

# TWC boosts childcare options for military

**From Staff Reports**  
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Military families in need of child care options may have increased access because of a partnership between a state agency and the federal government.

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) is partnering with the Department of Defense (DOD) on the Military Child Care in Your Neighborhood-PLUS (MCCYN-PLUS) program to increase access to child care when it is unavailable to families on base, according to a Nov. 7 news release.

In October, the child care program expanded into Texas — the proud home to 15 active duty military installations with an economic impact over \$100 billion.

“Access to child care is crucial for all Texas families, including active duty military personnel who call Texas home,” said TWC Chairman Bryan Daniel. “TWC’s childcare quality rating program, Texas Rising Star, ensures military families will find quality care for their children.”

Through the program, DOD provides fee assistance to eligible military families to offset the cost of childcare when there is no availability on base. The program requires participating community-based childcare programs to be enrolled in the state’s childcare quality rating and improvement system.

In Texas, the TWC administers Texas Rising Star to improve childcare quality and provide incentives for improv-

ing care through enhanced reimbursement. Qualified community childcare programs must rate at a three- or four-Star certification level to participate in the new program for military families.

“We want to thank our military families for their service. Ensuring access to excellent childcare is one way we do that,” said TWC Commissioner Representing Labor Julian Alvarez. “As TWC expands Texas Rising Star, military families will have more options to help them with their childcare needs across the state.”

Local community childcare programs eligible for MCCYN-PLUS can increase their income by expanding their services to military families.

Additionally, the DOD’s expansion of the MCCYN-PLUS program benefits the broader community by raising the quality of childcare for both military and civilian families.

“The MCCYN-Plus program is another tool and option available for childcare providers, which are primarily small businesses, to participate in Texas Rising Star,” said TWC Commissioner Representing Employers Aaron Demerson. “From free business coaches to childcare expansion grants, TWC is here for childcare providers to help them grow and improve their businesses.”

For a list of approved MCCYN-PLUS providers in Texas, visit [childcareaware.org](http://childcareaware.org). Texas’ military parents can also learn more about Texas Rising Star at [texasrisingstar.org](http://texasrisingstar.org).



Connor Pittman/The Sachse News

**Matt Lankford, Anita Collins, 5 Loaves Executive Director Audrey Wallace, Eva Hummel and Jerod Potts, from left, gather to commemorate a \$12,500 donation to the Sachse-based nonprofit for the Beacon of Hope program.**

# 5 Loaves donations recognized

*continued from 1A*

sure that everyone is going to shine.”

In providing background information on the district, Lopez said that GISD’s demographics are urban. Around 75% of its student population is economically disadvantaged and 67% are at-risk, he added.

“We are a high poverty, high minority and high at-risk school district,” Lopez said. “All statistics should tell you that we should not be thriving.”

Despite the conditions stacked against them, the district scored a “B” in the annual Texas Education Agency accountability ratings, said Lopez, but they fell just short of an “A” rating.

“We were really hard on ourselves and said we really should have gotten an ‘A,’” Lopez said.

However, the district also compared itself to similar dis-

tricts in the Dallas-Fort Worth area with at least 25,000 students and a student population where 50% are economically disadvantaged. Among those groups, the district finished at the top of the pack, said Lopez.

“When you start talking about the high impact and high performance, you should be very proud because the school district is competing at the highest levels,” Lopez said.

Additionally, Garland ISD had the highest percentage of students who met the college, career or military readiness metric for the third consecutive year, he added. Part of this is the district’s focus on aligning students with potential opportunities, such as trade school or alternatives to college, said Lopez.

“We have so many kids that are college, career or military ready, that we feel it’s our fault that the state is changing guidelines on how the state will rate who is college, career or military ready,” Lopez said. “We have over 200 programs available to students.”

Looking ahead, the superintendent said the district plans to present a significant bond package to voters, totaling around \$940 million, because the average age of Garland ISD’s facilities is 45 years old.

Following Lopez, Wylie ISD Superintendent David Vinson highlighted the character-based education of the district and its high ratings with the Texas Education Agency.

Vinson, superintendent since 2011, said it was important for the district to recognize student accomplishments and those with good character, which is what the Wylie Way is all about.

“[During] The last nine weeks of school in Wylie, we spend our time celebrating and showing the gratitude for who got our kids there,” Vinson said. “One of the things we want to make sure you know is the center and focus are the teachers and principals who make this happen.”

In the most recent release of accountability ratings from the Texas Education Agency, each campus received at least one distinction and five received every possible one, said Vinson. Overall, the district received an “A” and was the only school district with over 10,000 students to achieve the mark.

Part of its educational mission is to provide needed assistance in subjects such as math and reading to prevent students from falling behind.

“We have reading interventionists that go in when the kid has struggles and we know that it’s beyond dyslexia or special education,” Vinson said. “If there is a kid who has a need in Wylie, our goal is to address that need.”

Vinson added the district has become a model professional learning community, which involves having sessions for teachers to meet, learn and grow together.

Additionally, the district sends 81% of its students to college where 86% continue to stay in college, said Vinson. The regional comparison is around 50%, he added.

Vinson said he thinks Wylie ISD graduates tend to stay in college because they enroll in dual-credit courses and get necessary college experience.

“What we believe is that if a kid who can tip-toe into the water before they start swimming, they’re going to be a whole lot more successful,” Vinson said. “It makes a difference.”

In a program that is unique to the district, Vinson said staff will survey teachers on why they continue to teach in the district.

“That’s really important. If we know that, we can be that and adjust to what makes them stay,” Vinson said. “They stay here for the coworkers and the shared values.”

Following Vinson’s comments, there was a ceremony to donate \$12,500 to 5 Loaves Food Pantry for its Beacon of Hope program. The Sachse Economic Development Corporation provided a \$2,500 donation match to two donations.

“We are so blessed to have such wonderful partners that come alongside us,” said 5 Loaves Founder and Executive Director Audrey Wallace. “Thank you to Sachse EDC, Atmos and American National Bank for partnering with us to Provide a Beacon Of Hope to families in need.”

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