

Najim Family Foundation Letter of Intent

Agency: San Antonio Foundation for Excellence in Education, Inc. (SAISD Foundation)

Project Title: To support unique classroom environments in order to foster student learning and improve academic achievement.

Amount of funding request (whole dollar amounts only): \$ 82,400

Brief statement of the organization's purpose and history: Since 1998, the San Antonio Foundation for Excellence in Education, Inc. (SAISD Foundation) has supported the San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD). Its mission is to assist SAISD in becoming one of the nation's leading urban school districts through innovation and educational excellence. The SAISD Foundation achieves this mission through the support of innovative school and district wide projects and grants to teachers. The SAISD Foundation stimulates and enables student success throughout the district by funding innovative ideas and expanding proven approaches in increasing student achievement. During the 2016-2017 school year, the SAISD Foundation served 45,700 students by providing 83 New Teacher Grants, 42 Innovative Grants, 137 Mini-Grants and additional grants to schools from key donors like the Harvey E. Najim Family Foundation. The SAISD Foundation also supports district-wide efforts to increase rigor and enhance school leadership and SAISD Schools of Innovation, in particular, CAST Tech and the Advanced Learning Academy. Finally, the SAISD Foundation supports approximately 120 donor funded scholarships for students pursuing higher education each year.

Project Description: The SAISD Foundation seeks funding to provide teachers with furniture and tools to create innovative indoor and outdoor classrooms environments for SAISD students. Flexible classrooms and seating arrangements (standing desks, balance balls etc.) give students a choice of what learning posture works best for them. Students who feel comfortable in their environments are more likely to work collaboratively, communicate and engage in critical thinking. Several SAISD classrooms have already implemented innovative learning environments and those classrooms have already seen improvement in students' grades. Those students were more likely to engage their peers and participate more in classroom activities and discussions. Fidgety students are able to burn off their excess energy with items like Hokki stools and wiggle mats which allow them to focus on their learning. In classrooms that have implemented those forms of seating or tools, we have seen students' behavior and concentration improve, while seeing student misbehavior decrease. Outdoor classrooms provide teachers with an additional learning space that allow students to work outside of a traditional classroom. These classroom spaces can spark students' creativity and help students think outside of the four walls of their classrooms.

Brief statement of any previous funding received from The Harvey E. Najim Family Foundation: The SAISD Foundation is grateful for the Harvey E. Najim Family Foundation's continued support of our programs and projects, including: \$58,542 in 2012, \$22,500 in 2013, \$74,500 in 2014, \$22,800 in 2015, \$79,012 in 2016, and \$34,500 in 2017. The Harvey E. Najim Family Foundation has been a consistent supporter of the Frances Weir Scholarship Program and various innovative projects across SAISD

How the proposed project relates to The Harvey E. Najim Family Foundation’s funding priorities: The Innovative Classrooms Project relates to the Najim Family Foundation’s funding priorities in that provides students with creative seating and posturing for students in traditional classrooms as well as alternative learning spaces which will advance children’s education and improve their academic performance. Students with access to creative seating that fit their needs and alternative learning spaces are more likely to participate in classroom activities and interact with their peers as they feel more comfortable and inspired in the space than in traditional classrooms. Students who participate and stay on task are more likely to succeed academically and outside of the classroom. Without the restrictions of a desk and a chair, students needing alternative workspaces can more easily stay on task and not be distracted by their need to get up and move. This is particularly important with younger children as it can be difficult for them to sit still for long periods of time in a traditional school chair.

Line-item budget for project in which funds are being requested (this is not your organization’s budget).

Line Item Description	Number of Classrooms or Schools	Quantity & Cost per Unit or Room	Total Project Funds	Najim Requested Funds Allocation
Flexible Seating (wobble chairs, balance balls, wiggle mats, fidgety feet bands, Hokki stools)	50	\$1,000	\$50,000	\$40,000
Outdoor Classrooms (metal or wooden picnic tables, outdoor dry erase boards, umbrellas)	8	\$5,000	\$40,000	\$30,000
Standing Desks (Double Desks – 2 per classroom)	24	48/\$310	\$14,800	\$12,400
Total			\$104,800	\$82,400

Children Impacted

The TOTAL project initiative will impact 4,280 number of unduplicated children.

NFF requested funds will impact 3,300 number of unduplicated children.

Organization total revenue and expenses for current fiscal year

Revenue: \$4,898,000

Expenses: \$4,897,036

Project timeline (beginning and ending dates)

Beginning: October 2017

Ending: September 2018

Funds from the Najim Family Foundation will be spent within one year of grant awarding.

Brief project evaluation criteria: The SAISD Foundation will oversee the selection of the teachers who request innovative learning classrooms through the Innovative Grants Program. The Grant Selection Committee (consisting of SAISD Foundation Board Members and SAISD District Grants Staff) reviews every application and recommends programs for funding. The SAISD Foundation Director and Grants Manager take these recommendations and determine which programs will actually be funded. The SAISD Foundation facilitates the purchasing of items for the teachers. Upon completion of the funding cycle, funded teachers are expected to submit project reports and reflect on the successes and challenges of their projects.

List other project funders (pending and committed foundations)

Foundation	Amount	Pending or Committed
Waste Management	\$20,000	Committed
SAISD Foundation Fundraising	\$2,400	Committed

Contact information of primary and secondary person within organization

Primary

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