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San Francisco Parent Action
www.sfparentaction.org

Questions for SFUSD School Board Candidates 2024

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
3. 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
4. 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
5. 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
6. 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.***

All excellent and important questions, thank you. I hope SF Parents continue advocating for these key areas as we have seen over the past couple years how much your group and others have been able to tilt the conversation. To that end, the Parent Priorities Platform is very welcome.

We are now making some good work as we steer our beloved school district in the direction of trust and student outcomes. As our future four Commissioners will begin governance in January 2025, we will face many headwinds as we make so many tough choices.

Let's keep the focus on making good progress, using proven methods.

- 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.***

As a child of immigrants and a K-12 SFUSD graduate, I have the personal experience and vision to make this school district one that will enable every child from every background to flourish and reach their dreams.

I have family and friends as students and educators in several schools in the district and have been a frequent volunteer and donor. For several years, I helped my friend's Alvarado with a craft beer fundraiser. Recently I helped beautify the gardens of James Lick. I have been a steady public education Opinion contributor to several local publications, including the SF Examiner, and Beyond Chron. In short, I do all this because I care so much.

I have worked hard to show my leadership style in practice, at the SFUSD Citizens Bond Oversight Committee, the SF Civil Grand Jury, or other civic and political efforts. For me, our efforts are most effective with vision, with a sense of how to work as a team, with a focus on end users, here our families. Our Bond Oversight group has implemented many reforms, in collaboration with district staff. We are now building on such efforts.

I have done a couple worthwhile candidate training programs and am

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studying on my own. I am very happy to see the SF Parents training program have such interest, as my other obligations kept me from joining. We all are students.

I have done the work in reviewing board meeting contracts, and spreadsheets. I'll be ready on Day 1.

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

YES, in fact I applaud such efforts. We have to do the hard work to avoid state takeover and to finally stop kicking the can. Our district's prior financial choices have led to incredible imbalances in classroom sizes that have for years been kept under wraps. Now we can demonstrate a good process by listening to the community. And we can help create the future where we direct more resources towards the in-demand programs that already do amazing work for so many families and educators.

For more on my years-long advocacy to focus on these efforts, please see some of my earlier deep dives on Board of Education Commissioners' actions that have kicked the can– <https://eyessfboe.substack.com>

Let's also be sure to keep the district committed to reducing the size of the administration. More money closer to the classrooms, for sure.

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

Let's keep on this path of improving outcomes, driven by proven practices, achievable goals, and doing professional development. Let's recognize and reward educators, schools, and programs that are making progress. We've been able to make gains in years past, and we can look to other districts across the state who have made improvements with similar budgets and student populations. Doing this sort of work is social justice work, and can transform families, and can increase enrollment. Board of Education Commissioner Lisa Weissman-Ward has expressed such sentiments well, many times.

I have been in constant communication with families of all races. There are family suggestions which have been ignored for years. Parents want attention to kids' mental health, they want education opportunities in math and sciences,

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they want their kids to be happy to be in the classroom because of arts classes. These are only some examples. As we focus on academic outcomes, let's also keep attention to the other parts needed to have students in the classrooms.

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

The district already has many staff and programs supporting such efforts, across the grades. Let's have a culture where we celebrate high achievement. Let's appreciate academic achievement like we appreciate athletic and creative talents. Let's encourage every school to support, and challenge, every student from where they are at to where we can see them be. It's a critical effort here that will keep students in our school district.

As an SFUSD student who loved STEM and went on to a career in biotechnology, I had many opportunities to learn about different career fields. Let's partner with local companies and nonprofits that will help train and encourage our promising students, in every field.

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?*

Thank you for this important question. The families leaving at these points have such hard to hear stories and really wanted to stay. Let's make a record of their concerns and show the public how we are working through those concerns head-on. Happy families are the best sales force. And let's continue telling the stories that you all are talking about- where families committed to public schools are really happy.

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

While there are some parts of this system that work well for some families, it may be time to improve the enrollment process. As we may be in a future with fewer public schools, and less funding for MUNI, we can benefit from going to a system where many families can enroll in their very good neighborhood school. And we can have accommodations for immersion programs and other family preferences.

What I see as important in an improved enrollment policy: 1) simpler than the current system, 2) part of a program to improve all schools, 3) programs that

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are valued by the current school communities.

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?

I not only voted YES on Prop G (8th Grade Algebra), I submitted my own campaign argument, I donated to the effort, I worked on the campaign, and I got earned media for my personal experience of how taking middle school algebra changed my life.

This topic was a personal one for me, as I was a semi-engaged Presidio Middle School student in sixth grade, who enjoyed my video games. Ms Rueda's algebra class was where I blossomed and found my passion. It is through this class that I really started to enjoy learning. I continued on to winning a National Math contest, winning an International Chemistry Olympiad medal, acceptances to all applied colleges, and a fruitful career in biotechnology.

Exact choices of math curriculum I will leave to others with more experience. I definitely believe every middle school should have a path to algebra and every high school should have opportunities for advanced math and science classes.

And our focus on outcomes should largely be on implementing proven methods to bring all our students up to grade level in both math and reading. Proposition G also had important parts devoted to helping students before they reach middle school.

From my perspective, our efforts should be to provide the structure to allow students to thrive at their own time. Just like we have students go from regular classes to music and sports prodigies, we can do the same for our academic students.

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

I was one of the big advocates for the recall of the 3 school board commissioners in 2022. I signed Siva Raj's original petition to get the recall started, I collected roughly 1000 signatures, and I advocated for removing those Commissioners in writings and during forums. This team effort required a heroic effort from many parties, and I was happy to support in many minor ways as well.

Why did I do so? Like many, I was incensed at how our schools were the last to bring students back to class, while our Commissioners were spending so much time on a terribly done effort to rename schools. What really got my goat was

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that this renaming effort left so many other important government efforts ignored.

I previously explained how I sought to encourage our district to bring spending more in balance. The district also was not following the law in that they did not have citizen oversight for hundreds of millions of dollars of school bond spending, for years. I was one of a small team that worked with insider whistleblowers to bring back our Citizens Bond Oversight Committee. The recalled Commissioners were content in sweeping this topic and so many others under the proverbial rug.

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?

Thanks so much for this question! In order for our district to flourish and to continue on an upward path, we need to listen to the feedback of all the caring groups that have great advice. I have continuously been working with many individual groups like yours, members of district leadership, many former Board of Education Commissioners, and literacy and immigrant family advocates. I will have a regular schedule to keep doing so.

I will work with school sites and the Bond Oversight group and folks in City Hall. I will be in touch with many districts across the state and folks in Sacramento. As a matter of fact, I have learned the value of leaning on experts across the state in working on the Citizens Bond Oversight Committee. Working in this collaborative manner gives us good chances to make bigger ripples in good directions, even with a challenging funding environment.

And I am open to your ideas for who else to add to the list!