MISA NEWS

Advocacy |Partnership | Support

Honoring Champions for Children

Julie Novak of Ft. Sam Houston *(right)* and Brian Miller of Lackland ISD, received the Champions of Children Award from MISA Executive Director, Kyle Fairbairn and President, Keith Mispagel. Both were recognized for many years of service to military-connected students and communities.



Brian Miller, retiring long-time Board member, Lackland ISD.



Advocacy, Funding and the MISA Message

Advocate, Connect, Support

MISA Members gathered for the annual Fall Meeting at the Hyatt Regency, in Washington DC, on September 21, 2026. Executive Director Kyle Fairbairn and president, Keith Mispagel provided updates and partner presentations about issues affecting military connected schools. Across every presentation, a theme emerged: military connected students benefit when those who serve them work together. Whether through a student transition program, a new classroom resource, a federal funding request, facilities upgrades or a partnership with federal leaders, each effort contributes to a stronger support network for military-connected families. Fairbairn emphasized the importance of advocating for funding that allow military-connected schools to continue to leverage the opportunities available to them to best serve our students. Fairbairn explained that the pro-rated LOT amount is now subject to a second pro-ration because the funding is inadequate. Another $71.5m is needed just to fund LOT. Without an improvement in funding, the payments schools receive will continue to drop, as costs rise. The strength of MISA is our unity and Fairbairn provided the group with messaging cards to advocate with a common voice. Kyle closed by acknowledging the School Liaison specialists in attendance.

Partnership Briefings

OLDCC: David Kennedy of the Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (OLDCC) reviewed the federal construction programs that

MISA-MCSAS

MISA Education Consultant, Helen Payne, shared about the school leader training initiative MCSAS (Military Connected School Administrator Summit). Participants meet for

- Cross district-team building
- Keynote and Partner Presentations
- District Share Sessions
- Team Planning Time
- Networking and Social Time

The goal of MCSAS is to build a community of military-connected school leaders who share best practices and build connections they can leverage when in need. In 2026, 100 participants benefited from the program.

Save the Date! MCSAS 2027!

Registration forms will be sent to all MISA districts and available on the MISA website by October 22. If you have questions, contact Helen misaschools25@gmail.com

June 9-11, 2027 – San Diego, CA
July 7-9, 2027 – Indianapolis, IN



MISA School Leaders at MCSAS, Nashville, TN

support communities affected by military installations. The Defense Community Infrastructure Program (DCIP) is competitive, with a new recipients announcement expected soon. The Public Schools on Military Installations (PSMI) program is noncompetitive and helps communities navigate school construction needs and the effects of base closures. Kennedy discussed the origins and pending update of the PSMI priority list, expected to be released to Congress by April 2027. To date, $3.2 billion has been appropriated, 58 schools have been built, and more than 40,000 students have benefited. Kennedy noted that funding followed previous list releases, but he did not know whether that would be the case this time.

MIC3: Executive Director, Lindsey Dablow and Chair, Daron Korte reviewed the Military Interstate Children's Compact (MIC3), including its focus on enrollment, placement, eligibility and graduation. The compact applies to K-12 public schools and is designed to reduce educational barriers created by frequent military moves. Chair, Daron Korte spoke of the value of partnership with organizations like MISA, and our shared purpose of supporting better educational opportunities for military-connected students. MIC3 provides problem-solving and training in all 50 states.

Youth Sponsorship Program: Kristen Acquah from the Youth Sponsorship Program talked about the they efforts of their office to support student transitions between school districts, emphasizing the importance of connection for students.

MISA Consultant Mark Gillman: Gillman discussed his role as a MISA lobbyist, particularly in pursuit of the DOW Supplemental Impact Aid and DOW Special Education funding. That funding is currently in the NDAA and getting it passed is critical. Kyle reminded the group to apply for the special education funding!

Kyle also introduced an additional consultant, Allie Talcott, who will be working parallel to Mark Gilman specifically to pursue stable funding for the MCASP program within the DOWEA Grants program. Many MISA districts have received these grants and have instituted successful programs that provide robust educational experience for military connected students. The MCASP program is valued by MISA districts but has not recently been funded.

MISA Social Committee: MISA Member Hilary Bales shared a presentation honoring the milestone birthday of Kyle Fairbairn, by tracking all the places MISA members took "Flat Kyle" this summer. "Kyle" traveled the Mediterranean, climbed mountains, spent time on the water and even went to college. The ad-hoc committee of Hilary, Amy Lerner and Trish Olney supports relationships, connections and unity amongst the membership.



Flat Kyle working on his tan