



Good afternoon, my name is Ana Arce I am the parent of Natalie and Alice who attend LBUSD. Natalie is a 6th grader at Franklin Middle School and Alice a 2nd grader at Lincoln Elementary. Like my two girls, I also attended the LBUSD. I am here to share my story and why We the People High School is desperately needed in our community.

I attended Millikin High School in Long Beach, a school with 4000 students. I was your average student, I was quiet, and never really felt a sense of belonging in school. My senior year of high school my brother who was 19 at the time passed away in a tragic accident, no one at school knew I was grieving not my friends, not my teachers, and not my counselor. This affected how I viewed my future, I believed there was no point in going to college if I was going to die just like my brother. I made some bad choices and Life after high school hit me hard. It took me many years to find my way to college. My experience as a college student was different, I was a parent, I worked two jobs, and found time to do homework. I breastfeed while writing my papers in college and graduated from USC in 2014. This is why education matters to me more than ever, I want my children to have the best experience and education possible. And I want them to be known and cared for by their teachers and their counselors.

The school of choice system in Long Beach allows the best performing schools to cherry pick the brightest students from underperforming schools. My oldest daughter Natalie is a bright student, she was in the excel program in elementary school, she speaks 3 languages, and I was sure she would be one of the lucky ones to be picked. She wasn't. She attends Franklin Middle School one of the lowest underperforming middle schools in the district. For Natalie, there is no other choice. This is just middle school, what will happen when she applies to high school?

Our community - needs more options like We the People High School. We the People's foundations and values reflect what I learned while I studied at USC. WTP will propel students and give them a competitive advantage for a college readiness race that many are not prepared to run, others will give up, and where only a few make it to the finish line. We need schools that enable students to be known, and to become powerful advocates for themselves and their community. I have chosen to become part of the parent organizing committee at We the People so that I can make a difference for my own daughter and for other young people in my community. Thank you!



Good afternoon. My name is Tasha Wiggins Hunter and I serve as the Executive Director in the Uptown Business Improvement District in Long Beach. I'm also the President of the Arts Council for Long Beach and a Cultural Heritage Commissioner. Titles aside, my most important role is being mother to Asia, Mosiah, and Zakai Hunter. Having worked as an educator in the K-12 and college systems for 15 years, I am a huge youth advocate focused on strong academic foundations for all our children.

We the People has the ability to be that strong academic and civic foundation for so many young people in the city of Long Beach. So many times adults never find our voices nor have the courage or skills to amplify it. We the People engages students at an early age to help them develop their voices while their minds are cultivating new concepts and ideas.

I firmly believe this school team can deliver radically-improved student outcomes. We the People has the structure and the philosophy to do more than just close the achievement gaps for black and brown youth in Long Beach. Young folks need creative environments to be intellectually encouraged---rather than the cookie cutter pedagogical approach that too many students in my community endure merely because of our of circumstance.

Over the past year, I have personally witnessed the daily drive, push and outreach efforts of the We the People team. The student and parent workshops, and the community engagement has been dedicated and focused. We need more public school options here in Long Beach. Speaking as a parent, I can assure you that each of my children is unique, and each has required a different academic pathway as a result. It is my hope that, you, the LACOE Board of Directors, cast your vote in favor of We the People Charter high school so they can continue the real work getting of everything in place to welcome students on the first day of school this August.



Good afternoon Members of the School Board, and school district leadership. I was born and raised in Sweden and came to the US in 1991, as a 20 year old. It was not until 2010, when my daughter began kindergarten that I for the first time experienced culture shock.

Kindergarten and 1st grade were very stressful and in the end of 1st grade, we pulled her out and homeschooled for 3 years. She is back in public school now, 6th grade, and while it was ok for a little while, the excitement has worn off and the stress setting in again.

So when I heard Anita speak about her plans for We the people, I loved the personalized aspects - small class size and an environment that provides collaborative work as opposed to competitive work, project-based learning, integrated speech and debate, engagement through the arts, and learning to engage with the community, while also of course keeping a high standard of the core subjects.

America is currently in a space of cultural growth and evolution, and we need our educational system to catch up and provide a new path to learning. As an immigrant, a professional anthropologist, and engaged parent, I see a discrepancy between what our educational system believes it is, and what it actually is. I strongly believe that We the People will bridge that gap and provide students with relevant education for today's and tomorrow's world. Long Beach should be honored to implement and support this opportunity.



Good afternoon School Board members and county staff, my name is Khemara Has, and I am the chair of the founding board of WTP. I've been a resident of Long Beach in both the 2nd district and the 6th districts. I was a baby when my family came to the states as refugees from Cambodia and like so many others; my parents drove home the importance of education in leveling a playing field that would be difficult to navigate. I was lucky that my parents advocated for me and my siblings so strongly because it would have been far too easy for me to become just another number in our public school system. I think that it's important for our students to advocate for themselves and amplify their own voices in their education.

I am proud to be a member of a founding board that is so well suited to starting a school to meet those exact needs. As a psychology instructor at CSUF, I have seen a diverse group of students struggle with issues of race identity and immigration while balancing their education. As a longtime resident of Long Beach, I have a strong personal connection to this community...

Long Beach has a strong social justice tradition which is evidenced very clearly in the issues that are brought up at the annual People's State of the city. From protecting hotel workers to understanding the impact of environmental racism, community organizing and social justice movements occur every day in Long Beach and our youth can stand to learn and benefit from these experiences. These issues are truly intersectional and WTP can foster an environment where engaged students are equipped to face these challenges. We want our students to advocate not only for themselves but for others, which is precisely what an education from WTP will provide, thank you.



Good afternoon members of the LA County school district board, my name is Mia Hernandez-Perez. I am a graduate from Renaissance High School in Long Beach, and I am currently a freshman at Cal State university of Long Beach. I was an active student in high school, having formed a high school club with the goal of preparing students for adulthood. I've graduated from youth leadership long beach class of 2018 and hope to join the CSULB student body. I am here to emphasize why We the People is needed in Long Beach.

Hands- on learning and creative learning experiences is something that Long Beach schools have emphasized over the past few years, yet only a very small percentage of students are able to say that they have completed a real hands-on learning experience such as an internship. I can testify that having at least one internship on your resume makes all the difference and that is how I have forced doors to open for me. Yet I understand how it can be frustrating for students to find time for that. As a high school student, I had to seek out opportunities on my own to work on issues that matter to me outside of school, because my school did not provide me with the time or guidance to learn to be an active, engaged citizen. What is amazing about We the People, is that students will have 3 internships carved into their curriculum every year of high school, meaning this will be their assignment and a very meaningful one too. This means a path to success is inevitable at wtp high school for every individual student not just a selective few. Students will forge their own pathway to success because they can explore what fits them - their interests and their passions.

Like We the People, Renaissance was a small school, having a student population of around 500 students in total. I was able to make meaningful relationships with my teachers and school staff. Yet, in order to attend this small learning community, I had to ride the bus ride across town for an hour every morning. Our goal is to open the school North of the Long Beach airport, adding value to this part of town as it currently lacks small schools. Not only would the small population of the school help personalize the education, but the fact that the goal of this school is to build it around the ideas of the students will empower other students like me to take an active role in our city. I strongly believe that this is possible with a genuine team like Anita's. I believe in We the People High School because I believe in community efforts and creative learning experiences. Thank you for your time.



Good afternoon members of the board. My name is Yunique Pettigrew a single mother of two amazing boys. My oldest who is an 8th grader and my youngest a 6th grader. My 8th grader Israel will be an incoming freshmen in the fall of this year and choice of High school is everything for him and I. I constantly check in on him seeing how he is doing because he has a few hiccups that may be small to some but are big for him. We live in North Long Beach which really has only one high school which is Jordan High School which is very big and overwhelming for him.

As we were on the search for a high school that can benefit him and he benefit from it We the People was introduced to us by a very good friend. We've been following the progress of the school for awhile. It struck us for the simple fact that they have workshops of empowerment for the students. We the People also encourages students to take on big issues like the injustices and inequality and solve them in realistic ways. The students are hands-on with the shaping of what their learning journey will look like.

Understanding the need in our community, I believe We the People should be approved because it is unique in what is offering the students. With We the People my boys can see themselves, their history, and their community represented within the curriculum. Its not just a side bar in a textbook or just taught during Black history month. Our history is very important and being able to learn all year long is so empowering. Learning our truths and understanding who we are has been a journey. I've been on this journey of fighting for my boys education since 2015 because their education means everything to me and with We the People the journey will continue.