
Additional Board Update Information: Head Start PK3 Grant

Report for Summer of 2023 to ensure the sharing of accurate and regular information about program planning, policies, and agency operations.

Project Name: Head Start – Travis County, Texas

Grant Period: 7/1/2019 – 4/30/2024

Award Amount: 5/1/2023-4/30/2024: \$1,705,882.00 for Operations, \$21,383.00 for T/TA

Additional funds: COLA/QI: \$153,265.00

TOTAL FUNDS for FY 23-24: \$1,880,530.00

Financial Expenditures:

Spending for the 2022-2023 school year ended on 3/31/23 and no additional purchases were made after that date. New funds for the 2023-2024 school year did not open until 7/10/23, thus no reports on purchases are available at this time. An updated chart will be provided on the August 2023 Board Update.

Head Start Federal Grant Funds	
<i>Summer 2023 - Supplies and Materials for Classrooms</i>	\$0
Total Expenditures to date (7/30/23)	\$0

A detailed report of salary and benefit expenses can be provided by the finance department upon request.

Enrollment:

As of 7/31/23, we have pre-enrolled 142 slots of 204 students. All eligible families are required to complete the following: AISD online registration, digital AISD Pre-K application, and a digital Head Start enrollment application along with a transfer (as needed). Our enrollment capacity is 204. Recruitment efforts for the 2023-2024 school year included: sharing Head Start information via email, text, agency websites, social media, Bright to Text messaging, attending in-person events and hand-delivering flyers by placing them on storefronts and car windows.

Program information summaries:

Self Assessment Process

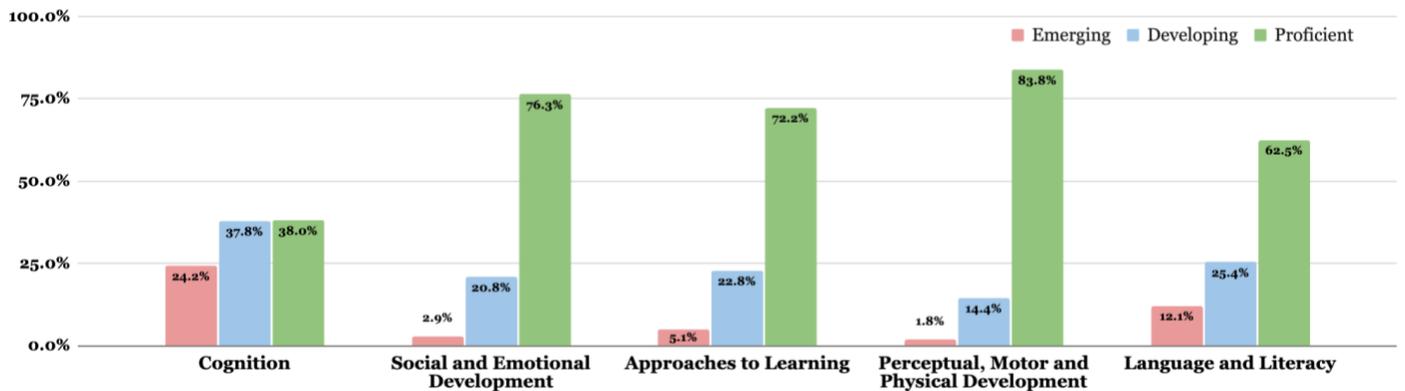
During the months of June and July, the Austin ISD Head Start Leadership team along with various stakeholders from the community engaged in the self assessment process. The teams review a variety of data, identified program strengths and weaknesses, all while working to provide vital feedback about our program. The management team then reviewed the collective data gathered and worked on a plan for continuing to improve our program. The completed Self-assessment will be submitted to the board for approval at the September 2023 school board meeting.

Corrective Action Plan

On July 20th 2023, Austin ISD was granted a 60 day extension to the date of correction for our corrective action plans. Work has continued on the corrective action plans over the summer and the Head Start team is excited to share with the 2nd reviewers what changes we have made to the process.

22-23 Student Outcome Data

Education staff completed the third wave of student assessment using the CLI Engage assessment tools during the month of May 2023 and data was analyzed by the Head Start Management team at the end of May. The percentage for each category is a collection of all students at each site who score in each of the 3 scoring levels: Emerging, Developing and Proficient. Significant improvement was noted for students in all areas of development.



Emerging	24.2%	2.9%	5.1%	1.8%	12.1%
Developing	37.8%	20.8%	22.8%	14.4%	25.4%
Proficient	38.0%	76.3%	72.2%	83.8%	62.5%

*data on table and chart are identical

Parent Family Engagement:

During the months of June and July, the Health and Social Services Specialist in collaboration with the Family Advocates prepared for family engagement for the 2023-2024 school year. This school year we are looking forward to hosting our parent engagement events in-person at all eight of our Head Start Campuses. Family Advocates will work hard to establish a community where families can gather and learn from each other while also engaging in our fun and interactive family engagement events. During the summer months we reviewed our 6 lesson parent engagement curriculum to update all activities and prepared for parent engagement this school year. In addition to the parenting curriculum, we will also be hosting community partner meetings throughout the school year based on the topics that interest our enrolled families most. Families will have the opportunity to complete a beginning of the year survey to communicate what topics they are most interested in learning about this school year.

Education:

In the months of June and July, the Education Specialist worked in collaboration with the Early Learning Specialists on Summer professional learning plans for EDU, Leadership Institute, Job Alike Day and Renew for TAs. We also presented at the Region 13 Early Childhood Conference and at the Region 13 Instructional Coaching Conference. The Education specialist has also been updating documents to reflect the new Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines and preparing new materials for our Head Start teachers.

Behavior and Disabilities

In the absence of a Behavior and Disability specialist, the Education specialist has been helping with identifying students enrolling in Head Start who have an IEP or have suspected disabilities.

Communication & Guidance from the Secretary of DHHS and Office of Head Start:

June/July 2023 - [All Communications](#)



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES

Office of Head Start | 4th Floor – Switzer Memorial Building, 330 C Street SW, Washington DC 20024 eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov

Program Performance Summary Report

To: Authorizing Official/Board Chairperson

Mr. Dedrick Epps
Austin Independent School District
4000 S Interstate 35
Frontage Road
Austin, TX 78704 - 7420

From: Responsible HHS Official

Date: 04/04/2023

Tala Hooban

Deputy Director, Office of Head Start

On behalf of Mr. Khari M. Garvin

Director, Office of Head Start

From January 23, 2023 to January 27, 2023, the Administration for Children and Families conducted a Focus Area Two (FA2) monitoring review of Austin Independent School District Head Start program. This report contains information about the grant recipient's performance and compliance with the requirements of the Head Start Program Performance Standards (HSPPS) or Public Law 110-134, *Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act of 2007*.

The Office of Head Start (OHS) would like to thank your governing body, policy council, parents, and staff for their engagement in the review process. Based on the information gathered during this review, it has been determined that your program needs improvement in one or more areas. This report provides you with detailed information in each area where program performance did not meet one or more applicable HSPPS, laws, regulations, and policy requirements, and the required timeframes for corrective action.

Please contact your Regional Office for guidance should you have any questions or concerns. Your Regional Office will follow up on the content of this report and can work with you to identify resources to support your program's continuous improvement.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE REPORT

Copies of this report will be distributed to the following:

Mr. Kenneth Gilbert, Regional Program Manager
Mr. John Green-Otero, Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director
Mrs. Ashlee Johnson, Head Start Director

Grant(s) included as part of this review

Grant Recipient Name	Grant Number(s)
Austin Independent School District	06CH010976

Glossary of Terms

Finding Type	Definition
Area of Concern (AOC)	An area in which the agency needs to improve performance. These issues should be discussed with the grant recipient's Regional Office for possible technical assistance.
Area of Noncompliance (ANC)	An area in which the agency is out of compliance with Federal requirements (including but not limited to the Head Start Act or one or more of the regulations) in one or more areas of performance. This status requires a written timeline for correction and possible technical assistance or guidance from the grant recipient's program specialist. If not corrected within the specified timeline, this status becomes a deficiency.
Deficiency	<p>As defined in the Head Start Act, the term "deficiency" means:</p> <p>(A) a systemic or substantial material failure of an agency in an area of performance that the Secretary determines involves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) a threat to the health, safety, or civil rights of children or staff; (ii) a denial to parents of the exercise of their full roles and responsibilities related to program operations; (iii) a failure to comply with standards related to early childhood development and health services, family and community partnerships, or program design and management; (iv) the misuse of funds received under this subchapter; (v) loss of legal status (as determined by the Secretary) or financial viability, loss of permits, debarment from receiving Federal grants or contracts, or the improper use of Federal funds; or (vi) failure to meet any other Federal or State requirement that the agency has shown an unwillingness or inability to correct, after notice from the Secretary, within the period specified; <p>(B) systemic or material failure of the governing body of an agency to fully exercise its legal and fiduciary responsibilities; or</p> <p>(C) an unresolved area of noncompliance.</p>

Performance Summary

Service Area	Grant Number(s)	Compliance Level	Applicable Standards	Timeframe for Correction
Ongoing Fiscal Capacity	06CH010976	Area of Noncompliance	75.303(a)	120 days
Determining, Verifying, and Documenting Eligibility	06CH010976	Area of Noncompliance	1302.12(k)	120 days
Determining, Verifying, and Documenting Eligibility	06CH010976	Area of Noncompliance	1302.12(a)(ii)	120 days

Program Overview

Austin Independent School District has provided educational services to its community since 1881 and is the eighth-largest school district in Texas. In 2019, the school district acquired a Head Start grant to expand services for students in need. The program is funded to offer program options for 204 Head Start children who are dually enrolled in the school district's preschool program.



Program Management and Quality Improvement

Program Management

The grant recipient establishes a management structure consisting of staff, consultants, or contractors who ensure high-quality service delivery; have sufficient knowledge, training, experience, and competencies to fulfill the roles and responsibilities of their positions; and provide regular supervision and support to staff.

Ongoing Monitoring and Continuous Improvement

The grant recipient uses data to identify program strengths, needs, and areas needing improvement; to evaluate progress toward achieving program goals and compliance with program performance standards; and to assess the effectiveness of professional development.

Program Governance

The grant recipient maintains a formal structure of program governance to oversee the quality of services for children and families and to make decisions related to program design and implementation.

The grant recipient's policy council is engaged in the direction of the program, including program design and planning of goals and objectives.

Program Management and Quality Improvement Summary

Austin Independent School District ensured quality dual language services that met families' preferences. The recipient analyzed program and community data, which indicated that most Spanish-speaking families wanted their children to learn English and English-speaking families wanted their children to learn Spanish. To meet children where they were on their language journey, the program created a dual language immersion classroom where teachers taught using a 50/50 instruction model and an ESL classroom where teachers taught children English as a second language using a 90/10 instruction model. In addition, the school district's multilingual education team worked collaboratively with the Head Start program to support these efforts. The program planned dual language instructional practices in response to feedback from enrolled families.



Monitoring and Implementing Quality Education and Child Development Services

Alignment with School Readiness

The grant recipient's school readiness efforts align with the expectations of receiving schools, the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework (HSELOF), and state early learning standards.

Effective and Intentional Teaching Practices

The grant recipient's teaching practices intentionally promote progress toward school readiness and provide quality learning experiences for children.

Supporting Teachers in Promoting School Readiness

The grant recipient ensures teachers are prepared to implement the curriculum and support children's progress toward school readiness.

Home-Based Program Services

Not Applicable.

Education Services Summary

The grant recipient's Head Start staff collaborated with the school district's special education department to serve children with disabilities. The recipient provided staff and families with direct access to disability services by creating inclusive environments for children at its elementary schools. This model allowed for ongoing communication, collaboration, and resource sharing. As a result, teachers and families received timely support and assistance with the referral and evaluation process for children with suspected disabilities. The recipient's efforts led to multiple enrolled children receiving needed early intervention services.



Monitoring and Implementing Quality Health Services

Child Health Status and Care

The grant recipient effectively monitors and maintains timely information on children's health statuses and care including ongoing sources of health care, preventive care, and follow-up.

Mental Health

The grant recipient supports a program-wide culture that promotes mental health and social and emotional well-being, and uses mental health consultation to support staff and families.

Oral Health and Nutrition

The grant recipient maintains and monitors for effective oral health practices and nutrition services that meet the nutritional needs and accommodate children's feeding requirements and allergies.

Safety Practices

The grant recipient implements a process for monitoring and maintaining healthy and safe environments.

Services to Expectant Families

Not Applicable.

Health Services Summary

Austin Independent School District supported the health and well-being of enrolled children. Program and district staff collected and maintained records on children in Head Start to ensure their ongoing and extended health care needs were met. To meet those needs, the recipient used internal resources and collaborated with community partners. When health data showed the staff members were experiencing challenges in completing required screenings on time, the program used COVID-19 funding to purchase hearing and vision equipment, allowing timely completion of screenings on site. The recipient also collaborated with a local agency that provided families with vouchers for free glasses. These strategies helped ensure children's health needs were met.

After the conclusion of this monitoring review and prior to the issuance of the report, an incident of potential threat to health and safety of participants was reported by the recipient to the Regional Office. Any Office of Head Start action resulting from this incident will be issued through a separate report.



Monitoring and Implementing Quality Family and Community Engagement Services

Family Well-Being

The grant recipient collaborates with families to support family well-being, parents' aspirations, and parents' life goals.

Strengthening Parenting and Parent-Child Supports

The grant recipient provides services that strengthen parent-child relationships and support parents in strengthening parenting skills.

Family Engagement in Education and Child Development Services

The grant recipient provides education and child development services that recognize parents' roles as children's lifelong educators and encourage parents to engage in their children's education.

Family and Community Engagement Services Summary

Austin Independent School District implemented a parenting curriculum that aided families in supporting their children's social-emotional development at home. When selecting a parenting curriculum, the program evaluated options based on its alignment with the program's social-emotional curriculum and its availability in English and Spanish in support of dual language families. The curriculum was provided to families through a virtual platform with six modules. The program modified the curriculum by adding activities to each module for parents to complete at home with their children. Curriculum training was presented to parents by program staff in English and Spanish and made available online. These intentional strategies encouraged family engagement and fostered parental confidence.



Monitoring and Implementing Fiscal Infrastructure

Budget Planning and Development

The grant recipient develops and implements its budget to sustain management, staffing structures, and the delivery of services that support the needs of enrolled children and families.

Ongoing Fiscal Capacity

The grant recipient does not plan and implement a fiscal management system that supports the organization's ongoing capacity to execute its budget over time and meet the needs of its organization.

ANC - 75.303(a)

Timeframe for Correction: 120 days

Citation Definition:

75.303 Internal controls The non-Federal entity must: a) Establish and maintain effective internal control over the Federal award that provides reasonable assurance that the non-Federal entity is managing the Federal award in compliance with Federal statutes, regulations, and the terms and conditions of the Federal award. These internal controls should be in compliance with guidance in Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government, issued by the Comptroller General of the United States or the Internal Control Integrated Framework, issued by the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission (COSO).

Monitoring Feedback:

The grant recipient did not establish and maintain effective control over the Federal award.

The recipient did not provide the detailed general ledger used to support the agency's accounting functions for the Federal Financial Report (SF-425) and payroll transactions; and did not provide the detailed general ledger for procurements in time for transaction testing. The recipient filed the SF-425 but did not produce the detailed general ledger to support the reported figures. Additionally, without the detailed general ledger, the recipient could not confirm that it accurately tracked non-exempt employees' time. The detailed procurement general ledger was not provided until the last day of the monitoring review.

Despite several requests made to Head Start leadership and finance department members, the grant recipient did not produce detailed general ledgers for verification and did not identify who was responsible for its oversight.

The grant recipient did not establish and maintain effective control over the Federal award; therefore, it was not in compliance with the regulation.

Additional fieldwork may be required to determine the total amount of potentially unallowable costs charged to Head Start. The Office of Head Start will notify the grant recipient in advance of a special review if one is required. This matter may also be referred to the Office of Administration, Administration for Children and Families, to determine whether a disallowance is appropriate.

Budget Execution

The grant recipient's financial management system provides for effective control over and accountability for all funds, property, and other assets.

Facilities and Equipment

The grant recipient complies with application, prior approval, and reporting requirements for facilities purchased, constructed, or renovated with Head Start funds.



Monitoring ERSEA: Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment, and Attendance

Determining, Verifying, and Documenting Eligibility

The grant recipient does not enroll children or expectant mothers who are categorically eligible or who meet defined income-eligibility requirements.

ANC - 1302.12(k)

Timeframe for Correction: 120 days

Citation Definition:

1302.12 Determining, verifying, and documenting eligibility. (k) Records. (1) A program must keep eligibility determination records for each participant and ongoing records of the eligibility training for staff required by paragraph (m) of this section. A program may keep these records electronically. (2) Each eligibility determination record must include: (i) Copies of any documents or statements, including declarations, that are deemed necessary to verify eligibility under paragraphs (h) and (i) of this section; (ii) A statement that program staff has made reasonable efforts to verify information by: (A) Conducting either an in-person, or a telephone interview with the family as described under paragraph (a)(1)(i) or (a)(2) of this section; and, (B) Describing efforts made to verify eligibility, as required under paragraphs (h) through (i) of this section; and, collecting documents required for third party verification that includes the family's written consent to contact each third party, the third parties' names, titles, and affiliations, and information from third parties regarding the family's eligibility. (iii) A statement that identifies whether: (A) The family's income is below income guidelines for its size, and lists the family's size; (B) The family is eligible for or, in the absence of child care, potentially eligible for public assistance; (C) The child is a homeless child or the child is in foster care; (D) The family was determined to be eligible under the criterion in paragraph (c)(2) of this section; or, (E) The family was determined to be eligible under the criterion in paragraph (d)(1) of this section. (3) A program must keep eligibility determination records for those currently enrolled, as long as they are enrolled, and, for one year after they have either stopped receiving services; or are no longer enrolled.

Monitoring Feedback:

The grant recipient did not ensure eligibility determination records included documents used to verify eligibility and statements that program staff made reasonable efforts to verify information through in-person or phone interviews with families.

A review of 65 child files showed 5 (8%) of the files were missing information. Of the five files, three did not indicate in-person or phone interviews, one did not have income documentation, and one was missing both the interview information and income documentation.

The grant recipient did not ensure eligibility determination records included documents used to verify eligibility and statements that program staff made reasonable efforts to verify information through in-person or phone interviews with families; therefore, it was not in compliance with the regulation.

ANC - 1302.12(a)(ii)

Timeframe for Correction: 120 days

Citation Definition:

1302.12 Determining, verifying, and documenting eligibility. (a) Process overview. (1) Program staff must: (ii) Verify information as required in paragraphs (h) and (i) of this section.

Monitoring Feedback:

The grant recipient did not create a process to correctly determine, verify, and document eligibility in all files.

A review of 65 eligibility files showed 17 contained errors. Of the 17 files, 2 contained inaccurate information on family size, 8 had income calculation mistakes, and 7 eligibility determinations were incorrect. In a discussion, the Head Start director stated errors occurred when families entered their own information and family services staff did not verify the entries for accuracy during the determination process.

The grant recipient did not create a process to correctly determine, verify, and document eligibility in all files; therefore, it was not in compliance with the regulation.

Enrollment Verification

The grant recipient maintains and tracks enrollment.

----- End of Report -----

Austin ISD Head Start

Corrective Action Plan - Eligibility and Enrollment

Noncompliant Finding To Be Addressed		What & How <i>What Specific Steps Will Be Taken To Resolve This Finding? What Do These Steps Look Like And/Or Sound Like When Implemented Effectively?</i>		Person(s) Responsible	Evidence of Correction	Completion Due Date
<p>1302.12 Determining, verifying, and documenting eligibility.</p> <p>(a) Process overview.</p> <p>and</p> <p>(k) Records.</p>	a k	Update the Austin ISD Head Start checklist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Updated income verification codes ● Drop downs for verification codes 	Head Start Director	23-24 Eligibility Checklist Instructions for completing checklist	April 2nd 2023	
	a	Updated and executed a revised training for Family Advocates on enrollment/eligibility process within Austin ISD Head Start. Topics covered will include but not be limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Review of AISD Head Start Policies and Procedures for eligibility ● Verification Interview - Phone or In-person ● Income - Verification codes, document uploads , calculations ● Family Size 	Head Start Director	Meeting Agenda Austin ISD Head Start Policies and Procedures 23-24 Eligibility Checklist	April 13th 2023	
	k	Create Head Start eligibility file audit rubric <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Request possible support from the Austin ISD Enrollment office 	Head Start Director and ERSEA Manager	Head Start Eligibility Audit Rubric	June 15th 2023	
	a	Updating Head Start Procedures Guide <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Subpart A - Eligibility, Recruitment, Selection, Enrollment and Attendance ● Subpart J - Program Management and Quality Improvement 	Head Start Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1302.13 - Recruitment ● 1302.12 - Income Eligibility - Required Use of the Eligibility Verification ● Requirement for Application of 	July 31st 2023	

Austin ISD Head Start

Corrective Action Plan - Eligibility and Enrollment

<p>1302.12 Determining, verifying, and documenting eligibility.</p> <p>(a) Process overview.</p> <p>and</p> <p>(k) Records.</p>				<p>Enrollment into Head Start</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1302.12 - Requirements for All Applicants ● 1302.12 - Requirements for Applicants Over Income ● 1302.12 - Age Eligibility/Age Verification ● 1302.14 - Selection Process ● 1302.16 - Attendance ● 1302.17 - Suspension and Expulsion 	
	a k	<p>Bi Weekly Eligibility Check-In with ERSEA Manager</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meetings will begin in May 2023 ● Follow-up with Family Advocates to make corrections, improve practices and eliminate errors, based on data gathered based on eligibility file audit rubric ● Training provided for 30 mins during meetings as needed, meeting agenda will reflect training topics 	ERSEA Manager	Agenda Staff Attendance Log	July 31st 2023
	a k	Monthly file audits of eligible students	Head Start Director and ERSEA Manager	Eligibility and Recruitment Monitoring Plan	July 31st 2023

Austin ISD Head Start

Corrective Action Plan - Eligibility and Enrollment

	k	Analysis and Review of file audit rubrics for trends and ongoing training needs	Head Start Director and ERSEA Manager	Head Start Eligibility Audit Rubric	July 31st 2023
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Austin ISD Head Start

Corrective Action Plan - Fiscal

Noncompliant Finding To Be Addressed	What & How <i>What Specific Steps Will Be Taken To Resolve This Finding? What Do These Steps Look Like And/Or Sound Like When Implemented Effectively?</i>	Person(s) Responsible	Evidence of Correction	Completion Due Date
On the grant recipient did not establish and maintain effective control over the Federal Award.	<p>Improve communication with program. Define roles in the Head Start Enterprise Website to ensure that everyone involved with the program is award and prepared for future reviews.</p>	Head Start Administrator		07/31/2023
	<p>Improve communication with program. Define roles so that requests are directed appropriately.</p>	Grant Accountant Lead	MEMO to Head Start Administrator	07/31/2023
	<p>Improve communication with State and Federal Accountability (SAFA) Define roles so that requests are directed appropriately.</p>	Grant Accountant Lead	MEMO to State & Federal Accountability (SAFA)	07/31/2023
	Ongoing monitoring: Fiscal Checklist	Grant Accountant Lead	A review of the fiscal checklist will be added to the meeting agenda for check ins between the Grant Accountant Lead and the Assistant Superintendent of Financial Services.	07/31/2023

Austin ISD Head Start

Corrective Action Plan - Fiscal

On the grant recipient did not establish and maintain effective control over the Federal Award.	Ongoing Monitoring: Financial Reports (monthly, SF425 reports)	Grant Accountant Lead, Head Start Administrator, & Head Start Budget Specialist	The Grant accountant will send monthly emails to the Head Start Administrator with copies of the financial reports. Monthly reconciliation of Pcard transactions	07/31/2023
	Ongoing Monitoring: Communication	Grant Accountant Lead & Superintendent of Financial Services	A Head Start update will be added to the meeting agenda for monthly check ins between the Grant Accountant lead and the Assistant Superintendent of Finance.	07/31/2023
	Written Procedures of Draw Down Submissions	Grant Accountant Lead	Procedure – Reimbursement Requests	07/31/2023
	Previous General Ledger (GL) & Payroll Transactions	Grant Accountant Lead	Submission of previous SF425 with Supporting Evidence	07/31/2023
	Current General Ledger (GL) & Payroll Transactions	Grant Accountant Lead	Submission of current SF425 with supporting evidence	07/31/2023

Austin ISD Head Start

Corrective Action Plan - Fiscal

On the grant recipient did not establish and maintain effective control over the Federal Award.	Reimbursement Request Process	Grant Accountant Lead	Reimbursement Request Process	06/30/2023
	Documentation of Non-Exempt Staff	Executive Director of SAFA	Non-Exempt Staff PowerPoint and Non-Exempt Staff Form	07/31/2023
	Finance Training	Finance Team	Agenda & PowerPoint	07/31/2023
	Training on Head Start Federal Reports	Grant Accountant Lead	Agenda & Sign in Sheet	08/31/2023