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San Francisco Parent Action
www.sfparentaction.org

Questions for SFUSD School Board Candidates 2024 Jaime Huling

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

<i>Excellent and Equitable Public Schools</i>	<i>Level of Agreement</i>
1. I SUPPORT the SF Parent Coalition Parent Priorities Platform. A focus on equity and excellence going hand-in-hand, improving student outcomes in our district, regaining 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 2024-25.	4
2. 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.	4
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 adopts a comprehensive and fully funded plan , and makes the necessary changes to our curricula, tools, and instruction methods that will follow an evidence- and standards-based instructional approach.	4
4. GOVERNANCE: An effective School Board follows the lead of and supports the superintendent and staff, letting them be the experts and making recommendations for the direction of the district.	4
5. BUDGET HEALTH: I commit to governing in accordance with nationally-established best financial practices . 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.	4

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OPEN-ENDED: (all responses should be 250 words or fewer)

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

Supplemental response to question no. 4:

As an SFUSD mom, I'm deeply invested in making sure that SFUSD meets its core mission of producing strong student outcomes. I applaud the board for using a governance framework focused on improving the quality of our childrens' education.

As a deputy city attorney who has counseled city commissions, however, I know that the board can't spend as much time as it should on student outcomes until it fixes the many problems with the district's basic operations. Too many serious problems have been ignored for too long. The board needs to end the EMPowerSF payroll disaster and make sure teachers get paid on time, reform the school assignment system, and balance the budget.

- 2) ***Why are you running for the Board of Education? Within this response, please describe a) your connection to SFUSD students and families, and b) a description of your leadership style, experience, and/or training.***

I'm the daughter of a conservative car salesman and a progressive Latina who dropped out of college when she got married. My parents raised me to value education, but I doubt they ever imagined I'd become the first lawyer in our family.

When I was in sixth grade, a chance encounter changed the course of my education and my life, leading me to Stanford Law School. I'm the first woman in my mother's family to graduate from a four-year college. Even as I did well in school, my parents didn't fully understand how to help me on my academic path. I want to make sure all SFUSD students have the chance to succeed in ways their ancestors could only dream about.

I've spent my entire career fighting to protect San Francisco and its residents. I won cases that people once thought were impossible: for marriage equality, against the opioid industry, and against the Trump administration.

I moved to San Francisco nearly twenty years ago, and I've been a public servant for over a decade. I'm the mother of a first grader in a Spanish immersion school and a toddler. I see the potential in my kids and all of our SFUSD students, and I'm ready to be the champion they deserve.

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I'm running for the Board of Education because I believe that every student in our district deserves an educational environment that will support and challenge them so that they can see just how far they can go.

3) Do you support the superintendent's [plan](#) to fix SFUSD's budget deficit, including but not limited to classroom consolidations and school closures?

Growing up, I watched my dad stay up late at the kitchen table trying to figure out how to keep our family's small business open. He knew that avoiding making the hard decisions in the short term wouldn't benefit anyone in the long term, because he needed to keep the lights on.

I know that if we don't right-size the district, we will just end up under state control. The hard decisions we avoid today will be made tomorrow by Sacramento bureaucrats who don't know our city.

The superintendent's resource alignment initiative is going to be hard. But we can do hard things, especially when we're doing the right thing. The district needs to approach these tough decisions by prioritizing equity and excellence.

Through meaningful community engagement, the school district can emerge from this process with better-funded, better-enrolled schools offering all of the enrichment and supportive resources that our kids deserve.

4) How can SFUSD increase academic [outcomes](#) for the most underserved students and close the racially predictable achievement gap?

Many of my own family members didn't graduate high school, even though they were capable of graduating and so much more. The odds were stacked against them, and they lacked the right supports to overcome their circumstances.

That's why I've spent over a decade volunteering with ScholarMatch, Inc. It's a nonprofit in the Mission that makes college possible for first generation students. Almost all the kids they serve are low-income students of color.

As a college coach, I saw firsthand that our SFUSD high school students are wildly capable of college readiness and success. ScholarMatch students are not only admitted to college, they graduate on time at higher rates than the average American college student.

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Closing the racial achievement gap requires: a sense of belonging and inclusion, culturally competent communication with families, consistent support from adults who help kids believe that they are capable and worthy of excellence, and strategic holistic non-academic supports. As we balance the budget, we must protect and support the teachers, para-professionals, and social workers who help provide students with a sense of belonging and possibility.

We also need to evaluate our systems district-wide to make them simple and equitable for all families. This includes looking at: the lottery assignment system, transportation options, and before-and-aftercare. A key driver of our racial achievement gap is chronic absenteeism. The district should investigate whether our complicated and unpredictable school assignment system is making absenteeism worse by making it harder for students to get to and from school.

5) *How can SFUSD challenge and create learning opportunities for higher achieving students?*

A broken clock is right twice a day. I don't agree with former president George W. Bush on just about anything, but even he knew that the soft bigotry of low expectations is a form of bias. Too often, debates about opportunities for accelerated learning and academic excellence in SFUSD are framed as if only white and Asian families want or benefit from such programs.

I firmly disagree with that. It's profoundly inequitable to say that only kids whose families can pay for private school are capable and deserving of advanced learning.

SFUSD needs to evaluate its policies, curricula, and staffing models to see where we can create more flexibility for teachers and schools to meet students where they are, including providing them with above-grade-level opportunities. We need to make sure that the district-wide implementation of 8th grade algebra isn't thwarted by potentially flawed pilot models.

Rather than fighting over limited spots at Lowell High School, we need to create more hubs for academic excellence equitably located throughout the city, and expand access to AP classes in the eastern and southern neighborhoods.

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6) What should SFUSD do to increase enrollment and to attract more students and families to the San Francisco Unified School District, at elementary, middle, and/or high school entry points?

Nothing matters more to us than our kids and their futures. Parents aren't going to trust the district with their kids if they don't trust it do to the right thing. So in order to increase enrollment, we first need to restore trust. That starts with electing a competent, calm, and communicative school board.

Next, we need to keep our promise to fix our broken school assignment system. The confusion, uncertainty, and stress of the lottery drives families away. And as we consider closing and consolidating schools, we need to protect and expand schools that are in high demand.

Most importantly, we need to make sure that every SFUSD student has access to an excellent education. Parents see that we are underperforming in basic markers of achievement, and they vote with their feet.

The district has had success attracting families with specialized programs such as K-8 schools, language immersion schools, public Montessori, and Ruth Asawa San Francisco School of the Arts. Expanding popular programs, especially by expanding language pathways in middle and high school, will help draw students to, and keep them in, the district.

7) What do you think of SFUSD's lottery system of enrollment?

We know that the lottery system hasn't reduced segregation, but it has driven families away from the district. Sometimes, the lottery drives families out of San Francisco entirely. The district's homework of moving to a zone assignment system is now four years late. Its not equitable to have a school assignment system that feels like you need a law degree to understand it.

It won't be equitable if the district closes schools in student-rich neighborhoods before moving to the proposed zone assignment system. Under a zone assignment system, schools that are now under-enrolled should succeed in attracting more students.

We need a simple, predictable system. Families need to know that they're

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going to be assigned to a school that they can get to and has a schedule that works for them. Families need a resource that shows all of their options in one place to help them choose a school: language pathways, transportation, schedule, and before and aftercare options.

We ask students and parents to white-knuckle it through the second week of classes, hoping that they'll get into the school they want, and to commit to a school without guaranteed before or aftercare. How can we act surprised when we have declining enrollment?

8) *How did you vote on Prop G (8th Grade Algebra) and why? What are the top three areas to focus on in math currently to improve math outcomes for kids at SFUSD?*

Yes on Prop G! We can't succeed in educating students by holding them back. In a district that is 86% students of color, it is profoundly inequitable to deny students opportunities to learn. Without 8th grade algebra, it's harder for students to complete calculus, a key indicator of college readiness.

Removing algebra from 8th grade was never evidence-based. It only created a two-tiered system where those with resources knew how to get around the obstacles the district threw in their way. As the greatest hub for technology jobs in the world, we must ensure that all kids in San Francisco have the opportunity to access the prosperity in our city. For many, that starts with algebra.

To improve math outcomes for SFUSD students, we first need to have data that accurately tells us what our children do and don't know. Especially in the early years of literacy, K-3, it can be difficult to tell whether assessments showing that children lack proficiency in math are due to the child's lack of literacy in the language in which they are being assessed. This is especially true in immersion and bi-literacy pathways.

We also need to focus on increasing the math proficiency rates for Black, Latino, and Pacific Islander children—who have significant achievement gaps—through proven, evidence-based methods such as increasing instructional minutes devoted to math and providing high-dosage tutoring.

9) *What was your position on the school board recall of February 2022, and why?*

I supported the recall. Generally, I'm opposed to recalls on principle. Once the voters speak, their chosen representatives should be allowed to govern. California's

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frequent recalls often waste public dollars and distract us from the tough work before us. But the school board recall was different.

The school board abandoned its duty to our kids during COVID. They kept schools closed, and made no preparations to open them, long past what common-sense and science recommended. The closures continued even though City-run learning hubs for essential workers showed that kids could learn in person safely. And they were extremely inequitable. The students that school closures hurt the most were already farthest from opportunity.

We're still dealing with the academic and social-emotional consequences of long-term distance learning to students. The prolonged COVID closures drove a generation of families away from SFUSD and we are now faced with the fiscal consequences of that drop in enrollment.

Although my son was in preschool during COVID, as a future SFUSD parent, I watched the school board meetings closely. I was appalled by what I saw. Public service is a trust. The school board broke that trust through its actions and its tone against its constituents during COVID. The recall was needed to begin restoring trust in the district.

10) Who will you look to as your trusted sources of feedback, information, and advice as you make decisions as a BOE Commissioner? In what ways will you engage with and solicit feedback from community members?

Growing up in a politically divided family, I learned how to communicate effectively with people who see things differently. I've worked effectively with a wide range of elected leaders, department heads, and local government staff across California for years. Reaching out to people with different viewpoints makes me good at my job and gets better results.

I'm a public-interest lawyer who has spent my career trying to move the law to shape policy and improve our society. I know that at the end of the day, no matter how much you believe in your case, you have to know and confront the facts. As a school board member, I will talk to everyone, even those I disagree with. But ultimately I'll be guided by the evidence.

For me, trusted sources of feedback, information, and advice would include SF Parent Coalition, current and past school board members, district advisory councils and committees, PTAs, SSCs, and ELACs, teachers, administrators, and district staff, both individually and through their unions, partners in the City government such as the Department of Children, Youth, and their Families, the California School Boards Association, Ed100, and the Council of Great City Schools.