



www.sfparentaction.org

Questions for November 2026 SFUSD School Board Candidates
Laurance Lee

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.

Enthusiastic support for the above statements from SF Parents Action! Your leadership and dedication to these goals and standards are sorely needed as we work to make San Francisco public schools the best in the country! Board of Education Commissioners are public servants who work with the community.

As we are in our fourth year of student outcomes focused government, with the vision, values, goals and guardrails governance, I would like to share my priorities as I see my efforts for the next several years. I will work with the Board to 1) continue to include community voices in district direction; 2) keep pushing us to make data-informed decisions; 3) make our culture one of continuous improvement. Let's together make San Francisco schools the best in the country!

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***

As a San Francisco native and a K-12 product of SFUSD, the honor and privilege of my lifetime has been growing up in our public schools here. This son of an illegal Chinese immigrant rose to much academic and professional achievement thanks to the support of my many educators here. I am now fortunate to be able to give back my time and resources in appreciation.

Looking back over those years, I now recognize I had traits of someone on the autism spectrum, when autism was less understood. I leaned toward the sciences and felt uncomfortable in social situations. My educators accepted and encouraged me, both in my studies, and in supporting me to become more well-rounded. Today I have a soft spot for neurodiverse students, particularly those with less than strong emotional skills.

Over the past few years since the pandemic, I have volunteered for our public schools in a number of different roles. I have been an active member of the Citizens Bond Oversight Committee for the past several years, now in the role of Vice Chair. I have helped give out college scholarships to hundreds of students, many first generation. I have recently begun volunteering in a Kindergarten class at Drew Elementary in the Bayview neighborhood, through the non-profit San Francisco Education Fund.

We live in a city where excellence and equity have proven to produce NFL stars, academic and professional leaders, authors and musicians. And I see bright futures in the Kinder class I volunteer with. Let's keep doing the hard needed work to support and uplift.

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 have had the privilege to meet the most dedicated and passionate and wonderful parents supporting the school district here through SF Parents. They know all the challenges in running the school district, and are still working hard to make it better. That vision and community sustain me as I follow my passion to help public school families here in San Francisco.

I will regularly work with members of SF Parents to uplift their voices, especially the voices of those who are afraid to speak up and/or have language difficulty and/or can't make it to Board Meetings.

I am particularly attached to the "SF Kids Can't Wait" campaign for improved student reading and math outcomes. I will keep this effort the main focus of my work as a Board of Education Commissioner.

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?

I was an SFUSD student during the long teachers strike in 1979 and remember how disruptive it was for everyone. We all wish the strike could have been avoided. I heard from many families during this strike how hard it was to plan for the strike days, and how afraid they were that the strike could go on for weeks. I heard from many teachers how hard the strike was on them, and I donated to support them.

I am all for finding ways to build on and improve collaborative relations between the teachers union and the district. As a School Board member, I will be in regular contact with teachers and union leadership, and I will be in regular contact with the Superintendent. We can continue to emphasize our many areas of agreement as we seek to improve the lives of our 50,000 students.

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***

Effective Board governance is having our district improve student outcomes. We can do better.

School Board members work with the Superintendent in public and in private. I would encourage the Superintendent in private to prepare good options for the Board to consider at Board Meetings. Too many times the public has found the choices presented by district staff to be between two less than good options. In public, I would encourage the Superintendent to keep aligned with our Visions, Values, Goals, and Guardrails, especially when we are not making good progress on student outcomes.

As a volunteer for several schools, and an active Board Meeting attendee, I know many examples of how plans are rolling out with gaps, how staffing makes achieving goals hard, and how uneven schools do in trying to achieve goals. One of my major efforts as a Board Member will be pushing to ensure the district is tracking goals on a monthly basis, and giving help should things not be tracking in a good direction.

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?

I know I will face pushback from families and teachers, even when I have their interests at heart in every vote and every comment. I have spoken with many prior Board of Education Commissioners and understand what they have gone through.

I will be available and a good listener in their criticism. I will explain my decision making process and reasons for my votes. And I will continue to work with them regardless of their tough words and emotions.

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?

Most likely the district will need to close/co-locate/combine schools. Given how recent cuts have started to affect classrooms, the district needs to find places to reduce expenses, get back into positive certification, and eliminate its structural deficit. I would much prefer reductions in unneeded consultants, lawyers, and

district staff.

We do have to come to terms that some less well-attended schools are receiving thousands of dollars more per student and are not producing outsized student outcomes. With the money redeployed, we could give more schools the needed staff, including literacy coaches, assistant vice-principals, and mental health support.

The recent effort to close schools under the prior Superintendent did a decent job in soliciting community input, and trying to put equity in consideration. Yet the plan failed largely because the plan ignored all the community input. I protested closures at many of the planned schools.

We are seeing now the fear and worry of so many families as the Newcomer schools and the Academy are closing. Should schools close, I would push hard to ensure that affected families would get all the support and services they can to keep their communities together and to help them transition into their new school.

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

The current student assignment system does give a large majority of families one of the schools of their choice. Yet, the overwhelming feeling I hear is that it really needs to change. It comes too late, it is too opaque, and it often forces families to have their kids travel quite a distance to their schools.

I am excited for the district's plan for zone-based school assignments, and want to learn more. Families I speak with from the Bayview to Noe Valley to the Sunset would love their kids to go to their neighborhood schools.

Let's work to make each neighborhood school special, popular, and growing, Let's make each school a great community, and a place where students have really great student outcomes.

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?

Budget challenges are definitely hurting students, and I see it every time I volunteer in classrooms. I have worked hard to try to understand how we can run our school district better, and increase enrollment.

One area I am excited to support is the district's plans to open a new K-8 Mandarin Immersion school. There are literally hundreds of families wanting to join this new

school. Let's give families what they seek, and we will grow enrollment.

At the same time, I must admit that one big root cause of our budget challenges is that the money is hard to follow. I remember LCAP meetings a few years ago where the district was going to do zero-based budgeting and really sort things out. Nothing came of it.

I have been working hard with my fellow members of the Citizens Bond Oversight Committee to get district staff to clearly share how money is spent. This process has been taking years and we have made some good progress. Yet there is still much to do to be even more transparent.

Our Board of Education can follow best practices in other school districts like Dallas that provide guardrails to the Superintendent about spending limited funds to best help student outcomes.

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?

The 8th grade algebra policy was not proposed well and may need further work. I agree with the majority of the Board that we need to provide clear pathways for all students to take 8th grade algebra. And I agree with the minority of the Board that would like means to support students that would need help to prepare for 8th grade algebra.

The Board can encourage the Superintendent to work to make good options for students that follow good practices, are data-based, and have teacher and family support.

I myself took algebra in 7th grade and know many current students that are frustrated that they need to take classes twice. We can find ways to encourage accelerated students to continue on their pace, even if above their grade level.

And let's keep working on bringing in well-proven, data-tracked methods to bring all students up to grade level math.