



CULVER CITY DEMOCRATS UNITED
CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE
CULVER CITY UNIFIED SCHOOL BOARD

Deadline to return questionnaire: Friday, July 19, 2024, @ 5:00pm.

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the Culver City Democrats United (“CCDU”) endorsement. Candidates seeking the endorsement of CCDU must complete and return the following questionnaire. Please do not make changes to the questions even though the questionnaire is provided to you in WORD format for your convenience in editing. Please send the completed questionnaire to endorsements@culvercitydems.com

Signing and submitting this questionnaire acknowledges that its contents are part of the public record and may be reproduced and distributed by CCDU.

About Culver City Democrats United

CCDU was founded in 2023 in Los Angeles County in an effort to ensure that Democrats of every shade of blue living in and near Culver City have a chartered Democratic Club that they can belong to, and which expresses in its name a geographic relationship to Culver City and its environs.

CCDU believes that Democrats in Culver City have a responsibility to Los Angeles County to make informed decisions about candidates for elected offices throughout the county which have a bearing on our collective life together.

It is our mission to ensure that candidates endorsed by CCDU embody the inclusive values of the Democratic Party and the values of the majority of Democratic voters in our region. CCDU rejects the politics of faction and exclusion that would seek control of the Democratic “brand” for a limited clique or constrained ideological orthodoxy.

We are committed to the Democratic Party.

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Candidate Information

- a. Name: Lindsay Carlson
- b. Email: carlsonforccusd@gmail.com
- c. Occupation: Attorney
- d. Employer: Latham & Watkins

2. What office are you seeking? Culver City School Board

3. Are you registered as a Democrat? For how long have you been a registered Democrat? (You must be a registered Democrat to receive a CCDU endorsement.)

Yes. I have been registered as a Democrat ever since I moved to California when I was 21. Prior to that (and briefly in 2004-2005, when I moved back to clerk for a Minnesota Supreme Court Justice) I was registered to vote in Minnesota, where there is no registration by party. However, I consistently voted for Democrats.

4. Have you ever been registered in another Party? If so, which one and why did you change? No, not applicable.

5. Briefly describe your educational background:

B.A. Political Science and French, Gustavus Adolphus College (2001)
J.D. UCLA School of Law (2004)

6. Briefly describe your work/professional background:

My 20 years of work as a practicing lawyer includes a judicial clerkship for Minnesota Supreme Court Justice Paul H. Anderson (ret.), and 14 years as a litigator and trial attorney in private practice, including as a partner at Alston & Bird. I specialized in class action and product liability litigation, and handled a fair amount of employment advice and litigation as well. I won every case that I arbitrated or tried to verdict.

For the past five years, I have been internal counsel for Latham & Watkins, overseeing the work of a team of six attorneys who handle a variety of

information governance issues and ensure the firm's management of information meets applicable legal, ethical, security and privacy requirements everywhere it operates around the world.

7. Campaign Information

- a. Campaign Committee ID Number: FPPC 1466919
- b. Campaign Address: C&I Consulting, 226 E. Canon Perdido #D, Santa Barbara, CA 93101
- c. Campaign Phone: (310) 439-8619
- d. Campaign Email Address: carlsonforccusd@gmail.com
- e. Campaign Consultant/Manager
 - i. Name: Danielle Cendejas and Lyle Canceko
 - ii. Contact Information: lcanceko@strategygroup.com, dcendejas@strategygroup.com
- f. Fundraiser
 - i. Name: Not applicable
 - ii. Contact Information: Not applicable

8. Campaign Finance

- a. How much money do you intend to raise? At least \$50,000
 - b. How much money have you raised so far? \$31,200.90
 - c. How much cash on hand do you have? \$27,435.65
9. Are there any specific industries or PACs you will not accept donations from? I will not accept contributions from PACs affiliated with charter schools, tobacco, firearms, or police. I am open to considering other categories of PACs that I should add to this list. Should I erroneously accidentally accept such a

contribution on my “do not accept” list, I welcome the community informing me of such so that I can take appropriate action.

10. Who are your five largest contributors?

- a. Albert Vera, Culver City Councilmember
- b. Cheryl Greene, Senior Director of Human Rights Campaign “Welcoming Schools” Program
- c. Hydee Feldstein Soto, Los Angeles City Attorney
- d. Lynn Carlson, aunt
- e. Dominique Shelton Leipzig, my former partner at Alston & Bird

11. Who are your top three individual endorsers?

- a. Culver City Councilmember Albert Vera
- b. Culver City Councilmember Dan O’Brien
- c. Culver City Councilmember Göran Eriksson

While I am proud of having received the endorsements of many elected officials, I am especially proud of the over 100 community members, community organizers, and leaders - many of them current CCUSD parents - who have affirmatively provided their support to my candidacy. A full list of supporters is available at www.carlsonforccusd.com/endorsements.

12. What are your top three organizational endorsers to date?

The endorsement process has just begun, and I am specifically focusing on obtaining endorsements from organizations with strong ties to and involvement in the Culver City community. To date, I am proud to have received the endorsement of the Culver City Federation of Teachers.

13. Have you received any campaign contributions from organizations outside Culver City? If so, please list them:

At present, I have not received any contributions from any organizations outside of Culver City. All of my contributions right now are from individuals, and as of June 30, 2024, 41% of the contributions I have received are from the Culver City community.

14. Have you ever sought the endorsement of, or will you accept the endorsement of, political parties other than the Democratic party, including non-registered political parties such as the Reform Party, the Democratic Socialists of America, or the California Working Families Party?

I have not sought, and will not seek, endorsements from other political parties or quasi-parties.

15. Have you ever been accused of, faced discipline for, or entered into a settlement related to misconduct or sexual harassment?

No

16. Have you ever been accused of, faced discipline for, or entered into a settlement related to financial impropriety?

No

17. Have you ever been convicted of a felony? If so, please explain.

No

18. Do you belong to any organization that openly discriminates on the basis of race, age, disability, religion, nation of origin, against LGBTQ+ persons, or against women?

No

II. QUALIFICATIONS AND VIEWS

1. Have you previously run for or held any elective or appointed public offices? If so, please list which office and dates:

I have not previously run for elected public office. I have been an elected member of the Los Angeles County Democratic Party Central Committee (2020-2024), and am currently serving as the appointed alternate to Ms. Rosa Russell, chair of the AD55 delegation.

2. List any awards, commendations, or recognitions in your background that you believe should be brought to our attention regarding your candidacy for CCUSD School Board.

National Association of Women Lawyers (NAWL) Outstanding Member, 2014. I have served on the Board of Directors of NAWL since 2019.

3. Why did you decide to run for CCUSD School Board?

I am running for two main reasons: (1) restore trust between district stakeholders - the community, our educators, district management, and the school board; and (2) to improve management of the district, using the skills I have as a lawyer and a manager of people and projects.

4. If elected, what are the three most important things you would like to accomplish?

In line with the reasons I am running, the three things that are currently at the top of my list to accomplish are: (1) bringing fiscal stability and smart management to the district, by examining our current practices and norms and identifying ways to improve efficiency, create revenue, spend responsibly (including increasing the percentage of the budget spent on students and in our classrooms to well above the 55% minimum), and improve legal compliance; (2) better connecting the community to the schools by ensuring that CCUSD is a welcoming place where all students, educators, and community members feel safe, included, heard, and appreciated; and (3) ensuring that we have academic opportunities and extracurricular activities that meet the needs of all of our students.

5. Do you believe CCUSD should offer accelerated, advanced, or "honors" classes for students ready for the material? Why or why not?

Yes. We should be meeting the academic needs of all of our students to the best of our abilities.

6. What does "equity" mean to you in the context of Culver City public schools, and what concrete steps will you take to achieve it?

As distinguished from "equality," which is providing the same to everyone regardless of circumstance, "equity" takes into account individual and community

circumstances and makes adjustments to imbalances to overcome intentional and unintentional barriers arising from bias or systemic structures.

I'm not certain that equity can be "achieved," in the sense that it is a value that takes an active, ongoing and continuous commitment infused into all of our actions. I appreciate that the district has a track record of prioritizing equity when promulgating policies, though I would like to see more specific and concrete action. I would particularly like to lean on our advisory groups and district staff devoted to DEI for ideas regarding how we can continue to improve the district's practices in this area.

7. CCUSD has failed for at least two years to meet the required 55% minimum spending in the classroom and is also confronting budget shortages. What concrete steps do you believe can be taken to rectify the financial situation and ensure the required minimum classroom spending?

I suppose that the good news is, we appear to be making progress toward spending a larger percentage of our budget in the classroom - it appears that we crossed back over that 55% threshold this year. However, I don't think that "barely compliant" is anything to brag about.

I believe that we need to have a thorough examination of our expenses, across the board. In particular, we need to consider that we may be over-staffed at the district office, and work toward right-sizing district administration. We can also take a look at our contracts with vendors to determine where we may be able to reduce duplication of services and cut our bills from outside counsel through better legal compliance.

8. Describe in detail your level of involvement at CCUSD and its schools, including attendance and participation at school board meetings since the last election in 2022.

I became involved in CCUSD schools the moment my son started TK in fall 2022. My first action was joining the El Rincon Site Council, on which I served during the 2022-2023 school year. My son transferred to El Marino in 2023, and I joined the PTA and started attending meetings - then became part of the PTA's nominating committee to recruit and assemble a proposed slate of 2024-2025 officers.

I have attended nearly all school board meetings since fall 2022, either on Zoom or in person as my schedule and childcare responsibilities allowed, and have provided public comment at many of these meetings. I was instrumental in bringing to light certain matters of noncompliance, including with respect to improper closed session meetings and unethical behavior by certain current Board members.

I was recruited to help administer the CCUSD Families for Excellence and Accountability Facebook group in early 2023, and helped grow the membership from less than 200 to over 1300 community members, collaborating with the other admins and moderators to organize the community around advocating for concrete and meaningful actions to improve our local schools. For all of this time, I have also organized informally with other parents and community members to bring much-needed change to the district, and help set us on a course toward significant improvement.

9. Do you support contracting with non-union organizations to provide services where unionized employees could provide similar services? Explain your answer, being specific to any instances you are aware of at CCUSD.

No. One particularly salient example of this was the district's arrangement with New Earth. While I understand that was intended to be a short-term fix, it quickly turned into a relationship where New Earth was purportedly providing "counseling" services to students that we could have hired district employees to provide. Setting aside any qualitative concerns about New Earth's services or concerns about their leadership's unethical behavior (of which there are many), direct hire would have eliminated the "middleman" and thereby both saved the district money as well as very likely provided higher wages to the counselors involved, provided stability to the student population that was being served, and greater accountability on the part of the service providers.

10. How can CCUSD successfully compete to retain students who might otherwise leave the district for private schools or charter schools? In your answer, list some concrete steps you believe our schools should take.

Throughout this campaign, I have spoken with many parents and caregivers who are considering their future in CCUSD. In addition considering private schools, most parents are not necessarily looking at charter schools so much as they are looking at interdistrict permits into certain LAUSD schools (such as Venice High School), or considering permitting in or moving to other smaller local districts

(such as El Segundo). I think this is an important fact because we need to have an understanding as to what other options are CCUSD's legitimate competition, and which are not.

Overwhelmingly, the concerns that families have that are leading them to consider other options appear to be centered around two overarching issues - student safety, and academic rigor - with some residual concerns around school facilities.

As to the issue of safety, there were significant concerns throughout the 2022-2023 school year, particularly at the middle and high schools. These concerns reverberated to elementary school families, thinking about the long-term future in the district. While I am generally skeptical of over-policing and inviting law enforcement onto CCUSD campuses, I am fully supportive of collaborating with CCPD and their School Resource Officer (SRO). Last fall, one of my partners in organizing put together an event inviting site administration and CCPD to speak with families and community members. It was incredibly informative, but unfortunately, was not supported or attended by any current members of the board. My understanding is that the safety situation at both schools has improved with new principals in charge of each, but we need to continue to build on that progress and ensure that all of our students both feel and are safe.

Around the same time safety concerns started increasing, the school board approved the removal of "honors" 9th and 10th grade English classes in favor of one uniform class that they deemed "college prep." Many parents and guardians were outraged, concerned about the lack of academic options for their kids - and whether "honors" classes in other areas would be next. While the district has stated no current intent to remove other honors options, we know that there are some current board members who would do so if they could. I will support a full range of academic options to meet the needs of all of our kids with respect to providing a rigorous curriculum, and support their path toward whatever they desire to do after high school. This may mean in some instances that we should explore adding classes that we do not yet offer, and partnering with other local educational institutions (such as West LA College) to provide our students with even more options. I welcome community input on what those should be.

11. How long have you lived in Culver City? How do you believe your time living in Culver City has prepared you for a leadership role in the city?

I have lived in Culver City since my husband and I purchased a home here in May 2014. I led a group of volunteers in support of Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign in 2016, and met a number of members of the community through that work - including former school board members Anne Allaire and Kathy Paspalis, and Jeannine Wisnosky Stehlin.

After that devastating loss, I ran for and won a position as a delegate to the California Democratic Party through the ADEM process, and became more involved in local politics - for example, supporting Albert Vera's 2018 campaign. I was elected to a position with the LACDP in 2020, and became a voice for Culver City within the party.

Immediately upon my son entering CCUSD schools as a TKer in 2022, I continued expanding my circle and getting to know parents through activism to improve the school district (more details on that above). I am a natural connector and organizer, and I enjoy meeting neighbors and working on issues of importance to our community.

As noted above I have a demanding full-time job. Due to my other commitments raising my young son, serving on the Board of the National Association of Women Lawyers, and serving as president of a very prominent countywide Democratic Club (Heart of LA), I have not had the bandwidth to serve on city committees and commissions. However, I will term-out of my time on the NAWL Board at the end of this year and step down as president of Heart of LA - which will create the space I need to devote to district matters as a member of the school board.

12. Explain the challenges that CCUSD faces with gender equity. Explain what concrete steps you will take to ensure gender equity in CCUSD.

I believe the district has good intentions, but in the two years I have been involved as a parent have observed "a thousand little cuts" that indicate there is a larger issue that needs to be addressed. It is a fact that even in 2024, the district is reliant on the uncompensated labor of parents, who are overwhelmingly moms. The vast majority of PTA and other uncompensated positions at the schools (e.g. room parents, drop off coordinators, etc.) are occupied by women. So much so that my son, when he came home from TK one day, asked me why I wasn't volunteering in the classroom - and when I suggested he ask his father the same question, he said that "only moms can do that." While I appreciate the volunteerism, as a progressive/liberal community, we should be encouraging a more even division of labor and that includes encouraging men to become more

involved, and understanding that we have a lot of women who work outside the home full-time and not necessarily with flexible schedules that permit a lot of daytime involvement in the schools.

Gender equity benefits men, too. When we normalize volunteerism among men, the community becomes more inclusive and men will be more comfortable meaningfully participating in it. When we consider that in these times, many parents regardless of their gender or employment status would like to be involved in the schools, we can look at our current practices through a more critical lens. By way of another example, our school communities need to be more sensitive to the challenges faced by parents, regardless of gender identity, who need to work during typical, full-time working hours. I am sensitive to the fact that our classified and certificated employees have their own defined working schedules that may present challenges of their own, but there are at least some things where we should have more flexibility to consider another approach. For example, not every “coffee chat with a principal” should be an in-person event at 9:00 a.m. Changing up schedules so that some meetings are virtual, or in the evening, would go a long way toward allowing more parents and caregivers to be involved.

As far as concrete steps go, I will approach everything I do through a gender equity lens, as I have a track record of doing in both professional and political spaces for a very long time. As to what that means, it includes interrogating implicit biases, and ensuring that all of the groups we serve on the board (whether students, educators, staff, community, and so forth) have equal opportunities regardless of gender identity and that we are removing both visible and invisible roadblocks to their participation.

13. What will your process be in deciding how to spend the first tranche of school bond, Measure E, money? What are your first 3 priorities in spending, ranked in order?
- a. Immediate, urgent fixes need to happen first - anything that directly impacts students right now, such as leaky ceilings and bathrooms in a state of extreme disrepair. Unfortunately, these should have been addressed through maintenance over the years but were not; now that we have an infusion of cash we should handle them quickly.
 - b. I would like to see us rebuild, or at least substantially revamp, both the middle school and high school, including sufficient permanent classrooms so that we can finally get rid of the portables at the high school (which I

understand have been there since the 1990s). I would like to see if we have the ability to include a pool in these plans.

- c. I would like to hear more from our school sites and professional staff evaluating needs before committing to a third priority. I understand that these conversations are underway, and I would like them to be more frequent and meaningful so that we get concrete recommendations and can prioritize them accordingly.

14. Suppose a School Board Member is making numerous social media posts that are in contravention of the values of Culver City Democrats United. What would be your response as a fellow School Board Member?

I believe first and foremost in “calling people in” and allowing those who have made genuine mistakes to “save face” and apologize to those they have wronged, before engaging in any sort of action that could be characterized as public shaming. However, if said Board member continues down a path that is insensitive to the needs of the public and/or offends my own values, I believe it is my duty to address it publicly and directly. The safety of our students and our community comes first. As I have mentioned in prior endorsement interviews, I am a big fan of organizational psychology and management, and one particular lesson on this subject is to engage in “radical candor” - care personally, and challenge directly. That approach is necessary to be an effective leader.

15. According to both CCFT and ACE, morale is low among teachers and staff. What concrete steps will you take to restore the morale of teachers, staff, and administrators in the district?

Having been deeply involved in school district matters for the past couple of years, I have certainly observed this morale issue firsthand as I have observed the union representatives speak at nearly every meeting and spoken to a number of teachers and classified staff who have expressed these concerns to me directly. I believe the morale issue is primarily driven by a feeling of not being heard, and I can help with that by making myself available to the union reps as well as the rank and file members if they wish to engage with me.

I also think that competent management of the district that puts our students and educators first will go a long way toward restoring morale. Recently, the board held a meeting where they spent 7 minutes hearing from the CBAC (Citizens Budget Advisory Committee) and 54 minutes discussing proposed changes to

their procedure for selecting a board vice president and clerk. This is unacceptable, and is just the latest demonstration of how board members spend a disproportionate amount of their time at meetings on issues that have little to do with the management of the district. I will commit to spending as much time as possible on matters of district management, and not on extraneous or performative matters.

III. FINAL SECTION

Is there anything else you would like Culver City Democrats United to know about you, or anything else you wish to tell us?

I don't just talk, I do. And I believe that hard conversations and respectful engagement are not mutually exclusive. I've earned respect and support across the community by consistently showing up, doing the work, and being honest with everyone regarding both our strengths and our weaknesses and truly caring about both the near and long-term success of our schools and the district.

All stakeholders deserve leaders on the board who are there to do the work of running the district - not to occupy a position with a title that they can leverage for their future political ambitions. I'm running for this position because I want to do the work. I am a big fan of public education, and I want our schools to be among the best in Southern California. While I've spent a lot of time in politics as a "side hustle," until recently I did not envision myself actually running for office, and I have no plans to run for any other political office. I am here because I answered the call from our community to run.

I am thankful to the board and members of this club for creating a space in which all Democrats can create a sense of community and engage with each other with a sense of mutual respect. As a club founder and president, I know how much work it takes and I appreciate that. I would be honored to have your endorsement in this race.

I CERTIFY THAT THESE ANSWERS ACCURATELY REPRESENT MY VIEWS AND EXPERIENCES.

Candidate
Signature:



Date: July 14, 2024

Received By:

Date Received:

Please submit by email to: endorsements@culvercitydems.com

