



Angela Denise Dominguez
Donna Independent School District
Donna, Texas

INTRODUCTION

Since 2021, Dr. Angela Dominguez has served with exceptional leadership as the first female superintendent in Donna Independent School District's more than 100-year history. With a steadfast commitment to educational excellence and equity, she has worked to transform Donna ISD into a district focused on student achievement, innovation, and community collaboration.

Shaped by her own experiences overcoming adversity, Dr. Dominguez brings a deep personal understanding of the challenges many students face. She is recognized for her visionary leadership and her ability to unite stakeholders around a shared mission of progress. She fosters a culture of high expectations and continuous improvement, guiding the district through strategic initiatives that prioritize early childhood education, academic growth, and community engagement. Under her leadership, Donna ISD has made significant strides in expanding opportunities for students and families, creating a brighter future for the entire community.

Education

Dr. Dominguez was the first in her family to graduate from college, earning a Bachelor of Arts in History from Dartmouth College in 1995. She continued her education with a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership from Texas A&M University–Kingsville in 2002, and ultimately completed her Ed.D. through the Cooperative Superintendency Program at the University of Texas at Austin in 2021.

Experience

Dr. Dominguez started her career in education as a middle school math teacher at Truman Middle School in Edgewood Independent School District in San Antonio, Texas. Her dedication to student success and academic excellence quickly propelled her into leadership roles, including Administrative Intern, Vice Principal, and Academic Dean at John F. Kennedy High School. She further expanded her expertise as District Testing Coordinator for Edgewood ISD, deepening her understanding of curriculum alignment and assessment practices.

Her leadership journey continued as she took on principal roles at Storm Dual Language Academy and the Young Women's Leadership Academy in San Antonio ISD. At Storm, she led a nationally recognized Dual Language program, and at the Young Women's Leadership Academy, she opened the first all-girls public school in San Antonio, empowering young women toward academic excellence. Later, in Somerset ISD, she served as District Math and Science Instructional Facilitator, District GEAR UP Coordinator, and Principal of Somerset High School, where she successfully transformed the campus from low performing to one of the most distinguished schools in Bexar County, fostering a strong culture of college and career readiness.

Returning to Edgewood ISD, Dr. Dominguez advanced to serve as Executive Director of School Leadership, Chief of Schools, and Assistant Superintendent of Academic Services. In these roles, she spearheaded transformative initiatives, including the opening of Edgewood ISD's first Early Head Start program for infants through age three, the launch of a University School in partnership with Texas A&M San Antonio, and leading post-pandemic academic recovery efforts in a district serving over 20,000 students. She is especially recognized for her strength in coaching and developing school leaders, holding high expectations while fostering a culture of professionalism and respect.

Following her work in Edgewood ISD, Dr. Dominguez served as Deputy Superintendent for Colorado Springs District 11. There, she continued to lead district-wide initiatives that positively impacted student achievement and strengthened support for campus leaders.

In October 2021, Dr. Dominguez was appointed Superintendent of Donna Independent School District. Today, she leads a district of approximately 13,000 students across 20 schools, serving a

diverse population in which 95% of students are economically disadvantaged, over half are emergent bilingual learners, and 86% are considered at-risk. She recognizes that the Donna ISD Board, employees, families, and community members are all dedicated to building a bold district that prepares students to be a powerful force for positive change in the community. This passion and belief in students is what attracted Dr. Dominguez to Donna ISD, and she is honored to serve the students, staff, and families of the community.

Dr. Dominguez has established a reputation as a leader deeply focused on student outcomes. Across her 29-year career, she has successfully turned around low-performing schools, led nationally recognized programs, and built high-performing systems at the district level. Growing up in a one-bedroom house on the west side of San Antonio with her parents and three siblings, she learned early the values of hard work, determination, and resilience—principles that continue to guide her leadership today.

Outstanding Achievement(s)

With the steadfast support of the Donna ISD Board of Trustees and in proud recognition of the district's achievements as an H-E-B Excellence in Education Award finalist, Dr. Dominguez has led transformative initiatives that continue to elevate Donna ISD. Upon assuming her role, Dr. Dominguez launched the "Look, Listen, and Learn Tour" to engage with teachers, staff, parents, and community members. This initiative laid the foundation for a comprehensive five-year strategic plan, developed in collaboration with the Board of Trustees and key stakeholders. The plan outlines clear, strategic goals centered on student success, family and community engagement, operational excellence, employee development, and financial stewardship.

Guided by this roadmap, Donna ISD has achieved remarkable progress. The district has seen 100% student growth across all subjects, with the most significant gains in early childhood literacy — a priority area identified early in Dr. Dominguez's tenure. In 2021, only 18% of kindergarten students were reading at grade level. By the end of the 2023-2024 school year, that number had soared to 85% across English and Spanish combined, with an impressive 86% in Spanish— a testament to the district's commitment to early childhood education.

Under her leadership, Donna ISD also improved its Texas Education Agency accountability rating from a C to a B, while advancing multiple campuses from failing or low ratings to strong performance — including turning an F-rated campus to a B and lifting three D-rated campuses to B ratings. In 2022, the district celebrated four A-rated campuses and fifteen B-rated campuses under the state accountability system.

Financially, Dr. Dominguez secured a State Financial Integrity Rating of 100 for three consecutive years and successfully led the passage of a \$120 million bond in May 2023 — the largest in the history of Donna ISD — to support critical facility upgrades and future growth.

She has also prioritized academic innovation, launching specialized schools such as the M. Rivas Primary Discovery Academy (Pre-K–2nd grade) and the Caceres Intermediate Discovery Academy (3rd–5th grade) to enhance enrollment and instructional excellence. Committed to fostering a culture of continuous improvement, she collaborated with stakeholders to develop and implement a two-way dual language bilingual model, created a unified instructional framework and initiated the redesign of the curriculum to enhance the delivery of high-quality instruction, and launched a targeted professional development plan for principals, central office staff, and campus instructional leaders. Dr. Dominguez continues to drive transformative change in Donna ISD, leveraging her extensive experience and visionary leadership to elevate student achievement and create opportunities for all learners.

AN INTERVIEW

Tell us about how you see today's superintendent.

Public education has undergone significant changes throughout my career. As superintendents, we must stay attuned to the evolving landscape to effectively lead school districts. Recent years have introduced new challenges, including the pandemic and school closures, ongoing concerns about school safety, competition from charter schools and other educational institutions, and political debates around public school funding. Despite these challenges, our primary goal remains clear: to graduate well-rounded, resilient students prepared for college or career opportunities.

In addition to our student-focused aspirations, it's essential that we create a work environment where our staff feels valued and works in a culture that is positive and supportive. Our mission is to serve our students, community, and staff. As a superintendent in today's context, I believe it is vital to be strategic and thoughtful in planning for the future while navigating the day-to-day realities of running a school district. My approach to decision-making is always anchored in the best interests of our students. Leading a school district requires a multi-faceted strategy, one that guides both the district and school boards in the best possible direction for the communities we serve.

What new understandings did you acquire after two or three years on the job?

In my third year on the job, I had the unique opportunity to attend the Holdsworth Center for Educational Leadership. This professional development experience, combined with the strong mentorship I received from a retired superintendent (Dr. Arturo Cavazos), was truly transformative. It helped me shift my perspective on the role of a superintendent and build essential competencies in areas where I needed growth. This shift allowed me to move from simply surviving in the position to thriving in it.

Through this experience, I gained valuable insights and coaching on how to make key changes in my leadership. I learned how to set a clear vision, communicate more effectively, handle public scrutiny, collaborate with an elected board, and develop my senior leadership team. These transitions helped me allocate time for strategic planning and think more clearly about the district's future.

This learning has empowered me to engage with a variety of stakeholders while maintaining a focus on serving the community through an understanding-based approach. Additionally, I have refined my ability to facilitate the work of the organization rather than executing it all myself. By building the capacity of my senior leadership team, I have strengthened my leadership and contributed to greater stability within Donna ISD.

Share an idea to use or something you've learned with your colleagues.

One of the most valuable lessons my colleagues and I have learned together is the power of listening. Taking the time to genuinely listen to students, teachers, and parents has uncovered both immediate solutions and long-term opportunities for growth.

Through our “Lunch and Learn” forums with students, I heard firsthand about both big aspirations and small but impactful needs. Some of their requests were simple and affordable, like adding more basketballs and sports equipment, or addressing everyday necessities such as installing locks in student bathrooms — simple fixes that make a real difference and are well within our resources.

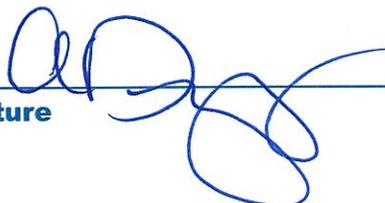
At the same time, their feedback also guided larger initiatives, such as adding mini classroom libraries in every elementary classroom, installing new playgrounds, and building new running tracks to promote health and literacy, all of which contribute to enriching our students' experiences.

Similarly, our Teacher Talks revealed practical concerns that could be quickly resolved, like ensuring reliable copy machines and providing spirit shirts for our special needs students competing in the Special Olympics, so they feel the same pride and belonging as every student in our district.

Parents expressed a desire for expanded fine arts and athletic opportunities, and because we listened, we are now launching newly redesigned and refocused campuses that reflect these priorities: J.S. Adame Arts Academy (PreK3–5th Grade), A.M. Ochoa Primary Science and Sports Academy (PreK3–2nd Grade), and C. Stainke Intermediate Science and Sports Academy (3rd–5th Grade) — each one designed to nurture our students' talents and passions.

Through active listening, we've turned conversations into action, ensuring that our decisions are informed by the voices of those we serve every day.

Submitted by:

Angela Dominguez 

Name/Signature

4-14-25

Date