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Tomio Nagano
SF Parent Action
510-289-4249
tomio@sfparents.org

***SF PARENT ACTION LAUNCHES BOARD OF EDUCATION BOOTCAMP
FELLOWSHIP WITH INAUGURAL COHORT OF 10 EXPERIENCED PUBLIC
SCHOOL PARENT LEADERS***

SAN FRANCISCO, CA 2/23/2022 - This evening, ten public school parent leaders from across the city will log in to the first session of a brand new Board of Education candidate training program hosted by SF Parent Action. The participants have committed to spending five evenings through May to learn about what running for and serving on San Francisco's Board of Education would entail. The Fellowship is free to participants and brings in guest speakers including past and current Board of Education commissioners Commissioners Jenny Lam, Lainie Motamedi, Lisa Weissman-Ward, and Rachel Norton, and local and state education organization leaders including from Ed100.

SF Parent Action believes that parents are the key to refocusing SFUSD on student needs and what's happening in our classrooms. Parents are paying attention, and they are sticking up for their kids' education. Every participant of the inaugural Board Fellows program is a current public school parent. The ten parents represent diverse backgrounds and lived experiences, have children at 13 public schools across the city, and most have served in some leadership capacity at one or more school sites. They were selected for their passion around ensuring thriving, equitable public schools and their commitment to building their own leadership skills—whether running for Board of Education or serving our schools in some other leadership capacity.

Executive Director Meredith Dodson shared her excitement about the program, *"The amount of interest in this program is evidence of how important parent voice has proven to be the last couple of years. We learned how vital parents are as partners in our children's education and in*



ensuring thriving, equitable public schools. Tonight we continue down the path we've already started, with a long-term investment in ensuring a strong pipeline of parent leaders—whether serving on our Board of Education or some other parent leadership role for our schools—so that never again will we find ourselves in a situation where the district and Board are so unresponsive to the needs of our city's students. A city like San Francisco should have world-class public schools. That's our ultimate goal, and we believe informed and empowered parents, like those starting this program tonight, will help us get there."

For too long, overly politicized systems that have kept parents out of the equation have also done too little to support San Francisco's children, particularly those from marginalized backgrounds. While this program includes educating on the city's political landscape that BOE candidates will have to navigate, the main focus is on how the BOE functions, the local and state educational landscape, and what change is needed to ensure our public schools deliver better educational outcomes for our children.

The fellowship will culminate with an in-person graduation session in May, and SF Parent Action will run subsequent fellowship programs in the future as well to ensure a pipeline of strong parent advocates ready to run for BOE positions.

About SF Parent Action

SF Parent Action, a 501(c)4 advocacy organization which believes in the vital importance of a de-politicized school board to really focus on the students and what's happening in the classroom, got started in the summer of 2020 when parents were being ignored by past school board members. These parents felt voiceless until they found each other and began to form this movement. Then known as Decreasing the Distance, the group finally succeeded in getting kids back into their classrooms, and were described as "true heroes for our children" by former superintendent Vincent Matthews. The parent movement then went on to launch an official organization to continue to give parents a voice in who makes decisions that impact their children's education.

In 2022's school board race, the organization endorsed Lainie Motamedi and Lisa Weissman-Ward, two public school moms who they believed listened to the diverse constituency of public schools families and who would put students before politics. Commissioner Weissman-Ward and Motamedi were the top two vote-getters, and SF Parent



Action saw this as evidence of how parents are leading the charge to improve our public schools in San Francisco.