



# Greg Rodriguez

## for Palm Springs Unified School District

### About Greg

The following is a brief-some may say not so brief-recap of my life experiences and professional career. These experiences provide me with a unique ability to be a new and effective leader for Palm Springs Unified School District. I have experienced both large and small school districts as a student and as a parent. I have two children that have expanded my knowledge of the school systems and the challenges we face today, especially in the Coachella Valley. I hope by reading this you will have the confidence to give me your vote in November.

I was born and raised in Huntington Beach, California where I attended public school at Talbert Elementary. My Mother and I relocated to Boise, Idaho when I was 14. I attended Lowell Scott Junior High, Meridian High School and Boise High School from which I graduated in 1984.

I have always been active in school, primarily through debate and speech, Boys State, and the YMCA Youth Legislature. I have experienced and know the value of music, arts and extra-curricular activities in our public schools. I believe we need to return to the kind of access I had to these growing up as a child and teenager.

I attended Gonzaga University in Spokane, Washington from 1984 through 1989. I became very active in student government and held elective office for four of the five years I was there. I also was on the leadership team for the University's freshmen orientation staff. I put myself through college by doing work study in the archives of the library and working in all areas of the campus store. In addition to my work on campus, I worked for the Sheraton Hotel as a room service and restaurant waiter. Due to financial constraints I was not able to get my degree. I was very proud to complete it 10 years later at Seattle University. I hold a degree in economics and a minor in political science.

After college, I moved to Seattle, Washington where I continued my career with the Sheraton Corporation eventually rising to a management position as Food and Beverage Trainer. I had a long career in hospitality service and management and served on many employee-management committees to improve service, employee standards and profitability. My experience in training, operations and budgeting in this field were invaluable.

In 1996 I quit the workforce to stay at home and take care of our adopted son, Zachary, who has special needs. Zachary is my nephew by birth and was born three months premature. He is on the Autism Spectrum, but an extremely bright child. Our second child, Joshua, was adopted from the foster care system in 2000. Joshua was in and out of five different homes before coming to us and had serious detachment and cognitive issues. He is a great helper and an eager learner.

My interest in education began very early with my children since they required schooling from their earliest years. I also became exposed to the challenges schools face with special education, Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), different socioeconomic classes, and English as second language learners. It has been my ongoing goal to not only work for services and education for my children, but all of the children within my kid's schools as well. I was honored to serve on the Governor's Developmental Disabilities Council in Washington State before moving to Palm Springs, California.

My first political campaign job was distributing flyers at the local K-Mart for my babysitter's mother's school board campaign when I was 13. I have been a long-time Democratic Party and civil rights activist and consultant. I have used my political positions to work across party lines on issues especially affecting our children and their education and developmental growth. Truth be told, I actually worked on a few Republican campaigns in my late teens and early twenties. I have worked on a variety of candidate and issue campaigns at all levels of government since the 1980s. I have served as a Precinct Committee Officer, State Committeeman for the Washington State Democratic Party, County Party Treasurer and Chair of the King County Democrats in Washington State.

The school board position is non-partisan and I will respect and work within the spirit of that. However, my political experience gives me a unique advantage in being able to influence and maneuver state and federal laws that affect our local districts. I know how the political and educational systems work and can work effectively for our schools from day one.

I have also done consulting work for non-profit organizations and businesses such as [Williamsworks](#), Fairness Lobby (predecessor to [Equal Rights Washington](#)), [King County Democrats](#) and various candidate and issue campaigns. My main focus in this capacity has been with training, operations, technology and fiscal management, all things I can bring to the Palm Springs School Board.

I owned a vacation home in the desert for a couple of years before moving here permanently in 2006. I also visited the desert in my youth and spent two summers here working during my college career. I served as the Chair of Katherine Finchy's School Site Council for two years. I helped on the grass roots effort to pass the Measure E school bond, and in March of 2007 I was appointed to the Palm Springs Unified School District's Alternative Calendar Advisory Committee. In May of 2008 I was elected PTA President at Katherine Finchy Elementary for the 2008-2009 school year.

In 2008 I ran for the Palm Springs Unified School District Board of Directors. I came in a close third, but I did not end my work for students. I was appointed to the School District's Community and Parental advisory boards. In 2009 I joined the Board of the Pinnacle Fund which is the Foundation for the funding the arts and technologies in Palm Spring's schools. I was also appointed to the District's Citizen's Oversight Committee that tracks and communicates the status of the Measure T and Measure E Bonds for school construction and improvements. In the fall of 2009 I was appointed to the Palm Springs Human Rights Commission.

I am proud to call the desert my home and have seen the changes that have occurred here both good and bad. I want to help make sure that as we continue to grow that our schools are ahead of the curve. Again, I believe my life experiences and my professional background will enable me to work with all of you to achieve that goal.

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