Mr. Ivan Cabrera is a proud parent of two students enrolled in the Salinas City Elementary School District who believes that building bridges of communication among parents, students, teachers and the entire school community is the pathway for our students to be successful and will reduce barriers that prevent students from reaching success.

Mr. Cabrera is a voice and advocate for bilingual education, for English Learners and for the parents in his community. He states, “I feel that I am the voice of those parents who can’t be present because they are working long hours to provide for their families.” He has participated actively over the last four years at Mission Park Elementary School and in the school and district’s English Learner Advisory Council, initially as a member, then as a representative. At meetings, he always asks questions, and supports the school by advocating at the district level to receive services for students at Mission Park. Last year he was elected to the School Site Council and has also served as a representative on the District Budget Advisory Council for two years. At these meetings he praises the school, makes suggestions for change, and encourages other parents to become more involved and help improve their children’s education. He attends parent leadership conferences and strives to learn more to help not only his children but the children of the school community. One example of this is how he had advocated for the district hiring of crossing guards, and when there was no one to fill the position at his children’s school, he donned a vest, grabbed a STOP sign and volunteered for almost a full year until eventually he was hired for this important position. Ms. Jennifer Zanzot, Principal of Mission Park Elementary School, says, “I cannot imagine a more involved parent- Mr. Cabrera is a staunch advocate for the needs of English Learners and their families.”

Ms. Elizabeth Lopez, the Administrator for School Improvement and Parent Involvement for the Salinas City Elementary School District, shares that Mr. Cabrera has a gift of bringing people of all different walks of life together. “He is an authentic listener and makes people feel welcome and important. He respects all opinions that are different from his own and sees everything as an opportunity to learn, grow and move in a direction that promotes bilingual education and student success. He is a respected and tireless advocate of bilingual education and has participated in many committees as well as volunteers his time in the classroom after school and on Saturdays, to promote, support and advocate for programs that provide both parents of English Learners and English Learner students opportunities to be academically and social emotionally successful.”

Mr. Cabrera is bilingual and uses either English or Spanish to answer other parents’ questions, to help explain the benefits of both bilingual and structured English Immersion programs, and to help parents insist on adequate English Language Development support. He truly believes that knowing more than one language is an asset that helps in building strong bridges of communication among the entire community.

_CABE is proud to present Ivan Cabrera the CABE 2020 Parent of the Year Award!_