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## **Military Affairs Committee Helps Dyess Elementary School Receive \$962,607 Grant for \$1.9 Million STEM Facility**

The Defense Community Infrastructure Pilot Program (DCIP) recently awarded Abilene Independent School District (AISD) \$962,607 dollars to support construction of the new Dyess Elementary School Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Mathematics (STEM) facility. Facilitated by the Chamber's Military Affairs Committee (MAC), the grant will enhance the facility which has already broken ground and is anticipated to be completed in 2021.

"Dyess and the Abilene community have had a special relationship since the base opened and seek opportunities to support each other," said Greg Blair, AEP Texas and Military Affairs Committee (MAC) Chair. "The community's support for a new Dyess Elementary, along with the additional DCIP funds for STEM classroom/lab facilities, sends a strong message to our service men and women that we care about their families and their children's education."

The 6,876 square foot Makers Lab area will provide a world-class facility that entails specialized equipment for use by elementary students including multiple 3D printers, robotic arms, laser engravers, a vinyl cutter and more.

The concept of building a replacement campus for Dyess Elementary was developed and recommended by the AISD Master Facility Planning Committee in the spring of 2018. The idea that this campus would be predicated on meeting the unique needs of military families and students in order to ease their transition to the Abilene Community was at the very center of the planning process.

"We are thrilled to receive this grant and are grateful for the long and wonderful partnership we've enjoyed with Dyess Air Force Base and the military community. We also appreciate the support of the Military Affairs Committee to help expand STEM opportunities for our students," said AISD Superintendent Dr. David Young.

The DCIP is designed to address deficiencies in community infrastructure, supportive of a military installation, in order to enhance the military family quality of life, resilience or military value.

"This project is another excellent example of Abilene's continued public, private partnership when it comes to Dyess Air Force Base and the support of our Airmen," said Gray Bridwell, vice president of Military Affairs for the Chamber. "This award reaffirms Abilene's status as a Great American Defense Community."

Enrollment for Dyess Elementary School is 65.7 percent military family students.

For more information on the Chamber's Military Affairs Committee, visit [abilenechamber.com](http://abilenechamber.com).

*The Military Affairs Committee is a public-private partnership of the Abilene Chamber of Commerce, Development Corporation of Abilene, individuals and businesses. Through its 300 members, MAC advocates for expansion and preservation of missions at Dyess and cares for the needs of military members and their families.*

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