



## SOUTH SAN ANTONIO INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

### Agenda Item Summary

Meeting Date: May 16, 2025

Agenda Section: Consent

Agenda Item Title: Approve the Memorandum of Understanding with Texas A&M University - San Antonio - Partnership Toward Graduate Degree and Post-Graduate Certification Attainment (PGDA)

From/Presenters: Dr. Jennifer Gutierrez, Deputy Superintendent and Rita Uresti, Executive Director of Human Resources

Description: South San ISD is excited to partner with Texas A&M University-San Antonio (A&M-SA) to support staff in pursuing a graduate degree through the Postgraduate Degree Advancement (PGDA) initiative. This partnership provides valuable financial and logistical support for eligible employees.

#### **Program Benefits:**

- First Course Free: A&M-SA will provide tuition and fee assistance covering the cost of one graduate course (up to \$1,250) for up to ten Texas resident employees from South San ISD who are selected for participation in PGDA.
- This assistance is awarded during the first semester in which the student enrolls in a minimum of 6 credit hours of graduate coursework at A&M-SA.
- Substitute Coverage: South San ISD will provide pre-requested and pre-approved substitute coverage for up to 2 days per semester, for a maximum of 4 semesters, to help participants manage both work and academic responsibilities.

This initiative is designed to invest in the professional growth of South San ISD staff and encourage continued educational achievement.

Historical Data: During the 2022-2023, 2023-2024, and 2024-2025 school years, we partnered with Texas A&M University-San Antonio to offer a graduate program designed to support the professional growth of our educators. Through this collaboration, Texas A&M University-San Antonio provided \$1,000 in scholarship support for up to 15 participants enrolled in a graduate program. Additionally, South San Antonio ISD contributed \$500 per semester for each

participating employee, with an extra \$500 per semester awarded to those pursuing a reading specialist certification.

In the 2022–2023 school year, seven employees enrolled in the program. Participation increased to 11 students in 2023–2024 and slightly decreased to nine students in 2024–2025, demonstrating sustained interest in advanced educational opportunities.

Recommendation: Approve the Memorandum of Understanding with Texas A&M University - San Antonio - Partnership Toward Graduate Degree and Post-Graduate Certification Attainment (PGDA)

Purchasing Director and Approval Date: Not applicable

Funding Budget Code and Amount: Utilize Budget 199 to cover substitute expenses, not to exceed \$4,800.

Goal: 2. SSAISD will recruit, develop, support, and retain effective teachers, principals, and other instructional staff.

## Memorandum of Understanding

This Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") is entered into and shall be effective upon execution (the "Effective Date"), by and between **Texas A&M University-San Antonio** (referred to as "**A&M-SA**"), an agency of the State of Texas and a member of The Texas A&M University System ("Member"), and **South San Antonio Independent School District** ("**District**"). **A&M-SA** and **District** are sometimes hereafter referred to as "Party" individually and as "Parties" collectively.

This MOU consists of two articles. Article 1 is a non-binding portion of this MOU containing the general understandings and intentions of the Parties. Article 2 contains terms to which the Parties agree to be bound. The Parties agree as follows:

### Article 1

- 1.1 This Article 1 is not intended to be legally binding on either Party.
- 1.2 **District** and **A&M-SA** will work collaboratively to implement the **Partnership toward Graduate Degree and post-graduate certification Attainment (PGDA)** initiative. This initiative includes offering all required courses associated with the Master's degrees and post-graduate certification offered at **A&M-SA** to qualified participants for approved PGDA programs. Consistent with Texas A&M University System, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board standards, the courses will be offered at the campus of the University and/or online (the "Purpose").
- 1.3 Qualified (based upon **A&M-SA** admission requirements) PGDA candidates will be selected by the **District** to participate in the first cohort of PGDA.
- 1.4 **A&M-SA** intends to:
  - (a) **A&M-SA** will assist PGDA participants in enrolling for graduate courses. Participants will need to meet admission requirements for the graduate program at **A&M-SA**.
  - (b) **A&M-SA** and **District** points of contact will work together to identify a date/time for an online information session to provide information to interested prospective participants from the district. **A&M-SA** will provide representatives from various master's degree programs with representatives from the admissions and financial aid offices to provide information and answer questions from prospective students.
  - (c) **A&M-SA** will provide tuition & fee assistance covering the cost of one graduate course for up to \$1,250 for Texas residents to a maximum of 10 current employees from **District** who are selected for participation in PGDA. This tuition & fee assistance will be awarded during the first semester in which the student enrolls in a minimum of 6 credit hours of graduate coursework at **A&M-SA**.
  - (d) Insurance requirements are the responsibility of each PGDA participant in accordance with existing **A&M-SA** and **District** policies.

1.5 **District** intends to:

- (a) **District** will identify an individual who will serve as the district point of contact, and **A&M-SA** will identify an individual who will serve as the university point of contact. These two individuals will work together to create and disseminate materials advertising the opportunity to participate in PGDA to all educators within the **District**.
- (b) **A&M-SA** and **District** points of contact will work together to identify a date/time for an online information session to provide information to interested prospective participants from the district. **District** will provide a representative to explain the district's support for PGDA participants.
- (c) **District** will provide substitute coverage for up to 10 current employees selected for participation in PGDA. This substitute coverage will be awarded for two days each semester in which the student completes graduate coursework at **A&M-SA** for up to 4 semesters.
- (d) **District** will provide de-identified, anonymous student data to **A&M-SA** that assists in tracking the effectiveness of the **A&M-SA**'s PGDA program and its impact on student achievement. The data will be available for publication and program enhancement.
- (e) Admission to the program does not guarantee continued enrollment for students who fail to maintain an adequate GPA or who demonstrate Fitness to Practice concerns.

## Article 2

- 2.1 This Article 2 is intended to be legally binding on the Parties.
- 2.2 Each Party acknowledges that neither Party will have any legal rights or obligations as to the understandings and intentions in Article 1, and neither Party should or may take any action or fail to take any action in detrimental reliance on Article 1.
- 2.3 The Parties anticipate that under this MOU it may be necessary for a Party (the "Disclosing Party") to transfer information of a confidential nature ("Confidential Information") to the other Party (the "Receiving Party"). The Disclosing Party shall clearly identify Confidential Information at the time of disclosure by (i) appropriate stamp or markings on the document exchanged, or (ii) written notice, with attached listings of all material, copies of all documents, and complete summaries of all oral disclosures (under prior assertion of the confidential nature of the same) to which each notice relates, delivered within thirty (30) days of the disclosure to the other Party.
  - (a) "Confidential Information" does not include information that: (i) is or becomes publicly known or available other than as a result of a breach of this MOU by the Receiving Party; (ii) was already in the possession of the Receiving Party as the result of disclosure by an individual or entity that was not then obligated to keep that information confidential; (iii) the Disclosing Party had disclosed or discloses to

an individual or entity without confidentiality restrictions; or (iv) the Receiving Party had developed or develops independently before or after the Disclosing Party discloses equivalent information to the Receiving Party.

- (b) The Receiving Party shall use the same reasonable efforts to protect the Disclosing Party's Confidential Information as it uses to protect its own confidential information of a similar nature. The Receiving Party may use Confidential Information only for the Purpose under this MOU and may disclose Confidential Information only to its directors, regents, officers, employees, agents, consultants, advisors, or other representatives ("Representatives") having a need to know the Confidential Information for the Purpose, provided that they are subject to confidentiality obligations not less restrictive than those set forth herein, and that the Receiving Party remains responsible for its Representatives' compliance with such obligations.
- (c) If the Receiving Party is legally required to disclose Confidential Information, the Receiving Party shall, to the extent allowed by law, promptly give the Disclosing Party written notice of the requirement so as to provide the Disclosing Party a reasonable opportunity to pursue appropriate process to prevent or limit the disclosure. If the Receiving Party complies with the terms of this Section, disclosure of that portion of the Confidential Information, which the Receiving Party is legally required to disclose, will not constitute a breach of this MOU.
- (d) The Receiving Party shall, upon request of the Disclosing Party, promptly return or destroy all materials embodying Confidential Information other than materials in electronic backup systems or otherwise not reasonably capable of being readily located and segregated without undue burden or expense, except that the Receiving Party may securely retain one (1) copy in its files solely for record purposes. The Receiving Party's obligations as to Confidential Information will survive the termination or expiration of this MOU for a period of three (3) years.

2.4 Each Party acknowledges that all rights in any trademarks, service marks, slogans, logos, designs, and other similar means of distinction associated with that Party (its "Marks"), including all goodwill pertaining to the Marks, are the sole property of that Party. Neither Party may use the Marks of the other without the advance written consent of that Party, except that each Party may use the name of the other Party in factual statements that, in context, are not misleading or imply an endorsement by that Party or its employees. The Parties will mutually agree in advance upon any public announcements, or communications to the media regarding this MOU to be provided pursuant to this MOU.

2.5 Each Party shall be responsible for its own costs, risks, and liabilities as a result of its activities under this MOU without expectation of reimbursement from the other Party. There will be no exchange of funds or other resources among the Parties.

2.6 This MOU commences on the Effective Date and continues through May, 2026 (the "Term"), unless sooner terminated as provided herein, not to exceed a total Term of five (5) years. Either Party may terminate this MOU effective upon thirty (30) days' written notice to the other Party. Either Party may terminate this MOU effective upon written notice to the

other Party if the other Party materially breaches any term of this MOU and fails to cure such breach within ten (10) days after receiving written notice of the breach.

- 2.7 Each Party shall conduct all activities in connection with this MOU in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations.
- 2.8 The validity of this MOU and all matters pertaining to this MOU, including but not limited to, matters of performance, breach, remedies, procedures, rights, duties, interpretation or construction, shall be governed and determined in accordance with the laws of the State of Texas. Pursuant to Section 85.18(b), Texas Education Code, mandatory venue for all legal proceedings against **A&M-SA** is to be in the county in which the principal office of **A&M-SA**'s governing officer is located.
- 2.9 Any notice required or permitted under this MOU must be in writing and in English, and is deemed given: (a) three (3) business days after it is deposited and post-marked with the United States Postal Service, postage prepaid, certified mail, return receipt requested, (b) the next business day after it is sent by overnight carrier, (c) on the date sent by email transmission with electronic confirmation of receipt by the party being notified, or (d) on the date of delivery if delivered personally. Parties can change their respective notice address by sending to the other Party a notice of the new address. Notices should be addressed as follows:
- (a) **A&M-SA:** Texas A&M University-San Antonio  
One University Way  
San Antonio, Texas 78224  
Dr. Wowek Sean Kearney  
Professor of Educational Leadership  
Phone: 210-784-2528  
Email: wowek.kearney@tamusa.edu
- (b) **District:** South San Antonio Independent School District  
5622 Ray Ellison Blvd  
San Antonio, TX 78242  
Dr. Saul Hinojosa  
Office of the Superintendent  
Phone: 210-977-7000  
Email: saul.hinojosa@southsanisd.net
- 2.10 This MOU is not intended to create a partnership or joint venture between the Parties. Neither Party may bind the other or otherwise act in any way as the representative of the other, unless specifically authorized, in advance and in writing, to do so, and then only for the limited purpose stated in such authorization.
- 2.11 This MOU contains the entire understanding of the Parties as to its subject matter and supersedes all other written and oral agreements between the Parties as to that subject matter.
- 2.12 This MOU is assignable only with the written consent of both Parties.

- 2.13 Each provision of this MOU is severable. If any provision is rendered invalid or unenforceable by statute or regulations or declared null and void by any court of competent jurisdiction, the remaining provisions will remain in full force and effect if the essential terms of this MOU remain valid, legal, and enforceable.
- 2.14 Neither Party is liable or responsible to the other Party for any loss or damage or for any delays or failure to perform under this MOU due to causes beyond its reasonable control, including, but not limited to, acts of God, employee strikes, epidemics, war, riots, flood, fire, sabotage, terrorist acts or any other circumstances of like character (force majeure occurrence).
- 2.15 **A&M-SA** is an agency of the state of Texas and under the Constitution and the laws of the state of Texas possesses certain rights and privileges, is subject to certain limitations and restrictions, and only has authority as is granted to it under the Constitution and the laws of the state of Texas. **District** expressly acknowledges that **A&M-SA** is an agency of the state of Texas and nothing in this MOU will be construed as a waiver or relinquishment by **A&M-SA** of its right to claim such exemptions, remedies, privileges, and immunities as may be provided by the Constitution and the laws of the state of Texas.
- 2.16 Prior to performing any specific projects or work contemplated by this MOU, the Parties will enter into a separate agreement containing definitive statements of work and associated budgets. Notwithstanding the foregoing, this MOU does not bind the Parties to negotiate or consummate any such later agreement(s).

Each Party enters into this MOU as of the Effective Date.

**South San Antonio Independent School  
District**

**Texas A&M University-San Antonio**

By: \_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Dr. Saul Hinojosa

Name: Dr. Mohamed Abdelrahman

Title: Superintendent

Title: Provost

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Do You Want to Earn A Master's Degree?

South San ISD is partnering with Texas A&M University-San Antonio to provide an opportunity for you to earn a graduate degree.

Texas A&M University-San Antonio is providing the **FIRST COURSE FREE** for up to ten participants from South San ISD during the first semester when students enroll in a minimum of 6 credit hours of graduate study

South San ISD is providing pre-requested/pre-approved **substitute coverage** for 2 days per semester for up to 4 semesters of graduate study



## Programs Available

- MS in Reading
- MS in Biology
- MS in Bilingual Education
- MS in Applied Behavioral Analysis
- MS in Kinesiology
- MEd in Early Childhood Education
- MEd in Special Education
- MEd in Instructional Leadership
- MA in School Counseling
- MA in English
- MA in Psychology
- MA in Curriculum & Instruction
- MA in Educational Administration (includes Principal Certification)
- MBA in Business Administration
- Reading Specialist Certification
- Educational Diagnostician Certification
- Superintendent Certification

## INFORMATION SESSION

Day: May 7, 2025

Time: 5:00-5:45pm

Zoom link for meeting:

<https://tamusa.zoom.us/j/4134245999?omn=86202692772>

Register using the QR Code or RSVP link below



[https://tamusa.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_6qV95Cmh13Af1ye](https://tamusa.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_6qV95Cmh13Af1ye)

University Point of Contact:

Dr. W. Sean Kearney

[wkearney@tamusa.edu](mailto:wkearney@tamusa.edu)

District Point of Contact:

Superintendent's Office

[michelle.martinez@southsanisd.net](mailto:michelle.martinez@southsanisd.net)