

Democratic Party of Sacramento County

Questionnaire: School Board Candidates

NOTE: The answers you provide on this questionnaire will be made available to DPSC members and will become public. Questions that are underlined are yes/no questions and do not require an explanation unless your response is “no.”

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Candidate Name	Linda Fowler
Office Sought	School Board Member
FPPC ID	None yet
Occupation	Retired State Employee & Site Adm.
Employer	Highlands Community Charter School
Campaign Email	ptsac007@aol.com
Campaign Phone	916-204-1143
Campaign Website & Social Media	None yet
Campaign Manager or Contact Person	None yet
Campaign Consultants (list all)	None
Anticipated Budget & Funds Raised	\$25,000
Are you a dues-paying DPSC member?	No; Only the DNC & DCC

Optional demographic questions:

Racial/Ethnic Identity	Caucasian
Gender Identity/Pronouns	Female
LGBTQ+?	No
Veteran?	No
Young Democrat (35 or under)?	No
Union Member?	Yes

Please list all offices you have held or organizations to which you belong or in which you have held a leadership position, and what position you held:

<u>Office/Organization</u>	<u>Position Held</u>	<u>Duration</u>
No. Sacramento Elem. School District and Twin Rivers Unified School District	Elected Board Member	No. Sacramento – 37 years Twin Rivers -11years
CA Dept. of Justice, Office of the Attorney General	Civil Rights, Senior Investigative Auditor, Associate Analyst, Accounting Systems	25 years

Print Tech – Printing & Graphics	Owner/Manager	28 years
Highlands Community Charter School (Adults)	Site Administrator	3 years
IHSS	Caregiver	5 years

You may attach your biography, a list of current endorsements, and any campaign literature as a single file. Please name your file: last name/office sought.

ISSUE QUESTIONS

Section 1 – Viability & Campaign

1. Do you plan to purchase a ballot statement?

Yes/No Yes

2. Will all your campaign materials be printed by a union printer?

Yes/No No. I have an interest in my brother's printing business and he will donate my printing to me.

3. Have you always been a registered Democrat? If no, please state what else you were registered as, when, for how long, and why.

Yes/No Yes, since the time I was old enough to register and vote!

4. What will your ballot designation be? **Probably, School Administrator or some form describing my prior position in the Attorney General's Office**
5. What are your primary sources for fundraising? Please list your top three campaign contributors. **John Hufnagel, Union Local 185 and Members of the Sacramento Sierra Building Trades**
6. Do you voluntarily decline contributions from any particular contributor or class of contributors? If so, list who and why. **Yes. I have not, and will not, accept any contribution that does not support my Democratic liberal views i.e., organizations against a woman's right to choose.**
7. Have you ever endorsed, contributed to, campaigned for, or otherwise supported a candidate for election or appointment to a partisan or nonpartisan office that was not a member of the Democratic Party? If so, list who, for which office, and why? Please be specific. **Yes. I have supported, and still support, Michelle Rivas for the Twin Rivers Unified School District. Education should be**

focused on the best interests of students and should not be a partisan position and that describes Michelle Rivas.

8. Have you ever been investigated (by a governmental agency or private entity) for allegations that you engaged in discrimination, harassment, abuse, or retaliation? If so, what was the result of the investigation? **No**
9. Is there anything in your history on the subject of discrimination, harassment, abuse, or retaliation, which, if revealed, would bring you, your proposed office, or the Democratic Party into disrepute? **No**
10. How long have you lived in the district and community you seek to represent? **64 years**
11. Out of the last five elections, how many have you voted in? **All of them. I have never missed an election.**
12. Why did you decide to run for this office and what do you plan to accomplish during your tenure? **I am the incumbent, and I am by far the best and most qualified candidate. I have a stellar record of providing leadership and focus on children. I plan to make sure Twin Rivers stays solvent (unlike a contiguous district) and work to keep our student academic achievement continues upward. I also am determined to create more Career Technical Education programs for students.**
13. What sets you apart from the other candidates for this office? **I have a strong record of positive performances for students and I am a leader, NOT JUST CRITICISM OF OTHERS, and boasting of what they say they will do. And I am NOT dishonest!**
14. If you are an incumbent, what have you accomplished during your tenure? If you are a non-incumbent, what have you accomplished in the community prior to running? **I have many! As an elected board member, I was the only female board member with 4 white males, there were no female administrators and no female school principals, and I took the leadership to hire woman and minorities.**

Early in my tenure as a board member, a young teacher came to me and told me that she had to leave the classroom because she was pregnant and would be “showing” soon. She was the breadwinner of her family, and at the time, California did not recognize pregnancy as a qualification for any disability insurance. I created a little chaos, but I was successful in getting a policy to allow female teachers decide between them and their doctors when a teacher would leave the classroom. It also provided for them to use their earned sick leave. Thankfully, Congress and the State Legislature have followed by enacting more laws to protect families.

Section 2 - District & Governance

15. Are you familiar with your school district's budget? If so, how large is it, what are its principal revenue sources, and what are its largest expenditure categories? **I am very familiar with the district budget. The 2019-2020 current year budget is \$348,671,898. The unrestricted fund is \$244,960,606. Unrestricted fund is \$103,711,092.**

The principal revenue source is our general fund revenue that is generated by Average Daily Attendance (ADA). This is predicated on student enrollment and attendance. Other revenues included in the budget are Adult Education Fund, Child Development Fund, Deferred Maintenance Fund, Cafeteria Fund, and a Special reserve Fund for Post-Employment Benefits.

As in any entity, the largest expenditures are employee salaries. In addition, Twin Rivers is encumbered with the tremendous debt that the former Grant District created with no revenue stream. This debt impacts the General Fund.

16. Does your district conduct its elections by-district (rather than at-large)? If not, would you support moving its elections to by-district? **The district is comprised of seven areas which each representative must live in and is elected by the respective area voters.**
17. How will you work with educators, parents, and community advocates? What will you do to be accessible to community members and other stakeholders? **I will continue to be a professional that knows the requirements of my position and not attempt to micro manage the district. I will continue to listen and do my best to provide the necessary information to them. I have always had, and will continue to have, my telephone numbers and address available to whoever would like it.**
18. What will you do to promote transparency and ethics at the school district? **I periodically announce in open session meetings the practice and the pathways for all public information be made available to anyone that wishes it.**
19. What whistle-blower protections should there be for public employees and others who expose corruption, sexual harassment, or other illegal/unethical activity? Whistle blowers are an absolute necessity and should be protected at all levels. **A person should feel comfortable to bring any adverse information to light without feeling there will be any retaliation. In addition there should be a penalty for anyone who unmasks a whistleblower.**

20. What is the most disadvantaged area or constituency in your district? What is your plan for ensuring that that area or constituency receives the representation and services it needs? **The most financially disadvantage constituency in my area is the core of the former North Sacramento City. I, individually, initiated programs in the North Sacramento and Del Paso Heights area for job training, high school diploma classes and English as a Second Language all of no cost to the students.**

Section 3 – Civil Rights

21. Do you support a woman’s right to comprehensive healthcare, including the right to choose and access contraception, and the right to obtain a medically safe, legal abortion? **Absolutely Yes**

Yes/No

22. Do you support giving undocumented immigrants living in the United States a path towards citizenship?

Yes/No **Absolutely Yes**

23. Do you believe that LGBTQ people should have equal rights (including, but not limited to, in employment, housing, education, and marriage)?

Yes/No **Absolutely Yes**

24. Do you support background checks for all firearm and ammunition sales?

Yes/No **Absolutely Yes**

25. Do you believe that capital punishment should be abolished?

Yes/No **Absolutely Yes**

26. What will you do to prevent bullying or harassment of LGBTQ students because of their real or perceived sexual orientation and/or gender identity? **The Twin Rivers Board was asked to approve a revised bullying policy a couple of meetings ago. When it was placed on the meeting agenda for approval, I was not happy with it, and because of my resistance to it, it was sent back for more staff work, and I was requested by the other board members to work with staff to place the strengths that I had sought to be include in the policy. In addition, on October 29, 2019, I caused Twin Rivers Board members to vote on Resolution 795 specifically condemning bullying.**

27. What will you do to end discrimination in access to, and the provision of, high quality education? **Twin Rivers has policy of non discrimination to which I**

and the other board members and administration do our best to have a high quality educational system, but also it maintains equity. Our district is a minority majority district, and I will continue to ensure access to a high quality education as a requirement for all disadvantaged students.

28. What will you do to close the pay gap? **Twin Rivers always looks at comparability to other school districts. However, when it is shown that there should be a higher pay in one area, I voice my opinion, but the salaries of school employees are set by contract negotiations.**
29. What will you do to protect immigrant communities? Do you support the adoption of a safe haven school district policy? **I strongly support any and all methods available to protect the immigrant communities. As an example: before CSBA suggested a policy resolution for school districts to protect our immigrants, I had discussed the need for a board resolution with our superintendent, and a resolution to protect our immigrants was immediately approved.**
30. Do you support placing limits on free speech or assembly by educators or students at school? If so, how would you decide what those limits should be? **I cannot support restrictions on free speech or assembly even though I may not agree with it. Restrictions would be completely counter to my absolute belief in the First Amendment. The only restrictions that I would ever agree with are those that have been determined by the US Supreme Court and those that create personal harm to another.**
31. Is there a school-to-prison pipeline in your school district? If so, what will you do to close that pipeline? **Why on earth should there ever be a “school-to-prison pipeline”? That is ludicrous!**
32. What are the issues affecting students of color in your district and will you do to address those issues? **Students of color have to worry about law enforcement and the how their communities are served. This has a direct bearing on student learning when they feel unsafe. I am a member of the Sacramento City Police Community Leadership committee and I do my best to bring forth community voices.**
33. Do you support the hiring of student resource officers (SROs) in your school district? If so, what oversight will you put in place to hold SROs accountable, and what role would the community play in that? **Yes, I support SROs, and Twin Rivers has some. The SROs are under the direction of the school principal and our chief of police. The community has direct input into the hiring and placement of these officers through their site councils.**
34. What will you do to ensure that special needs students receive the services they need to succeed? **This past year, Twin Rivers implemented its own SELPA**

because we wanted more control to make sure special needs students are given the services they need.

35. What will you do to ensure that English Learner (EL) students receive the support they need to succeed? How will you ensure that non-English speaking parents are able to fully participate in their child's education (including participation at public meetings)? **Throughout the district, ELD programs are provided/to students, and we are very proud of our Bi-Literacy and dual immersion program as well. We provide translators to non-English speaking parents. In addition, we offer EL classes to parents to learn English.**

Section 4 – Healthcare

36. Do you support Medicare-for-All?

Yes/No Not entirely until I can see the numbers, costs and how it's funded. The concept is good, but I need more information.

37. What is your position on parental notification prior to a minor terminating a pregnancy? **I'm absolutely against it. I'm sure the minor didn't get consent from nor was the parent notified of the act that resulted in a pregnancy.**

38. What measures would you support to ensure adequate mental health services for all? **I can only do what the law allows at this juncture.**

39. What will you do to help address high child mortality rates in the Black community in Sacramento County? **I'm not sure what I can do except to support the Black community.**

40. What will you do to ensure that all students have access to nutritious meals at school and at home? **Twin Rivers has free breakfasts and lunches for all children who want and need them. In addition, we keep the free meals during the summer. At schools, we have periodic food drives for our children's home.**

Section 5 – Good Jobs for All

41. Do you support the right of workers to unionize by card check?

Yes/No I support workers right to unionize in any form.

42. Have you attended the Sacramento Central Labor Council Candidate Academy?

Yes/No No, I wasn't aware of it.

43. Describe your relationship with organized labor. **I belong to two separate chapters of SEIU. Early in my career in State service, I was a union steward.**
44. Which labor unions will you be interacting with in your role? What is your plan for building collaborative relationships with both union and nonunion employees? **Not sure what you mean about “interacting” with in my role. I will continue to work with some labor leaders to further the creation of programs in the district. Working with Kevin Frerreia of the Sacramento Sierra Building Trades, I was instrumental in creating career programs in Foothill High School.**
45. Will you support the adoption of project labor agreements or community workforce training agreements for your school district? **Yes**
46. What is the role of the office that you seek in promoting good jobs and economic development for our region? **Our best way is to provide a good education and opportunities for careers to our students**
47. What solutions would you propose to solve budget shortfalls and how would you prioritize the needs of your constituents in deciding what to cut first? **Twin Rivers is in the process of determining how the shortfall should be solved. Currently, we have formed, and it is working, a Student Housing Committee to determine if and which school(s) may need to be closed. At this time there is not definite recommendations.**
48. Is income inequality an issue in your community? If so, what steps will you take to address it? **Income inequality is an issue in every part of the Twin Rivers district. The only steps that I know I can take is to vote Democrat!**

Section 6 - Local Economy & Public Resources

49. Under what circumstances would you support raising revenues to support your school district by means of a bond or parcel tax measure? **When facilities are in need of repair and our deferred maintenance cannot cover the cost, I believe we should support a general bond initiative.**
50. Under what conditions would you support the privatization of public or natural resources (e.g., publicly-owned buildings, schools)? **This would have to be governed by statute.**
51. What is your position on "public/private partnerships"? **I think those partnerships are good. Twin Rivers partners with Safe Credit Union which provides students with the importance of knowing what a bank's functions are, let's them know how they may handle their own finances and maybe they would want a career in banking.**

52. When is it appropriate to use public money or tax incentives to subsidize private business? **I don't think it's legal for school districts to do this.**
53. What is your plan to support and encourage local small business development? **The only thing I think school board members can do it to expose students to the possibility of business ownership.**

Section 7 – Environment

54. Do you support the construction of the Delta tunnels?
Yes/No Not sure – but probably not.
55. What will you do to address climate change and reduce our carbon footprint in your role? **Vote Democrat!**

Section 8 – Education

56. Do you believe that public adult education, colleges, and universities should be tuition free?
Yes/No This can't be a yes or no answer. Just to say they should be free misses other competing interest and how they are funded.
57. Please explain LCFF and LCAP in three sentences or fewer. Have you read your district's LCAP? **I helped write it! The LCFF is the funding mechanism/formula and the LCAP is the plan to use the LCFF.**
58. Do you support Restorative Justice and funding such programs? **Not only do I support it, Twin Rivers has a Restorative Justice program in high school.**
59. What will you do to minimize bullying and promote tolerance in school? **See item #26**
60. What role do you believe charter schools should play in public education? This depends on the charter school. **I believe a parent has the right to determine a child's education, but anytime a charter school has a detrimental impact on the public schools, there needs to be some restrictions. I recall when Senator Hart first introduced the charter school concept in California. It was his intent to make public schools better by creating competition between the charter schools and public school. However, like so many good intentions, unintended circumstances occurred. AB 105 will have a direct impact on charter schools. The Highlands Community Charter School for adults who are 22 years or older and do not have a high school diploma teaches several technical career programs including truck driving. Students not only receive their high school diploma but also acquire a DMV Class A License. All of the**

programs are free and assistance for a job. English as a second language is a major program. When parents learn English, they are capable of helping their children and this has allowed their students to have higher achievement in school.

61. Do you support reforming teacher tenure, due process protections, or teacher salary and benefits? Please explain.. **Reforming teacher tenure is a political issue that can only be resolved by legislation. Due process protections are ingrained in both our state and federal constitutions and in court decisions. School employees' salaries and benefits are items of contract negotiations, and I support them within the ability of the district being able to provide them.**
62. Is there an achievement gap in your district? If so, what will you do to close it? **There's an achievement gap in every school district. I will continue to focus on equal opportunities and equity for all students not just my area.**
63. Is your school district de facto segregated? If so, what will you do to end that? **De facto segregation is an issue that is not in the purview of a school board member. It would be arguable as to whether it exists in the school district as De facto segregation is a fact that isn't controlled by any specific fact.**
64. Do you support ethnic studies? How would you implement ethnic studies in your school district? **I not only support ethnic studies, but I strongly support a stronger emphasis on history – not ancient history, but US history that should be known and how it has affected on current status.**
65. What will you do to ensure that school district staff (administrative, certificated, and classified staff) are culturally competent and reflect the diversity of your district? **I will help to ensure our hiring practices are followed.**
66. How will you ensure that students have equal access to any school that offers a unique academic program (e.g., magnet school, academy, etc.) in your district? **Twin Rivers constantly follows policy of allowing students both inter-district and intra-district attend the school of their choice.**

Section 9 – Housing

67. Do you support the adoption of rent control and just cause eviction protection?
Yes/No Yes, but school districts don't have any control in this issue.
68. What is your plan to address student homelessness in your community? **I have no plan except to support assistance to the homeless and let the municipal and state representative plan to eradicate the problem.**

Section 10 – Transportation and Public Transit

69. Would you support a local tax measure to fund transportation and public transit?

If so, which specific form of local taxation would you support? **Yes, and it should be a state sales tax on gasoline.**

70. Do you support providing universal free transit passes to students in partnership with Regional Transit (or other local transit agencies)? **Yes, when the school district doesn't provide bus service.**

Signature: *Linda Fowler, J.D.*

Date: **October 29, 2019**

Personal

In the mid 1930's, the depression came early and stayed late in the mid west, and then the dust bowl came. Like so many other Okies, California was the promise land - so, we came. With no money, no job, no place to live and no government subsidy/welfare of any kind, we began the only thing available. We truly lived in a land of hostility as the unwanted Okies.

I grew up in a family of 8 siblings, and we were migrant farm laborers mostly in the San Joaquin Valley – never living in a house, but only in a tent or in the open in a farmer's orchard. I attended about 30 schools during this time. My parents were uneducated: my Dad had a third grade education and my Mother an eighth grade education. I loved going to school, but getting to school was very difficult and educators didn't want to waste time on students that were "going nowhere". I dropped out of high school at the beginning of my senior year to work and help support my family.

After marrying my husband who had just returned from the Korean War and three children later, I learned that I could get my high school diploma. I enrolled at the Fremont School for adults, received my high school diploma, enrolled at Sacramento State College and finally earned my law degree in 1984.

My experience in going to school as a child provided the impetus for my being an elected board member. With every decision I make as a board member, I consciously think: how will this help the students?

California State Service Experience

I retired from the Office of the California Attorney General approximately 5 years ago with 25 years of combined State Service. My work consisted of cases in the Civil Rights Division. I had reinstated to State service approximately 8 years ago with the California Gambling Control Commission and later transferred to the Office of Attorney General. For the Commission, I conducted financial and compliance audits of Tribal-State Compacts of various Indian Tribes' Casinos. The audits were performed for compliance and financial accountability in conformance with the respective Tribal-State Compacts.

The financial audits were performed of the Tribes who file Quarterly Contribution Reports and contribute to the Special Distribution Fund and the General Fund. Participant Tribes of the Revenue Sharing Trust Fund are reviewed to confirm continued eligibility to receive distributions from the fund. In addition, the audits seek to confirm minimum internal control in conformance with the compacts as well as the National Indian Gaming Commission. The audit methods were in conformance with generally accepted auditing procedures and standards set by the American Institute of Certified Accounts (A.I.C.P.A) and the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB).

My experience in State service began with the Franchise Tax Board, and then to the Office of the Attorney General, Registry of Charitable Trusts. I oversaw and performed a wide variety of financial audits of private foundations, diverse organizations and as well as criminal and civil investigations. I acted independently as well as within a group. I have demonstrated that I have the ability to apply applicable laws, rules and regulations with management concepts and financial analyses. Investigations and complaints, both criminal and civil, originating from the public, legislature or the governor's office, were conducted at the direction of the legal staff. Later, I transitioned to the Division of Administration and was the Accounting Administrator where I engaged in finance, budgets and systems analyses.

Private Sector Experience

Small Business Owner

I left the state service in 1987 to work in our printing business that my husband and I had started about 7 years prior. My experiences as a business owner for over 20 years, gave me insights to many facets a small business owner encounters with bureaucracies and the struggles to create jobs and remain profitable. Owning a commercial printing and graphics business brought with it the responsibility to employees to provide a livable wage and benefits. This can be a real challenge, but success is so gratifying when it's achieved.

There were major hurdles in acquiring capital, mastering the industry protocols, managing day-to-day operations and giving back to the community. Sponsoring school academic programs and other activities made “giving back” realistic and sincere. These types of actions reinforce how respect flows from honesty and integrity.

Elected School District Governing Board Member

I am a long-time elected school district governing board member and currently serve on the Twin Rivers Unified School District Governing Board. I majored in Business Administration with emphasis on accounting, I have a Masters in Governance and know, and practice, the obligation of working as a team and expressing leadership.

In 1995, I initiated the process to unify the former Grant Joint Union High School district with the elementary feeder districts. In November 2007, the voters approved the unification of the new K-12 district later named Twin Rivers Unified School District. I was honored to be the first president of the newly created district.

I was elected in April, 1971 to the North Sacramento School District Governing Board and was elected to the new unified district at the time of unification. As an elected governing board member in the former North Sacramento Elementary School District, I served as president of the board six times. My tenure as a publicly elected school district trustee has provided me knowledge and insight for the need for financial controls and regulation of funds for operations and capital outlay.

As a strong advocate for the children of migrant farm workers and our minority students to receive an opportunity for a great education, I have worked diligently to keep and implement programs so necessary for their academic success. In addition, identification of, and assistance to, the homeless children and migrant children has allowed me to reach back and help them gain a better life. I have always advocated parental choice for how parents want to educate their children.

Through my leadership, I have personally initiated several approved district policies involving staff and students. Before it was fashionable, I was instrumental in creating policies which allowed pregnant teachers to work as long as they and their doctors decided it was safe. This policy was later enacted into law. Prior to the policies, pregnant teachers were required to leave their jobs when it became visually evident of their pregnancies. I initiated policies that lead the way for little girls to have equity in sports and academic curriculum. These achievements occurred when I was the only female on the governing board, and in addition, there were no female administrators, including principals in the district. There was substantial opposition, but working with diplomacy, the policies were approved.

Education: Law Degree, Major: Accounting/Auditing Curriculum and CSBA Masters in Governance

Honors

Human Rights in Education Award, Sacramento County Board of Supervisors

Legislative Woman of the Year, 2002 – Assemblyman Darrell Steinberg

Save the American River Association Award for Partnering to Save the American River Parkway

Received Award for Moot Court “Best Brief” in Law School

ACSA Service Award, Association of California School Administrators

Merit Awards (3); California State Merit Award Board

Distinguished Service Award, 2008; Jack O’Donnell, State Superintendent of Public Instruction