



San Elizario ISD
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MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Trustees
From: Sandra Sanchez, CTE Administrator
Subject: Innovative Courses: Making Connections I, II, III and IV
Date: July 8, 2026

HISTORY: In the past year, we have been working on how to better support our Special Education students. The Making Connections course sequence assists students with autism spectrum disorder or other related disorders such as social pragmatic communication disorder, that may cause deficits in the individual's social skills in developing an understanding of autism and other disorders which may cause deficits in social skills. **Making Connections I:** Covers topics such as building positive relationships, understanding social expectations in school and community settings, and applying organizational strategies for academic success. **Making Connections II:** Covers disability awareness, teaching students how autism impacts their ability to form and maintain relationships. It guides students through self-assessment of their social skills, encourages strategies for improving friendships, and helps differentiate between appropriate and inappropriate relationships. Students also learn to cope with negative attention, engage in conflict resolution, and apply these skills in various community and social settings. Additionally, students will explore postsecondary options, helping them to identify strengths and areas for growth in preparation for life beyond high school. **Making Connections III:** Emphasizes self-advocacy, where students will learn how to articulate their needs within their individualized education programs (IEPs) and effectively communicate their rights and accommodations. Additionally, students will examine how the skills they develop in the educational setting can be applied to community contexts. Through role-playing, discussions, and real-world practice, students will engage in future planning activities, including developing graduation plans, resumes, and interview skills to facilitate a successful transition to postsecondary opportunities. **Making Connections IV:** Assists students with developing skills to employ collaborative problem solving. This course specifically focuses on the aspect of social communication, by focusing on their collaborative problem-solving skills. The students will develop skills to understand their autism specifically related to their ability to communicate socially, engage in collaborative problem-solving, and navigate social situations effectively. This course also encourages mentoring relationships within the school environment and helps students identify and take steps toward their post-secondary goals, including job applications, FAFSA completion, and understanding available accommodations at postsecondary institutions or workplaces.

The mission of the San Elizario Independent School District is to graduate students with innovative skills for 21st-century careers by focusing on academic and social skills, fostering transformative practices, and building community support through positive relationships between home and school.



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RATIONALE: Implementing the innovative courses of Making Connections I, II, III and IV, will assist in closing the gaps in our student instruction for special education.

BUDGET IMPACT: Approximately \$2,000 for textbooks

ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION: To be able to support our special needs students in building positive relationships, understanding social expectations in school and community settings, and applying organizational strategies for academic success.

For Approval ☒ Yes ☐ No

If not, please check one: ☐ Presentation ☐ Report ☒ Information

Please check if applicable: ☒ Attachment Included

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