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Connecting Languages / Dual Language division enters second phase of implementation plan

EL PASO, TEXAS — The El Paso Independent School District’s Connecting Languages/Dual Language program today enters a new phase of implementation with robust support toward the District’s goal to graduate more students who are bilingual and bi-literate, EPISD Superintendent Juan Cabrera announced.

EPISD has been a national leader in dual language curriculum and the Board of Trustees strengthened its commitment by making the program one of its board goals. To that end, Cabrera has given the Connecting Languages/Dual Language program its own division, under the leadership of Interim Chief of Languages/Dual Language Laila Ferris.

“Dual language is not only one of my priorities and that of the board’s, but it also is something that our community told us is extremely important to the future success of students,” Cabrera said. “Bilingualism and bi-literacy is a focus of our EPISD 2020 Strategic Plan and we are committed to supporting our students and teachers with the proper resources.”

Ferris has been in the interim position since April, and will continue to lead the department’s staff of 16 through the implementation process.

The new implementation plan will add resources and focus to professional development for teachers and support for students. The District’s strong partnership with UTEP continues to offer collaboration through research and classroom engagement and learning experiences for UTEP students.

“A bilingual education can transform a child, a family, a school, a community, and even a country,” EPISD Deputy Superintendent of Academics and School Leadership Elizabeth Saenz said. “We applaud the board’s vision to give our students the cognitive, emotional, and social advantages of being bilingual, bi-literate, and bicultural.”

EPISD is a leader in the implementation of dual-language programs — a style of instruction in which monolingual English speakers are placed in the same classroom as monolingual Spanish speakers and instruction is provided equally in both languages. The goal of the program is to create fully bilingual and bi-literate students in English, Spanish and – when available – a potential third language.

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