



www.sfparentaction.org

Questions for November 2026 SFUSD School Board Candidates
Alida Fisher

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Somewhat Disagree, 3 = Somewhat Agree, 4 = Strongly Agree

<i>Excellent and Equitable Public Schools</i>	<i>Level of Agreement</i>
<p>1. I SUPPORT the SF Parents Parent Priorities: A focus on equity and excellence going hand-in-hand, improving student outcomes in our district, building trust and rebuilding community morale, improving the fiscal health of SFUSD, and overall good governance should be the top priorities of the School Board going into 2026-27.</p>	4
<p>2. DISTRICT TRANSPARENCY: I support increased transparency of school performance that enables San Francisco to evaluate and improve the quality of our public schools. This should include a public dashboard that shares math and reading assessment data at the school level, updated at least twice a year.</p>	4
<p>3. LITERACY AND MATH: I believe in the urgency of improving student outcomes in literacy and math at SFUSD. I commit to ensuring that SFUSD continues to implement and fully support a comprehensive plan, and makes the necessary adjustments to curricula, tools, and instructional methods that follow an evidence- and standards-based approach.</p>	4
<p>4. EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE: An effective School Board centers on 1) supporting the superintendent and cabinet to ensure student-focused leadership, 2) setting a clear, shared vision, and 3) defining goals rather than managing day-to-day operations or unnecessary interference in implementation or policy execution.</p>	4
<p>5. BUDGET HEALTH: I commit to governing in accordance with nationally-established best financial practice. I will hold District leadership accountable for presenting the budget clearly. When fixing our budget deficit, I support SF Parents' call for minimizing negative impacts to our most vulnerable students while ensuring a baseline of excellence across all schools.</p>	4

1. Optional: Expand on any of your responses to the statements above, in 250 words or fewer.

As an SFUSD parent, special education advocate, and current School Board Commissioner, I am running to continue building strong, equitable, and student-centered public schools.

Throughout my term, I have focused on fiscal stabilization, academic excellence, and rebuilding public trust through collaborative leadership and transparent governance. I am proud of the Board's work to adopt a balanced budget, expand Transitional Kindergarten, adopt new curriculum in core subject areas, modernize district operational systems, and reach agreements with all labor partners while protecting investments closest to classrooms.

My experience in special education advocacy has reinforced the importance of early intervention, inclusive practices, wraparound supports, and recruiting and retaining qualified staff. It has also given me firsthand insight into how operational decisions, staffing models, enrollment policies, and budgeting choices affect students furthest from opportunity. I believe strong governance requires listening closely to families, understanding how systems function in practice, and ensuring decisions are grounded in both data and lived experience.

SFUSD faces significant challenges, including declining enrollment and long-term fiscal pressures, but also tremendous opportunities to redesign systems in ways that better serve students and families. Academic excellence rooted in equity remains at the center of my work. Every student deserves access to high-quality instruction, meaningful supports, and pathways that allow them to thrive, and I remain committed to ensuring SFUSD delivers on that promise for all students.

2. *Why are you running for the Board of Education, and why now? Within your response, please describe:*

- ***Your connection to SFUSD students and families***
- ***The leadership experience that prepares you to govern a public education system***
- ***Your views on both academic excellence and equity in education***

I am running to continue my work as a School Board Commissioner because, while I am proud of what we have accomplished together, there is still important work ahead. As an SFUSD parent of one current student and three graduates, a special education advocate, and a former advisory committee chair, I have built strong coalitions and worked collaboratively with educators, district leaders, families, labor

partners, and city officials to strengthen our schools and improve outcomes for students.

During my term as commissioner, the Board has:

- Adopted a balanced 2025–26 budget while advancing a multi-year fiscal stabilization plan, moving SFUSD from negative to qualified certification and positioning the district for positive certification next school year;
- Adopted new curricula in English language arts, math, social studies, history, and ethnic studies, providing educators with stronger instructional tools and creating greater stability and coherence across the district;
- Modernized ineffective financial and HR systems through the implementation of Frontline and Red Rover, improving operational effectiveness and helping ensure employees are paid accurately and on time;
- Reached bargaining agreements with all labor partners; and
- Successfully implemented a major districtwide Transitional Kindergarten expansion, increasing access to early learning opportunities for families across San Francisco.

Academic excellence rooted in equity must remain at the center of our work so every student has access to the opportunities, support, and high-quality instruction they need to thrive. Together, we can continue building schools where every SFUSD student succeeds.

3. Why do you want the SF Parents endorsement? How will you uplift the voices of parents across SFUSD as a Board of Education decisionmaker?

I am seeking the SF Parents endorsement because we share a commitment to student-centered, practical, and accountable leadership in public education.

I recognize the importance of parent advocacy. My journey to Board of Education Commissioner started as a frustrated parent. My mom and grandmother were teachers. I loved school, school was fun for me! However, it was my journey into identifying my children's disabilities and learning differences that transformed me from active parent into parent activist, and made me realize that our schools aren't set up to help all students succeed.

My two decades of experience on various parent advisory committees, the LCAP Task Force, CCEIS Working Group, and more taught me that collaboration is one of the most powerful forces in public education. No single person or role can meet the needs of every student alone. When families, educators, students, district leaders,

and community partners work together with shared purpose, we are able to move beyond individual perspectives and build solutions that are stronger, more equitable, and more sustainable.

I am seeking SF Parents' endorsement because I want to continue that work in partnership with a coalition of families who are deeply engaged in ensuring SFUSD delivers on its promise. I believe we share a commitment to academic excellence rooted in equity, transparent decision-making, and ensuring that every student, regardless of background, has access to high-quality instruction and opportunities to succeed.

4. What's your perspective on the teacher strike that happened in February, including what could have been handled differently by 1) SFUSD leadership, 2) Board of Education, and 3) the Teacher's Union? What can the School Board do to promote a more collaborative relationship between the teacher's union and the district going forward?

February's UESF strike demonstrated the deep connection between San Francisco's public schools, educators, students, families, and the broader community. Across the city, educators, labor partners, families, students, and local leaders came together in solidarity to affirm a shared belief that strong public schools are essential to the health and future of San Francisco. The collective response reflected a commitment not only to educators, but also to the students and families who rely on school-based supports every day.

The strike reinforced the importance of collaboration and partnership in navigating complex challenges. It highlighted the critical role of Wellness Centers, social workers, and wraparound services in supporting students furthest from opportunity, and it underscored the need to protect investments closest to classrooms. The community response made clear that San Francisco values equity, collective care, and a strong social safety net for young people and families.

The experience also strengthened my understanding of allyship and leadership. Standing alongside educators and advocating during negotiations reinforced the importance of building transparent, respectful, and trust-based relationships with labor partners. Effective leadership requires both collaboration behind the scenes and visible public support for the communities and workers we serve.

Moving forward, I remain committed to working collaboratively with educators, labor partners, families, and district leadership to ensure that SFUSD policies and budgets reflect our shared values and prioritize students, equity, and strong school communities.

5. What does effective Board governance look like in practice? In your response, describe how you would:

- **Work with the Superintendent while maintaining appropriate oversight**
- **Ensure Board decisions are followed through on, without overstepping into staff work**

Providing every student with a high-quality education remains the central responsibility of the Board of Education. That commitment is reflected in the adoption of the Student Outcomes Focused Governance (SOFG) model, which centers the Board's work around three core goals: improving third grade reading proficiency, strengthening eighth grade math achievement, and ensuring students graduate prepared for college and careers. Through SOFG, the Board establishes clear goals and guardrails, approves the district budget, and maintains oversight to ensure district actions align with student outcomes and community priorities.

Strong governance depends on clarity of roles, accountability, and transparency. The SOFG framework helps align commissioners around shared priorities and provides a consistent structure for oversight, while the superintendent is responsible for operationalizing the Board's goals across the district. This governance model is intended to create focus, improve accountability, and strengthen long-term planning.

At the same time, strong governance also requires meaningful public engagement, transparent decision-making, and accountability structures (such as a public data dashboard). The transition away from standing committees has raised valid community concerns about reduced opportunities for public discussion and oversight. I pushed hard for the creation of an Ad Hoc Committee on Community Engagement, and am proud of the recommendations we are bringing to the full Board in June. The need to strengthen transparency, increase community participation, and improve communication is urgent, especially as the district navigates significant decisions related to enrollment systems, budgeting, and school portfolio planning in the years ahead.

6. Board decisions often face strong public criticism. How would you respond if a decision you supported was met with significant pushback from: 1) families? 2) teachers? What would you say, and what would you do next?

Receiving community pushback requires an understanding that a lack of criticism would not be a sign that everything is working well; it would, in fact, be a sign that we are not fully engaging the community in the work of our schools.

When there is disagreement, it is important to treat pushback not as resistance to be

managed, but as information to be understood. Community concern often reflects real experiences in schools and deserves to be heard with seriousness, even when decisions cannot shift in every direction requested. Strong leadership involves explaining the “why” behind decisions, including the values and evidence guiding them, while also acknowledging tradeoffs transparently.

Leading with values means being consistent. Equity, student opportunity, and high-quality instruction should remain the compass even when external pressure is strong or perspectives differ. At the same time, leaders must be willing to refine approaches when new information or patterns of concern emerge.

Ultimately, the goal is not unanimity, but trust. Trust is built when communities see that leaders are steady in their commitments, honest about challenges, and genuinely responsive to feedback. In that way, even moments of tension can become opportunities to deepen understanding and strengthen the shared work of supporting all students. Progress happens when we listen to one another, stay focused on students, and are willing to work through differences in service of a common goal: improving student outcomes.

7. Does the district need to close schools, and if so, why? To what extent should community input, equity, and enrollment demand shape these processes and final decisions?

SFUSD needs to close schools. Let's be clear: closing schools won't save money. Closing schools allows us to allocate more resources across fewer schools. Our system has not adjusted to sustained enrollment decline, creating ongoing challenges for equity, staffing, and resource allocation.

District enrollment has declined by more than 30,000 students since its peak in the late twentieth century, with projections indicating continued decreases in the years ahead. This mirrors a broader statewide trend: California school enrollment has been declining for nearly a decade, with pronounced impacts in coastal districts like San Francisco.

Despite these changes, SFUSD continues to operate more than 100 school sites. This creates a structural mismatch between the number of schools and the number of students, resulting in widespread under-enrollment across the system rather than concentrated enrollment in fewer, more fully resourced campuses.

As a result, many schools operate below optimal capacity, with fixed costs for facilities, administration, and staffing spread across too many sites. This limits efficiency and contributes to budget pressures.

This imbalance has real impacts on students and educators. Resources are stretched, staffing challenges are amplified, and it becomes harder to consistently offer robust academic programming, enrichment opportunities, and specialized services across all schools.

SFUSD's ongoing work to redesign its school portfolio is intended to better align the number and configuration of schools with enrollment realities, with a focus on strengthening equity, improving instructional quality, expanding program access, and ensuring more stable, well-resourced learning environments for all students.

8. What are the biggest challenges and opportunities you see with the district's current student assignment ("lottery") system?

Our current enrollment system isn't working. The urgency of our work is reflected in our enrollment trends. Today, only 64.3% of San Francisco's school-aged children attend SFUSD schools. At the same time, only 27% of K-5 students attend their home attendance area school.

Streamlining enrollment must therefore go hand-in-hand with building trust in the district's ability to provide high-quality programs and equitable access across all schools and neighborhoods. How do we ensure every school offers a high-quality educational experience? How do we guarantee equitable access to language pathways, special education services, STEM programs, and inclusive learning environments across all enrollment zones? How do we invest in under-enrolled schools so that families see them as strong and desirable options?

The work to revisit student assignment creates an important opportunity to take a more asset-based and community-centered approach. Rather than viewing under-enrolled schools as liabilities, SFUSD must invest in the programs and supports families consistently say they value, including language pathways, STEM opportunities, inclusion models, arts programming, and wraparound supports. We know that when schools are thoughtfully resourced and aligned with community priorities, families are more likely to choose and remain in those schools.

Ultimately, streamlining enrollment is about more than simplifying paperwork or assignment algorithms. It is about creating a system that families can understand, trust, and access equitably. A successful enrollment system reduces barriers, increases transparency, strengthens neighborhood community schools, and ensures that every student has access to high-quality educational opportunities throughout the district.

9. SFUSD is facing structural budget challenges, including declining enrollment, rising costs, and pressure on reserves. What do you see as the root causes of this

situation, and how should the Board respond within its governance role?

I am proud of the Board's work on fiscal stabilization, but significant challenges remain, including declining enrollment, rising healthcare and pension costs, and increasing special education expenses.

Budgets are value statements, and we must ensure our spending reflects our priorities and supports student success. I have consistently raised concerns that our current staffing model is not sufficient to meet student needs and, in some cases, may worsen long-term fiscal challenges. During budget discussions, the Board reviewed data showing that chronic absenteeism has a greater financial impact on SFUSD than enrollment decline, yet many attendance and student support positions have been reduced. At my own son's school, cuts to attendance and Wellness Center staffing have coincided with rising absenteeism, demonstrating how reductions in student supports can create both academic and financial consequences.

I have also advocated for greater investment in recruiting and retaining credentialed staff, particularly in special education. SFUSD continues to spend substantial resources on outside contractors and non-public placements because we lack sufficient in-house staffing capacity. Investing in school-based staff is better for students, families, and long-term fiscal sustainability.

At the same time, the district's transition to updated financial systems such as Frontline and Red Rover has strengthened accountability, forecasting, and budgeting practices. These tools create an important opportunity to make more strategic, transparent, and student-centered financial decisions moving forward.

10. The Board's 2014 decision to change 8th grade algebra policy did not produce the intended results, and the current Board's recent revisions have drawn mixed reactions from teachers and families. What does this case reveal about how the San Francisco Board of Education should handle decisions around academic policy? If elected, what specific, measurable actions would you take to: 1) expand access to advanced coursework, and 2) improve outcomes for historically underserved students?

Using Goal 3 as our north star, SFUSD has tremendous opportunities to strengthen student outcomes and ensure every student graduates college and career ready. Achieving this requires strategic investment in engaging, rigorous, and accessible course pathways that reflect both student interests and evolving college and workforce expectations. Students are asking for broader academic opportunities, including expanded AP offerings across multiple subject areas, greater access to

world language courses, and more pathways connected to their future goals.

The Board and district have an opportunity to build on existing successes by continuing to expand dual enrollment partnerships with CCSF, allowing students to earn college credit while in high school. We must also continue implementing recommendations from the High School Task Force focused on equitable access to coursework across all school sites, regardless of school size.

Innovative approaches, including investments in online and hybrid learning infrastructure and creative staffing models, can help ensure students across the district have access to robust and specialized courses. At the same time, strengthening course sequencing and academic pathways will better position students for college admissions and deeper learning opportunities. By aligning programs, staffing, and resources with student interests and long-term outcomes, SFUSD can create a more engaging, equitable, and future-focused high school experience for all students.