

## **HOWARD HILLS**

### **Constitutional Lawyer/Author**

My candidacy gives voters a choice to elect a new School Board member with a decades-long record supporting education excellence that students and families should always experience in Laguna's public schools.

My grandmother was an LBHS mom until 1942, when my youngest uncle graduated. I was an LBHS graduate in 1970, followed by our youngest daughter in 2009. Three of our grandkids have attended our public schools, representing five generations. A few more grandkids may follow, because we value all that remains good about public education in Laguna.

So, it is as stakeholders in our schools that we support positive change when needed to ensure our School Board upholds a higher standard for openness, accountability and community participation in its proceedings, consistent with state education and government codes.

We support enhancement of decision-making on budget, programs and operations, including full disclosure for public end-users of all spending to ensure fiscal transparency. Equally important, any School Board assessment of student learning deficits should be addressed as a local responsibility and priority, not camouflaged by statewide data.

Our small public school system is funded from local property taxes without attendance-based budgets, enabling innovations that enhance learning without unneeded public debt. Public education can unite people across the political spectrum, so let's keep School Board non-partisan, as mandated by state law to enable open community dialogue aimed at improved learning outcomes.

My candidacy also is informed by my service as a lawyer in the Peace Corps, drafting constitutions and laws for new Pacific Island nations.

As an international lawyer in U.S. Navy JAG assigned to White House treaty negotiations, my work was officially awarded Cabinet Secretary level recognition for collaborative dispute resolution and successful bipartisan consensus building in Congress.

Enlisted in 2021-2023 as Senior Adviser to the President's Special Envoy for renewal of treaties I had negotiated four decades earlier, we overcame political brinksmanship in 2023 to achieve bipartisan ratification of strategic agreements in a divided Congress.

If bipartisan unity is possible at the federal level, we even more readily can sustain civil non-partisan civic engagement in our local school community, benefitting all in the LBUSD public education family.