

HISD PRESS RELEASE

New HISD chief of police sworn in during ceremony

May 26, 2020 - The Houston Independent School District's new police chief, Pedro "Pete" Lopez, Jr. was sworn in Tuesday during an official ceremony where he took the oath of office at the district's Hattie Mae White Educational Support Center.

The chief's wife took part in the ceremonial badge-pinning portion of the event. Houston Municipal Courts Director and Presiding Judge J. Elaine Marshall administered the oath of office.

Lopez comes to HISD after 32 years of law enforcement experience, with 29 of those years spent serving the Houston Police Department, where he rose from the rank of patrol officer to assistant chief of Patrol Region 1. He has also served with the Harris County Sheriff's Department and Texas Department of Corrections.

"We are extremely pleased to have Chief Lopez at the helm of our police department because of his leadership experience, can-do attitude and forward-looking approach," HISD Interim Superintendent Grenita Lathan said. "We know he will lead our 200-plus officers by example."

Lopez completed law enforcement training at the FBI National Academy. In 2017, he was instrumental in leading Houston's police response to Hurricane Harvey. He also led the city's first-ever disaster relief mission to Puerto Rico in the wake of Hurricane Maria.

Houston Police Chief Art Acevedo made remarks at Lopez's swearing-in, describing him as a true professional who will work to de-criminalize minor in-school offenses.

"You are a gentleman. You are a leader and you have compassion," Acevedo said to Lopez. "Most importantly, you have the right mindset and the right heart for policing in an educational environment."

Lopez said he looks forward to leading a police department that serves students.

"This was an opportunity I could not pass up because I enjoy working with members of the community whose main interest is to help young people," Lopez said. "I look forward to using my professional and life experiences to be a mentor and an advocate for the children of this district. I want them to know they can overcome obstacles and challenges."

Lopez succeeds former HISD Police Department Chief Paul Cordova, who left the district to become the new chief of police for the Aldine Independent School District.

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The Houston Independent School District is the largest school district in Texas and the seventh-largest in the United States, with 280 schools and more than 209,772 students. The 333-square-mile district is one of the largest employers in the Houston metropolitan area, with more than 27,000 employees.

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