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Questions for November 2026 SFUSD School Board Candidates
Virginia Cheung

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.

My perspective is shaped by both lived experience and over two decades working across early education, family services, public health, language immersion education, and community partnerships. As the daughter of refugees who arrived in the United States without stable housing, I saw firsthand how difficult it was for my non-English-speaking parents to navigate systems that were not built for families like ours. My older brother dropped out of high school after not receiving the interventions and support he needed. I was fortunate to have educators who saw my potential, connected me to literacy support and Gifted & Talented Education, and changed the trajectory of my life.

That experience drives my belief that academic excellence and equity must go hand in hand. Every child deserves access to strong literacy and math instruction, differentiated learning, advanced coursework, culturally affirming curriculum, language immersion opportunities, and stable, fully staffed schools.

At Wu Yee Children's Services, I helped grow the organization from \$20M to \$80M to expand services for working families across San Francisco. That work reinforced for me that the first five years of life are foundational for brain development, language acquisition, and long-term success. We need stronger alignment between early education, kindergarten readiness, and SFUSD to improve outcomes for all children.

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 because I believe every child deserves access to an excellent public education, and a child's future should never depend on luck.

As a public school parent at Alice Fong Yu Alternative School and the daughter of refugees, I understand both the opportunities and barriers families experience navigating SFUSD. Like many families, I balance school schedules, childcare, transportation, work, and enrichment while trying to create stability for my child. I also understand how isolating systems can feel for immigrant, multilingual, low-income, Asian and Pacific Islander, Black/African American, and Latino/Spanish-speaking families when they lack access, representation, or support.

Professionally, I bring over 20 years of experience across early education, family

services, nonprofit leadership, and community partnerships. At Wu Yee Children's Services, San Francisco's largest Head Start provider, I helped expand services from \$20M to \$80M, connecting more working families to early education, healthcare, family support, and kindergarten readiness programs. Much of our work focused on immigrant, Asian and Pacific Islander, Black/African American, and Latino families navigating systemic inequities.

I believe academic excellence and equity are inseparable. Every child deserves rigorous literacy and math instruction, access to advanced coursework, culturally affirming curriculum, language immersion opportunities, and individualized support. As a former GATE student who benefited from differentiated instruction and early algebra access, I know students thrive when educators recognize and nurture their potential.

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?

Rebuilding trust in SFUSD requires strong partnership with parents, transparency, and meaningful engagement, not just communication after decisions have already been made.

As a single parent, I understand the realities families navigate every day: transportation, afterschool care, commutes, language barriers, and uncertainty around enrollment. Systems often assume families have unlimited time and flexibility, but many are balancing multiple jobs, caregiving responsibilities, and complex schedules.

At Wu Yee, I worked closely with immigrant and multilingual families across San Francisco, many of whom were navigating public systems for the first time. We learned that family engagement must be proactive, multilingual, culturally responsive, and rooted in trust. That same approach should shape SFUSD.

As a Board member, I would prioritize earlier and clearer communication, stronger language access, improved enrollment counseling, and meaningful opportunities for families to shape policy decisions. I also believe parents should have transparent access to school performance and student outcome data so they can advocate effectively for their children.

Families are children's first teachers and strongest advocates. SFUSD will only improve when families feel heard, respected, and included as real partners.

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?

The February strike reflected a deeper breakdown in trust between the district and educators after years of instability, staffing shortages, payroll failures, and delayed decision-making.

As a strike liaison, I saw firsthand the unity educators built across communities and how deeply they care about students. I also heard parents describe how much time and energy they spend simply trying to secure the supports their children need. The strike was ultimately about dignity for educators, students, and working families.

SFUSD leadership should have engaged earlier and more transparently around staffing, finances, and implementation challenges. The Board should have exercised stronger oversight and clearer accountability around operational issues impacting classrooms. The union raised legitimate concerns about compensation, healthcare, staffing, and workloads that directly affect student outcomes.

Going forward, the Board must promote a more collaborative relationship through transparency, earlier communication, regular labor-management planning, and shared accountability around student outcomes and staffing stability.

The district cannot rebuild trust or improve outcomes without a stable workforce. Educators deserve fair wages, manageable workloads, reliable systems, and respect for their expertise. In a world-class city, fully funding and supporting public education should be a shared priority.

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 governance requires clarity of roles, accountability, transparency, and strong partnership with the Superintendent while maintaining independent oversight.

The Board's role is to set vision, priorities, policy, and budget direction. The Superintendent is responsible for implementation and operations. Effective governance means establishing clear goals and measurable outcomes, then holding leadership accountable through regular reporting and public transparency.

I would work collaboratively with the Superintendent while maintaining rigorous oversight around staffing stability, academic outcomes, enrollment, implementation timelines, and fiscal accountability. Board decisions must be followed through with clear metrics, timelines, and public reporting.

At the same time, the Board should avoid micromanaging staff operations. Respecting the expertise of educators and district staff is essential to a healthy governance structure.

My leadership style is collaborative and systems-oriented. Throughout my career, I have worked across sectors and organizations to align strategy, resources, and implementation around shared goals. At Wu Yee, that included managing complex partnerships across government, philanthropy, and community organizations while maintaining accountability to families.

Families deserve a Board that is focused, responsive, transparent, and grounded in student outcomes, not politics or special interests.

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?

If families or educators strongly opposed a decision I supported, my first responsibility would be to listen carefully and understand the underlying concerns. Pushback often reflects real fears, unintended impacts, or gaps in implementation.

I would communicate transparently about the reasoning behind the decision, including the data, tradeoffs, and intended outcomes. At the same time, I would remain open to adjusting implementation if feedback revealed unintended consequences or inequitable impacts.

Families and educators bring critical expertise. Parents understand how policies affect daily life, while teachers understand classroom realities. Strong leadership requires both conviction and humility.

Throughout my career, I've worked in community-centered organizations where trust depended on meaningful engagement, not performative outreach. I believe people are more willing to work through disagreement when they feel respected, informed, and included in the process.

My goal would always be to keep the focus on improving outcomes for students while maintaining trust and transparency with the communities most affected.

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?

I would not commit to school closures without clear evidence that they would improve student outcomes, learning environments, and long-term stability for families.

My priority is retention, stability, and improving learning environments for all children. Strong relationships between students, educators, and families are foundational to success, and disruption should only occur if it clearly leads to better outcomes.

Any closure or consolidation proposal must be driven by data, measurable outcomes, and transparent equity analysis, not simply cost savings. High-need students, multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and historically marginalized communities must not be disproportionately harmed.

Meaningful community engagement must also be central to the process. Students, families, educators, and neighborhoods deserve to help shape decisions that affect their schools and communities.

At the same time, we should prioritize rebuilding enrollment and trust by strengthening school quality, supporting families, expanding excellent programs, and improving school experiences so more families choose and stay in SFUSD.

The goal is not simply fewer schools. The goal is fiscal responsibility and stewardship to deliver stronger, stable neighborhood schools that families trust and students thrive in.

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

Many families still experience it as stressful, confusing, and difficult to navigate, especially multilingual, working-class, and single-parent households.

As a single parent, I understand how enrollment decisions are tied to transportation, commutes, before- and after-school care, scheduling, safety, and cultural fit. Families need systems that reflect how they actually live.

We need stronger outreach to preschool families, earlier communication timelines, improved enrollment counseling, and a more accessible School Finder system with strong language access. Families should be able to make informed decisions before private school deadlines.

Equity must also remain central. Students should have equitable access to diverse, high-quality programs, including language immersion, arts, STEM, and advanced coursework, regardless of neighborhood or income.

At the same time, socioeconomic integration and inclusive school communities improve outcomes for all students. The assignment system should continue balancing diversity, fairness, predictability, and family needs.

Ultimately, the goal is not simply a better algorithm. It is rebuilding trust so more families feel confident choosing and staying in SFUSD.

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?

SFUSD's budget challenges are driven by declining enrollment, rising operational costs, staffing instability, and structural funding limitations tied to attendance-based formulas.

The Board's responsibility is to prioritize investments that directly improve student outcomes and stabilize enrollment. That means fully staffed classrooms, early education, student supports, and strong learning environments.

As part of the senior leadership team who helped grow Wu Yee Children's Services from \$20M to \$80M, I understand the importance of aligning spending with outcomes and stewarding resources responsibly. Fiscal responsibility means balancing long-term sustainability with the urgent needs of students today.

The Board must also improve transparency and accountability around budgeting decisions. Families and educators deserve meaningful input, particularly regarding reserve levels and major structural changes.

At the same time, we must rebuild trust and retention by strengthening programs, improving enrollment experiences, and supporting educators. Excellent schools attract and retain families, which stabilizes funding over time.

The district should also strengthen partnerships with the Department of Early Childhood and community organizations to better align services and improve kindergarten readiness. Investing in early interventions saves the district and the city money in the long term.

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 algebra debate demonstrates the importance of data-driven decision-making, transparent implementation, and meaningful engagement with educators and families.

Academic policy should not be ideological or reactive. The Board must evaluate policies using measurable outcomes, pilot programs where appropriate, and adjust based on evidence and classroom realities.

As someone who benefited from Gifted & Talented Education and early access to algebra, I strongly support expanding access to advanced coursework. Every child deserves differentiated instruction and opportunities to reach their full potential.

To expand access, I would prioritize stronger early math instruction, targeted interventions beginning in elementary school, high-dosage tutoring, and equitable access to accelerated pathways. We should monitor readiness earlier, not just in middle school.

To improve outcomes for historically underserved students, we must combine rigorous academics with culturally affirming curriculum, strong family engagement, language access, and stable staffing.

Representation matters. Students are more likely to succeed when they feel seen, supported, and challenged academically.

Success should be measured not only by access to advanced coursework, but by whether students from every background are thriving, confident, and prepared for college, career, and leadership.