BOARD MEMBER PROFILE

Grounded in Hope

Dr. Burnie Roper | Superintendent, Lackland ISD (TX)



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About the District

Lackland Independent School District is one of seven coterminous school districts in the USA, meaning that our district boundaries align exactly with the boundaries of the military installation we serve. We are wholly located on Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland AFB, in San Antonio, TX. We serve 100% military-connected students in grades PK-12.

Lackland ISD is a small district, with approximately 900 students. Although we are small, we are able to offer a variety of Advanced Placement courses in computer science, foreign language, math, and science. We also provide dual credit courses through one of our local colleges. We offer programs in cybersecurity through our CyberPatriot team, esports, Air Force JROTC, and robotics.



Importance of Impact Aid

Impact Aid is a critical source of revenue for our district, comprising roughly 50 percent of our total budget. This funding supports a variety of needs, including teacher salaries, our one-to-one iPad program and computers for students, bus purchases, free breakfast for all students, and cost-free field trips for all students.

If Impact Aid were increased, we could provide more academic opportunities and update our facilities. If Impact Aid were cut, we would more than likely have to close our doors.

Advocacy with Purpose

I was inspired to pursue education because I enjoyed working with young people. My years as a sixth-grade math teacher were deeply rewarding. I understand the impact that a good teacher can have on students, and I am grateful to have made a positive difference in the lives of so many young people.

I have hope for our students and believe they are capable of doing amazing things. I see it all the time when former students return to say thank you after achieving their dreams. I also see what advocating for Impact Aid can accomplish. Although we have not yet achieved the funding levels or permanent program status we want, I am part of NAFIS, a community that is passionate and relentless in their pursuit of providing the best education possible for their students.

As superintendent in a district whose budget relies on Impact Aid for almost 50 percent of its funding, I had no choice but to join NAFIS, whose main objective is to urge Congress to fully and permanently fund the Impact Aid Program. As a NAFIS Board member, I have the opportunity to influence decisions that will hopefully help determine the course of action needed to achieve that goal.

What Policymakers Need to Know

Policymakers must understand the importance of Impact Aid to school districts like Lackland ISD. Because we do not have a tax base, we depend on the U.S. Government to pay its tax bill so we can serve the students of those who serve this country every day. The Impact Aid Program should be fully and permanently funded to support school districts that depend on it to serve their students. ◆



Roper (right) with Lackland ISD Board Member Dr. Tonseda Henson & TAFIS Executive Director Dr. Billy Walker

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