

## **El Paso ISD**

Located in El Paso, Texas, the El Paso Independent School District (EPISD) is the largest district in the Texas Education Agency's Educational Service Center - Region 19. With nearly 60,000 students in 91 campuses, EPISD also is the 12th largest district in Texas and the 61st largest district in the United States. It also is El Paso's largest employer with 8,000 employees and has an annual operating budget nearly \$500 million. Organized in 1883, EPISD is not only a large district, but also one rich in history. In 2008, EPISD celebrated its 125th anniversary.

EPISD's mission is to graduate every student prepared for higher learning and careers to empower them as knowledgeable and engaged citizens, innovators, and drivers of a robust, bicultural economy.

The Board of Managers named Juan E. Cabrera superintendent of the El Paso Independent School District on Sept. 3, 2013. Immediately prior to joining EPISD, Cabrera worked as a school law attorney and served as general counsel and advisor to Texas school districts.

Under the guidance of the Board of Trustees and working with his leadership team, Cabrera seeks to provide all of EPISD's young scholars with an academically rigorous, character-based education, focusing on the "whole-child". This approach seeks to assure EPISD graduates are not only academically prepared, but also well rounded, civic-minded young citizens. To this end in 2014, EPISD instituted a requirement of 15 hours of Community Service per semester for every high school student. Through this and other initiatives, EPISD seeks to assure its students serve their local communities.

Working with EPISD's dedicated teachers and administrators Cabrera seeks to drive innovation and create "schools of choice" and "great schools" across the city to assure every child is provided every opportunity to succeed. EPISD is currently expanding dual language programs across all of its elementary schools, 9 middle schools and 3 High Schools. Additionally, EPISD is seeking to strengthen its current magnet programs while simultaneously expanding specialty academies across the city. Cabrera has also worked with EPISD leadership to institute district wide PSAT and SAT days for all 10th, 11th and 12th grade students, and in 2015 all 6th-9th graders will take introductory SAT and ACT courses. In 2014 EPISD created a district-wide summer school available for all students and also was the first large urban district in America to utilize "teacher-created" digital textbooks for high school core content.

In 2015, EPISD introduced "PowerUp EPISD" to transform "teaching and learning" in its classrooms by providing teacher professional development focusing on active-learning and student-centered instruction. Through PowerUp and the introduction of New Tech

Network Schools, EPISD is seeking to more deeply engage students through inquiry-based learning, project based learning and a deeper focus on collaboration in the classroom. To supplement, "PowerUp", EPISD has provided all high school students with a laptop computer to be used in school and at home. This program is supplementing the pedagogical changes in EPISD's classrooms and will expose EPISD's young scholars to a 21st Century education.

Cabrera is committed to positive organizational development and seeks to help grow and develop current and future EPISD leaders. During his short tenure at EPISD, his leadership team has created Principal and Teacher Leadership teams, Aspiring Principal and New Principal Academies and created Master Principal positions, all to help strengthen EPISD leadership.

Cabrera is a former elementary bilingual teacher, but spent 20 years away from the classroom working as a technology attorney and software executive. Cabrera has extensive experience in both the public and private sector and has supported entities in many key functional areas, including finance, audit, labor and employment, governance, contracts, procurement, technology planning and transactions, real estate and construction.

Recently, Cabrera was elected to the Executive Committee of the Council of Great City Schools and was also selected as 2015 Texas Latino Superintendent of the Year. Additionally, in November 2014, Cabrera was one of 100 Superintendents selected by the U.S. Department of Education to participate in the first-ever National ConnectED Superintendents Summit at the White House. This unique conference brought together 100 Superintendents from across America to share innovative approaches to using technology in schools.

Cabrera graduated from Texas A & I University in 1988 with a Bachelors of BBA and he obtained his law degree from the University of Texas School of Law in 1996. He has also completed programs at the London School of Business and the Harvard Negotiation Project. Additionally, he has completed the ALAS Superintendent's Leadership Academy, which seeks to prepare experienced leaders to successfully run urban public education systems especially in minority serving school systems.

Cabrera is active in the local community and serves on the boards of the UTEP/El Paso Education Collaborative, the Center Against Family and Sexual Violence, Workforce Solutions BorderPlex, Big Brothers and Big Sisters of El Paso, EPISD Education Foundation and the El Paso Chamber of Commerce. He's also a member of the Rotary Club of El Paso and the El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. At the state level, Cabrera currently serves as the President of the Texas Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents and on the state boards of the Minority Males Consortium, the Equity Center and the Texas High Performance Schools Consortium. Nationally, Cabrera serves on the Executive Committee of the Council of Great City Schools, which is the nation's leading advocate for large urban school systems.

Cabrera hails from a family of educators and is a native Texan and a native Spanish speaker. His parents and many of his "Tias" are retired Texas teachers and his wife Claudia

is a licensed social worker and bilingual Texas teacher. Cabrera has been married for 22 years and has 3 children.

A statement from Mr. Cabrera regarding the Texas Urban Council:

*“Educators at legacy urban districts face many unique challenges and through this coalition we have the opportunity to discuss similar challenges and best practices and meet our goal of bringing about meaningful and effective change to the way our schools support and drive innovation.”*