

Dr. Lawana Richmond, District E Candidate for San Diego Unified School Board of Trustees

PQE Candidate Forum Question Responses

Question 1 - How will you resolve the projected budget deficits pending for the next three years and maintain adequate staffing and educational programs along with school safety?

Projected budget deficits at the level of an institution like San Diego Unified requires business and operational leadership that combines best practices in operational excellence that include:

- Organizational design review and assessment to ensure we have the right people in the right place
- Right processes to achieve optimal results
- Revenue enhancement through public and private agency partnerships

I will bring my education and experience to provide the leadership to balance the operational budget, negotiate contracts on behalf of the parents and taxpayers that elect me. And I will prioritize student and staff safety first. As a board trustee, my responsibilities are to provide leadership and effective oversight to hold the Superintendent to the highest standards of equity, diversity, achievement, and accountability.

Question 2 - What is your position on public school choice – i.e., public charter schools, homeschools, learning pods?

I support all legitimate avenues of public education, including charter schools. I grew up attending district schools in Sub-District E, as they were the only schools available to me.

As a teen mom and single parent, I spent time in the foster care and group home systems. A charter alternative was not available to me. I fell out of the system dropped out at an early age to raise a child.

Wanting a better life for my child, I earned a GED and decided to pursue higher education. Starting in community college, I ultimately transferred to and graduated from San Diego State with a Bachelors in Business Administration. I then continued and earned a Masters in Information Systems and finally a Doctorate in Educational Leadership at UC San Diego/CSU San Marcos.

I know firsthand the hope offered and successes realized through quality public education. Students should NOT be trapped in failing schools when public charter schools provide a choice to parents. I will work to provide parents with quality public education.

Question 3 - If elected, what are your top priorities, and how do you expect to implement them?

If elected, my top priorities will begin with prioritizing the recovery caused by the pandemic. Careful consideration of the lessons learned will help to shape the implementation of best practices that will equip San Diego Unified students for their futures. I will restore and rebuild the public trust through greater transparency and accountability and address disparities in discipline practices and access to advanced or enriched learning opportunities that promote excellence. At the heart of all of this will be evidenced-based decision making.

"If you don't know your past, you don't know your future..."