



STATE CHAIR PROFILE

Serving Those Who Serve

Jesse M. Najera | Superintendent, Silver Valley Unified School District (CA)

About the District

Silver Valley Unified School District serves military-connected families from Fort Irwin's National Training Center and Marine Corps Logistics Base

Barstow. Approximately 75% of students are military connected, and our district experiences significant annual student mobility due to deployments and permanent change of station (PCS) moves.

I am incredibly proud that Silver Valley has maintained a 100% graduation rate while also building a thriving Career Technical Education program that prepares students for college, careers, and military service. All seven of our schools have been recognized as Purple Star Schools by the California Department of Education, reflecting our commitment to serving military families. We are also proud to employ many military spouses throughout our district.



From Calling to Commitment

I have been involved with NAFIS and Impact Aid advocacy for nearly 15 years and seen firsthand the difference federal support makes in our schools. In addition to serving as NAFIS California State Chair, I serve as President of the California Association of Federally Impacted Schools (CAFIS), sit on the Executive Board of the Military Impacted Schools Association (MISA), and was appointed to the California Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission.

I chose education because I felt called to serve others and make a positive difference in the lives of young people. Over time, that calling grew into a passion for serving the entire Silver Valley community that includes the military families who sacrifice so much on behalf of our country. Serving as Superintendent of Silver Valley Unified School District has truly been the honor of my life.

The Importance of Impact Aid

Impact Aid allows us to provide the programs and services our military-connected students need to succeed academically and socially. These funds support small class sizes, counselors, social workers, intervention teachers, visual and performing arts programs, and state-of-the-art technology. They also help us maintain safe, well-kept facilities that create positive learning environments for students.

An increase in Impact Aid would allow us to expand student supports and continue investing in innovative programs that help military-connected students thrive. Significant cuts would force difficult decisions affecting staffing, class sizes, intervention services, counseling supports, arts programs, and facility maintenance. Ultimately, the students who would feel those impacts most are the military children whose families serve our nation.

What Policymakers Need to Know

Unlike many school districts, federally impacted districts often have limited ability to generate local revenue and may have little or no bonding capacity. In Silver Valley, we can experience student turnover approaching 35% annually due to military moves and deployments, yet we must be prepared to welcome and support every new student immediately. Impact Aid provides the stability and resources necessary to meet the unique academic and social-emotional needs of military-connected children. Impact Aid is not a bonus—it replaces funding that federally impacted districts cannot generate locally. ♦

"Impact Aid is essential to helping us provide a high-quality educational experience for every student who enters our schools."



Najera (center) with Rep. Jay Obernolte (R-CA; far right) and Silver Valley USD leaders during an Impact Aid advocacy meeting