Living (COLA) and Quality Improvement Funding Application

**From:** Ms. Millicent Marcha, Chief Academic Officer or Mr. Kingman, Chief Financial Officer

**Additional Presenters if Applicable:** Mrs. Rebecca Herrera, Director of Early Childhood & Head Start

**Description:** The 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act contains an increase of approximately \$960 million for programs under the Head Start Act for FY22. A portion of the increase provides a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) of 5.6% to assist all Head Start grantees in increasing staff salaries and fringe benefits or in offsetting higher operation costs.

The SSAISD Head Start Program has been allocated \$146,013 in COLA funding and \$81,510 in Quality Improvement. Awarded COLA and Quality funds will be applied as follows:

-Hiring of 8 part-time paraprofessionals to support students and teachers during the instructional day

-Purchase the Second Step Program to teach and support student's social and emotional needs

-Provide a yoga instructor to teach students how to manage anxiety, improve their emotional regulation, boost their self-esteem, increase body awareness and mindfulness

-Promote a positive Teacher and Staff Culture (build a collaborative and inclusive staff culture at each of our sites); Activities may include team-building activities and building play in our professional learning sessions

**Historical Data:** The SSAISD Head Start Program is eligible to apply for a supplemental Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLA) and Quality Improvement grant through the Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start. SSAISD has previously applied and has been awarded the COLA grant in June of 2022.

**Recommendation:** The Administration recommends that the Board approve the submission of the 2022-2023 Head Start COLA and Quality Improvement funding application.

Purchasing Director and Approval Date: N/A

**Funding Budget Code and Amount:** Head Start -205 E

# Head Start COLA and Quality Improvement Grant Application FY 2023



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## Cost of Living Adjustment

### Narrative:

Each new budget period South San Antonio ISD Board considers and implements a pay increase for all employees. Typically, that increase is between 2.5% to 3% annually. This becomes a permanent part of the employee's total salary. I am requesting to use the COLA-granted funds in a manner to support our students with high-quality personnel and programs. All Head Start salaries are paid through the South San Antonio Independent School District which manages the grant. The school district sets up a compensation plan each year that is comparable to surrounding school districts. Each SSAISD employee received a 3% raise at the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year. SSAISD also implemented a retention incentive program to support and retain quality employees.

SSAISD requests the use of COLA funds to hire 8 part-time instructional aides to assist with classroom behaviors, reduce the student-teacher ratio, and give additional breaks during the school day to staff members. Our goal is to support and alleviate stressors which will result in less burnout and turnover. This will ease anxiety, build companionship, improve concentration, and teach self-control. In addition, we would like to hire a behavioral specialist to aid in this companionship with the students and provide feedback to teachers that can help them understand some of their behavioral concerns. Their common duties would include: observing, recording, and evaluating students' behavior.

As stated previously, the district intends to remain competitive in its compensation of employees, and we would like to utilize some of the COLA funds to adjust their current rates to make them more competitive.

**Budget Justification**

The salary increase will be effective on September 1, 2023, when SSAISD launches new salaries for the September 1 through August 31 fiscal year.

**Request - Personnel Cost of Living Adjustments**

<b>New Positions</b>	<b>Position Status</b>	<b># of Positions</b>	
Behavior Specialist	Fulltime	1	<b>\$49,000.00</b>
Instructional Aides (new positions)	PT Hourly	8	<b>\$70,000.00</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>\$119,000.00</b>

**Request: Cost of Living Adjustment for Existing Employees**

<b>Position</b>	<b>Position Status</b>	<b># of Positions</b>	<b>Total Request (Approximate 2.6%)</b>
Program Component Director	Fulltime	1	<b>\$2,445</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>2</b>	<b>\$2,445</b>

**Total Budget: \$121,445**

**Quality Improvement****Narrative:**

As identified in previous year's applications, many of the South San Antonio Independent School District's (SSAISD) Head Start students remain in need of mental health (social, emotional, behavioral) support. Mostly (but not exclusively) due to pandemic stressors, these needs have continued to increase over the past several years and teachers and families are continually asking for assistance. Local community stressors include a lack of financial resources, lack of consistent familial structures, food shortcomings, and shared/lack of homes. As a district in an impoverished area of the city, we are watching as our children struggle with mental health-associated behaviors such as anxiety and a lack of self-regulation/impulse control. Teachers have

reported higher-than-ever behaviors that are not typical for children in our programs. Impulse control is a critically important function of the brain that is the developing stage for children aged four through six. Our requested funds in this application all align with helping build strong social, emotional, and behavioral competencies.

As our program continues to grow and work towards meeting the needs of our students in the classroom, we would like to request the use of the Quality Improvement grant to supplement funds towards:

● **Supports to ensure effective implementation of a social-emotional program for students.**

- SecondStep Program- A research-based, social-emotional curriculum to get everyone on the same page and to build strong relationships in a positive school environment.
- a weekly or/biweekly yoga instructor- Students will learn how to manage anxiety, improve their emotional regulation, boost their self-esteem, increase body awareness and mindfulness, enhance concentration and memory, and develop their strength and flexibility.
- Reading/Therapy Dog- We would like to implement a therapy dog into this plan in order to benefit the social-emotional program. The dog would provide numerous benefits to our students in the form of anxiety and stress reduction and improvement in their self-esteem and overall mood. Therapy dogs help children learn social skills, preventing social isolation. Interaction with therapy dogs has also been found to cause a social catalyst effect, which further helps improve the stimulation of social behavior.
- We would like to use the remaining funds to support professional development for Head Start staff. Meeting student learning needs today requires effective professional development that helps teachers learn and refine the instructional strategies needed to teach 21st-century skills (FrogStreet Curriculum, Science of Reading, Language Development PD, Head Start-approved conferences).

We are requesting to use the COLA funds in this manner because all of the Head Start salaries are paid through the South San Antonio Independent School District which manages the

grant. The school district sets up a compensation plan each year that is compared with surrounding school districts.

**Budget Justification**

<b>Resources</b>	<b>Qty.</b>	<b>Price</b>	<b>Total</b>
Second Step Early Learning Curriculum	20	\$459.00	\$9,180
Certified Reading/Therapy Dog	1	\$6,000.00	\$6,000
Yoga Day (Improving Lives through Yoga)	144	\$490.00	\$70,558
Staff Professional Development			\$20,340
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$106,078</b>

**Conclusion**

SSAISD Head Start is committed to the success of its program. Receipt and approval of the COLA and Quality Improvement grant in the amount of \$227,523 will provide the necessary funds that allow us to continue providing the highest quality of services to the children and families within our community.



## SOUTH SAN ANTONIO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT Head Start & Early Childhood

### **Approval of Statement for Continuation Funding Application**

This document confirms and approves the COLA and Quality Improvement Grant application for the South San Antonio ISD Head Start program (#06CH010831), for the 2022-2023 school year. The 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act contains an increase of approximately \$960 million for programs under the Head Start Act for FY22. A portion of the increase provides a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) of 5.6% to assist all Head Start grantees in increasing staff salaries and fringe benefits or in offsetting higher operation costs. The SSAISD COLA and Quality Improvement Grant application was reviewed and approved on April 19, 2023, at the School Board meeting. Approval of the funding application will be further noted with the Office of Head Start and the Enterprise System.

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*Signature of School Board -President*

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*Date*