

| Poway Unified School District | Trustee Area E | | |
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| Candidates (* = responded by the original deadline) | David Cheng | Cindy Sytsma, incumbent | Craig Pond |
| <p><i>What do you think is the biggest challenge your school district will be facing over the next 2-4 years?</i></p> | <p>Ultimately, the most important issue is to improve student performance, and I believe that is PUSD's biggest challenge. To do that, I believe PUSD needs to focus on the following four priorities:</p> <p>1) Increase Teacher Pay</p> <p>We must pay our teachers more in order to attract and retain quality teachers. For the 2024-2025 school year, Poway Unified teachers did not receive a cost-of-living adjustment. In other words, all teachers received a pay cut when accounted for inflation. Instruction is Poway Unified's core offering, and instruction affects student performance more than anything else. Therefore, we must invest more in instruction, not less.</p> <p>2) Increase Transparency</p> <p>The public school system belongs to the public. As such, crucial information must be publicly available. For example, even though the 2024-2025 budget is 150 pages long, it does not contain information about the spending breakdown for individual programs. Without that information, it is impossible for the public (or even the Board) to know the effectiveness of the programs. To successfully balance the budget, cost effectiveness of each program must be studied.</p> <p>3) Increase Public Engagement</p> <p>For anyone that has attended school board meetings in recent years, it seems obvious that the Board is not receptive to public comments. In fact, the Board doesn't even seem interested in hearing them! Public comment has been cut to 30 minutes total regardless of how many members of the community are willing to take the time to provide feedback. This is not how public comment is supposed to be received, and this is not common practice in other school districts. I practice in front of the California Public Utilities Commission, and the five Utility Commissioners routinely spend hours listening to public comments -- there are no restrictions for how many speakers are allowed to provide feedback.</p> <p>4) Increase Accountability</p> <p>The Board needs to stop placing blame on external factors -- the state budget, the superintendent, the community for rejecting the bond. The Board must take ownership of Poway Unified's performance and any failures. As a Board member, I will accept full accountability -- the buck stops with the Board.</p> | <p>DNR = Did Not Respond</p> | <p>DNR = Did Not Respond</p> |

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| <p><i>What has the District done well in the last 2-4 years? What has the District not done well in the last 2-4 years?</i></p> | <p>I think PUSD worked hard and did well to adapt to COVID-19 during challenging times. PUSD has also maintained a good graduation rate over the last 2-4 years.</p> <p>Due to the mishandling of the recent superintendent scandal by the current Board, community trust and staff morale are extremely low. Academic excellence has also been suffering as seen by the declining test scores. On top of that, we have a \$28 million budget shortfall. I think all of these issues point to ineffective leadership and management mistakes by the current Board of Education. The Board needs to stop placing blame on external factors -- the state budget, the superintendent, the community for rejecting the proposed bond in 2020. The Board must take ownership of PUSD's performance and failures. I believe the community is desperately calling for more effective leadership by the Board.</p> | DNR | DNR |
| <p><i>How should performance be measured: For a Superintendent? For a Principal? For a teacher?</i></p> | <p>Various metrics should be established and reviewed to determine the performance of the Superintendent, including but not limited to: academic performance metrics, financial management, staff leadership and management, stakeholder surveys, and others. Goals should be set for each year in various categories, with annual reviews by the Board to see whether the Superintendent met those goals.</p> <p>Performance metrics should be established and reviewed for a Principal, including but not limited to: academic performance, attendance and graduation rates, teacher retention and satisfaction, professional development of staff, and peer reviews. Again, goals should be set for each year in various categories, with annual reviews conducted and provided to the Superintendent as well as the Board.</p> <p>Teacher performance should be measured by metrics including but not limited to: academic performance of the students, effectiveness of implementing the curriculum, results of classroom observation, attendance rates, feedback from parents, and feedback from students. Annual reviews should be conducted by the Principal.</p> | DNR | DNR |

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| <i>How should student success be measured?</i> | Some factors that should be considered include academic performance, emotional well-being, and post-graduation success. Academic performance, including grades and test scores, is at the forefront and easier to measure, but it should not be the only consideration. Student's emotional well-being, including their ability to cope with stress and other mental health challenges, is becoming increasingly important and relevant. Post-graduation success should be tracked and reported regularly, which would help the school district understand whether it is adequately preparing students for the future. | DNR |
| <i>What endorsements have you received to date?</i> | As seen from my website, I do not advertise my endorsements. I believe that it is better for voters to form their own opinions about each candidate. | DNR |
| <i>1. The school board is accountable to parents and students and should place parents and students at the forefront of decision making that impacts our students and schools.</i> | SUPPORT | DNR |
| <i>2. Sometimes it's ok to implement programs and resources without clear validation and/or proof of impact and measurable outcomes.</i> | OPPOSE | DNR |
| <i>3. Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) is the top priority for our district.</i> | OPPOSE | DNR |
| <i>4. Provide tutoring/college entrance counselors AT NO ADDITIONAL CHARGE to all students in the District.</i> | OPPOSE | DNR |
| <i>5. Strict adherence to merit-based academic standards and grading practices in our District.</i> | DNA (Did Not Answer) | DNR |
| <i>6. Implement Ethnic Studies in the district even if the state mandate is not funded or operationalized at the state level.</i> | DNA (Did Not Answer) | DNR |
| <i>7. Prioritize providing ongoing racial/critical social justice (anti-racist) trainings for faculty and educators.</i> | DNA (Did Not Answer) | DNR |
| <i>8. Implementing the National Educators Association (NEA) Jewish Affairs Caucus Antisemitism Checklist into our District's official policies, process and procedures.</i> | DNA (Did Not Answer) | DNR |
| <i>9. Maintain/add more GATE/Seminar/Honors/AP options for all students.</i> | SUPPORT | DNR |
| <i>10. Official school District condemnation of - and response to - discrimination, harassment, and/or hate crimes perpetrated against Jews, Zionists, and Israelis should be implemented with the same parameters, consequences and intensity as condemnations of discrimination and hate crimes against other protected minorities.</i> | SUPPORT | DNR |

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| 11. Oversight inside classrooms to ensure teachers don't use or teach unvetted (unapproved) resources or materials that violate School Board Policies, state legislation, existing state Ed Codes, and/or Federal Constitutional/Civil Rights protections. | SUPPORT | DNR | DNR |
| 12. Implementing the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IRHA) Definition Of Antisemitism into our District's official policies processes and procedures as adopted by the US Dept of Ed & Office of Civil Rights (EO). | DNA (Did Not Answer) | DNR | DNR |
| 13. Implement racial/critical social justice (anti-racist) activism in our District's policies, processes, and procedures. | DNA (Did Not Answer) | DNR | DNR |
| 14. The classroom is a place for learning fact-based, objective lessons. | SUPPORT | DNR | DNR |
| 15. Implementing, supporting, and promoting BDS in our district. | OPPOSE | DNR | DNR |
| 16. Prioritize District funds towards equitable programs over academic programs. | OPPOSE | DNR | DNR |
| 17. Instructional topics shall be relevant to the adopted course of study and curricular goals and should be designed to develop students' critical thinking skills, ability to discriminate between fact and opinion, respect for others, and understanding and tolerance of diverse points of view. | SUPPORT | DNR | DNR |
| 18. Partnering with the Liberated Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum Consortium (Website, Instagram) & aligned organizations or liberatory educators, including those inside the Coalition for Liberated Ethnic Studies. | OPPOSE | DNR | DNR |
| 19. School is a place for all students to be themselves and learn in an open, safe, and empowering environment. | SUPPORT | DNR | DNR |
| 20. Teachers should be able to use materials, sources, and/or content during lessons even if those materials have not been formally vetted or specifically approved by the school board. | OPPOSE | DNR | DNR |
| 21. District resolution reaffirming Jewish student and faculty value and the District's staunch condemnation of all forms of antisemitism as adopted by the US Dept. of Ed & Office of Civil Rights (EO). | DNA (Did Not Answer) | DNR | DNR |
| 22. Full transparency for curriculum and syllabus (including full list of all approved materials, books, resources, etc.) for every class/course in the District. | SUPPORT | DNR | DNR |

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| 23. Launching (or re-launching) a "Superintendents Jewish Parent Committee" to partner with the School Board once a month [or quarter, or as needed] on issues, hate incidents, and concerns facing that specific, protected minority group. | DNA (Did Not Answer) | DNR | DNR |
| 24. Hire liberatory-based consultants, including Liberated Ethnic Studies, and/or their associated organizations to provide services to our District (examples: train our District's teachers, help create new curriculum, vet or test or measure results for existing or new curriculum on behalf of the District, advise on DEI practices/ programs/ initiatives; and/or support ethnic studies, history, english, math, science, social studies, etc.). | OPPOSE | DNR | DNR |
| 25. Our District policies, processes, and procedures should promote fairness, equality, safety and academic success for all our students that uphold all district, state, and federal legal and ethical parameters. | SUPPORT | DNR | DNR |
| 26. Anyone who in any way defames, harasses, or belittles anyone based on their actual or perceived race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin age, or disability should not be permitted to engage with our District's students, teachers, programming, or curriculum | SUPPORT | DNR | DNR |
| 27. Objectivity, diversity of ideas, and fact-based learning is paramount to preparing our students to be global citizens. | SUPPORT | DNR | DNR |
| 28. All District staff, educators, administration, and school board trustees should inform, listen, and actively engage with parents and community members. | SUPPORT | DNR | DNR |
| 29. Clear goals, objectives, and metrics have been established for our DEI efforts in our District. | DNA (Did Not Answer) | DNR | DNR |
| 30. Diversity of people, ideas, and viewpoints is key to the success of our District, our teachers, and our students. | SUPPORT | DNR | DNR |
| 31. Performance-based evaluations of teachers throughout the District. | SUPPORT | DNR | DNR |
| 32. Setting and achieving successful goals for literacy rates and math aptitude scores of District students | School Board, Superintendent | DNR | DNR |
| 33. Failure of the District to follow District and/or State Ed Code and/or Federal Law & Guidelines | School Board, Superintendent | DNR | DNR |
| 34. Due diligence of resources, programming, and consultants used in the District to ensure it adheres to all District, state and federal standards, codes, and laws | School Board, Superintendent | DNR | DNR |

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| 35. Determining, overseeing, and assessing the District's measurements of success | School Board | DNR | DNR |
| 36. Setting clear goals, objectives, and metrics for any DEI efforts, policies, or programs | School Board | DNR | DNR |
| 37. Assessing the success or failure of the District's DEI programming | School Board, Superintendent | DNR | DNR |
| 38. Setting clear goals, objectives, and metrics for any Restorative Justice efforts, policies, or programs | School Board, Superintendent | DNR | DNR |
| 39. Responsible for assessing the success or failure of the District's Restorative Justice practices | School Board, Superintendent | DNR | DNR |
| 40. Informing, listening, and actively engaging with parents and community members | School Board, Superintendent | DNR | DNR |
| 41. Implementing, including funding, of programs and resources with clear validation and/or proof of impact and measurable outcomes | School Board, Superintendent | DNR | DNR |
| 42. Addressing ineffective or problematic teachers in the District's schools | Superintendent, Principals | DNR | DNR |
| 43. Developing measures that will accurately gauge the teacher's effectiveness as an instructor and outcomes for teachers based on the results | Superintendent, Principals | DNR | DNR |
| 44. Proactively upholding Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which "protects students from race, color, and national origin discrimination. This prohibition encompasses discrimination, including harassment, based on a student's actual or perceived: (1) shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics, or (2) citizenship or residency in a country with a dominant religion or distinct religious identity." | School Board, Superintendent | DNR | DNR |
| 45. Ensuring accountability and consequences for violating Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which "protects students from race, color, and national origin discrimination. This prohibition encompasses discrimination, including harassment, based on a student's actual or perceived: (1) shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics, or (2) citizenship or residency in a country with a dominant religion or distinct religious identity." | School Board, Superintendent | DNR | DNR |
| Comments: | <p>For some questions, the question either does not contain enough information, or the statements are too absolute to allow an appropriate response.</p> <p>For other questions, I do not have sufficient knowledge of the topic to provide a well-informed response at this time.</p> | | |