

# SFPARENTS

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. <b>I SUPPORT the <a href="#">SF Parent Coalition Parent Priorities Platform</a>.</b> 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. <b>TRANSPARENCY:</b> 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 <a href="#">dashboard</a> that shares math and reading assessment data at the school level, updated at least twice a year.	4
4. <b>LITERACY AND MATH:</b> 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 <a href="#">plan</a> , and makes the necessary changes to our curricula, tools, and instruction methods that will follow an evidence- and standards-based instructional approach.	4
5. <b>GOVERNANCE:</b> An <a href="#">effective</a> 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.	2
6. <b>BUDGET HEALTH:</b> I commit to governing in accordance with nationally-established <a href="#">best financial practices</a> . 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

### **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**. Letteris: I highly support all of the above items, except for #5. The reason is I cannot, in good conscience, support a superintendent and staff

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*who are not leading the district in the most effective way possible, or in a manner that reflects the best interests of the schools. On the one hand, I do agree that we should trust in the superintendent's ability to lead and give that person our support, but on the other hand, that trust is only warranted insofar it is earned and the schools are thriving based on the leadership provided.*

- 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. Letteris: I am running for BOE, because I deeply care for the well-being and welfare of all children in San Francisco, children from all backgrounds and walks of life. A great deal of our political dialogue is aimed at adults and monopolized with ideas of how to utilize our city's resources to fix the problems related to homelessness, drug addiction, and crime. This is a necessary discussion given the dire state of our city, but reactionary in nature. I propose we spend as much attention on prevention measures as reactionary measures. For examples, it's much more productive and cost effective to prevent crimes, drug addiction, and homelessness from occurring in the first place, by ensuring our youth, through proper and adequate education and support, do not go down these paths. There is a sobering correlation in social sciences that states if a child cannot read by the time he or she is 8 years old, then the odds of that child failing to graduate from high school at 18 years old and becoming incarcerated becomes exponentially greater. How do we ensure that every 8 year old can read? Answering this question is why I am running. Although I do not have children of my own, I did grow up in the public education system. I have an MA in education and also ran and operated my own private academy (after-school programs) for many years. I also have an engineering degree and have worked in tech for most of my career with large and small companies. I lead by example and believe in bottom-up decision making, treating all those around me as equals.*
- 3) *Do you support the superintendent's [plan](#) to fix SFUSD's budget deficit, including but not limited to classroom consolidations and school closures? Letteris: I support the plan, but only to the extent that willing and able parents and their children are not excluded from an education due to their schools closing.*
- 4) *How can SFUSD increase academic [outcomes](#) for the most underserved students and close the racially predictable achievement gap? Letteris: This is a complex issue, but I believe one way to bridge the gap is by engaging the parents and encouraging them to read to their children. If the parents are not available, then perhaps we can find a relative, friend, or neighbor to help out. I am even willing to volunteer my time to read to under-served students.*
- 5) *How can SFUSD challenge and create learning opportunities for higher achieving students? Letteris: When I ran my art academy, I realized that sometimes children*

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*make the best teachers. For example, we offered summer camps where 10 and 11 year olds taught other kids how to solve a Rubik's cube. It was immensely fun and successful for the children. As long as all children know the basics of reading and writing and arithmetic, then anything above and beyond that can be considered "higher achieving," and this is a broad umbrella term that can include any subject matter, whether it is science, art, dance, music, sports, etc. So, for example, a child that excels at dance, but not at science can be partnered with a child with the opposite skill set who excels at science but not at dance. They can teach each other. In the process, they will be challenged and learn entirely new skill sets they did not have before.*

- 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? Letteris: I wrote about this topic in detail on my web site at: [www.voteletteris.com/home-1-1](http://www.voteletteris.com/home-1-1). In essence, a healthy, balanced budget is a prerequisite for healthy enrollment. As long as we continue to mismanage the budget and resort to reducing classrooms and closing schools, then enrollment will never increase. For balancing the budget, we require three basic things: a) stakeholder engagement, b) planning, and b) execution and accountability. Again, these elements are described in detail at the URL above.*
- 7) *What do you think of SFUSD's lottery system of enrollment? Letteris: The lottery system has it's purpose, but should not be a goal of the public education system. Our goal should be able to include all students who are willing and able to attend a particular school.*
- 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? Letteris: I voted yes on Prop G. Math is a subject that many children, and even adults, are intimidated by. I struggled with math until my sophomore year in high school, when I was fortunate to have a teacher who taught math in a way I understood it. Before 10th grade, I was unable to make this connection with my math teachers. It was not any fault of the schools, but just a personal preference or learning style on my part. I think that with all the YouTube channels available, perhaps kids can find an instructional video that clicks with them? Unlike when I was a kid and there was no Internet, there are many more opportunities available for children to learn math. Therefore, the top three areas to focus on are: a) teacher exposure (expose the children to as many teaching styles as possible via, for example, YouTube), b) moral and emotional encouragement (do not give up), and c) include more fun and games in the learning process. My earlier bit about the Rubik's cube is also an excellent way to teach math.*
- 9) *What was your position on the school board recall of February 2022, and why? Letteris: I agree with the recall because re-opening schools should have been the board's number one priority during Covid, but it was not.*
- 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? Letteris: I will look to the*

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*stakeholders, the teachers, parents, and students, as my source of advice and information. I will make it a priority to speak with schools and parent and neighborhood groups on a regular basis to engage with the community. I currently am a member of the Greater West Portal Neighborhood Association and a delegate for the West of Twin Peaks Central Council.*