

**Good afternoon Superintendent Duardo, Members of the School Board, and county staff leadership. I'm Anita Ravi the Founder and Lead petitioner for We the People High School. Our mission is to empower the next generation of American and world leaders with the knowledge, practice, and tools to radically change the world for the better.**

**A bit about me to set the stage: I grew up in Sudbury, MA, zip code 01776, home of the very first town meeting on this continent in 1649. My mother, a 3rd generation Californian, and my father, an immigrant from India, attended this Town meeting monthly and instilled a deep sense of civic responsibility and civic engagement in me and my sister. These deep roots in civic activism propelled me into my career as an educator. As a teacher, school district leader, and teacher educator these past 26 years, I continue to believe that my responsibility as a citizen is to create pathways for our youth to lives and careers of active engagement in shaping the future of our country and our planet.**

**I have spent my entire career ensuring that ALL students have access to a high quality, relevant, academically rigorous education. As a teacher in New York City in the late 1990s, I was part of the small schools movement that paved the way for personalized, relevant and innovative education in New York, and across the country. As a fellow at the Institute for Learning, University of Pittsburgh, I empowered district leaders with the knowledge and tools to organize urban systems around effort-based education, positioning students as sense-makers. As a school district leader in Pittsburgh and as the CAO at Alliance College Ready Public Schools here in LA, I spent hundreds of hours inside of classrooms working with teachers and principals to move the needle on student engagement, equity, and achievement. And above all, I have spent these past 17 years empowering effective teachers across the country to see students as change-makers, and grow into their best selves as professionals.**



**We the People High School's mission is not only to close the opportunity gap in Long Beach by offering an A-G Plus course of study for all, but also to close the civic leadership gap in this city, state, and country. We intend to accomplish this in three ways.**

**First, by apprenticing students in the global citizenship standards and using the United Nations Global Goals for Sustainable Development as our framework for learning and action.**

**Second, through a thematic curriculum at each grade level where innovative, project-based coursework is interdisciplinary while remaining subject-matter serious.**

**Third, through Democracy In Action immersion workshops three times per year. For a week in the fall and spring, and for a 3-week January term, students have the opportunity to step outside their schedules and apprentice with our community partners to take action and initiate change on topics that are of interest to them.**

**Our school is designed to be inclusive and to empower students from traditionally underserved populations to find and amplify their voice, and to engage in political and social change on behalf of their communities.**

**Research shows students learn best via interdisciplinary projects that address current, real world issues. The goal is for our students to tackle grand challenges such as climate change, resource use, and environmental quality to develop practical solutions that can be implemented in the community. The connection between responsible citizenship and science knowledge is vital here in California. For example, in 2016, California had the largest ballot nationwide, with 17 measures, 10 of which had content related to science.**



**Our current ballot for next month's election contains measures related to sustainable living, access to healthcare, and the environment (three of the Global Goals). Singed into action by all of the UN member countries, the 17 Global Goals define issues that are local, national, and global. Ending extreme poverty, mitigating climate change, and creating sustainable cities (to name a few) require deep historical and contextual knowledge, and collaboration across disciplines and borders. We the People's focus on interdisciplinary learning and the Global Goals will position our graduates to create sound policy for a better future.**

**We believe we're at a critical inflection point here in the United States. It seems we hear daily that our democracy is in danger. And yet, we only need turn to the youth in our communities to see and hear a different narrative. The students of Parkland, Florida have launched a nationwide movement showing the power our youth can have to be our moral conscience, to agitate for change, and to make the world better. Here in Long Beach, over the past six months alone, students organized their own March for Our Lives, participated in the People's State of the City Conference, and facilitated open forum school board candidate events for our April school board elections. They ran their own city budget forum to explore data they collected on how city funds should be used to support youth, and successfully lobbied city government to create a fund for youth development for the first time in the history of our city.**

**Outside of school, students in Long Beach demonstrate everyday that they care about their communities, their environment, and their world. They see how injustice and inequality play out in their own schools and communities every day. These students have told us and showed us that there is tremendous desire for their voices to be strengthened and heard, and that school needs to be the place where this happens. We the People High School is a response to this demand.**