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San Francisco Parent Action
www.sfparentaction.org

Questions for SFUSD School Board Candidates 2024 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>
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.**

As a first generation Chinese immigrant who has experienced hardships and poverty as a child, I express my heartfelt gratitude to the SF Parent Coalition for their unwavering dedication to holding the school district and Board of Education accountable for the betterment of our children's educational journey with particular focus on equity. As a single mother and primary provider raising a young son, I deeply resonate with the shared concern about creating the best possible environment for our children to thrive as lifelong learners, have access to opportunities that fuel their curiosity, and provide the best pathways for their success and fulfilling their greatest potential.

My commitment lies in working hand in hand with the superintendent and faculty to implement top-tier curricula aimed at enhancing student proficiency in literacy and mathematics, while also ensuring access to diverse languages and fostering strong partnerships with parents who are the foremost educators in their children's lives.

I stand dedicated to equipping our staff with the necessary resources, training, and support to excel in their roles, ensuring they are well-equipped to nurture and educate our children effectively.

It's imperative that our spending is strategically allocated to initiatives that directly enhance student learning and engagement, paving the way for them to receive a quality education that prepares them for higher education, prosperous careers, and positive engagement as global citizens.

- 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 proud parent of a second grader attending Alice Fong Yu, I am deeply committed to ensuring every child in San Francisco receives a culturally affirming high quality education that nurtures their individual growth and empowers them to reach their full potential. My background working immigrant and underserved communities in the fields of early childhood development, K-8 education, arts, children and family services would bring an

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invaluable perspective to the board of education as we endeavor to improve our public school system and provide the best possible education for every student.

With over 15 years of experience championing children's rights and working in early child development, education, and community services, I bring a wealth of knowledge and passion to the table. My tenure at Wu Yee, a local community-based nonprofit founded by Chinese American women and a pioneer in multicultural early childhood education, has equipped me with invaluable insights into best practices, particularly in providing early exposure to languages, math, and literacy. Most of the children served by Wu Yee in their early childhood will transition to SFUSD as preschoolers and kindergarteners. After over 7 years of organizing with the community to build the most comprehensive early childhood care and education infrastructure in the nation, I am eager to leverage my knowledge and relationships to support children transitioning to kindergarten and beyond at SFUSD.

As Director of Advancement at Wu Yee, I have fostered strong relationships citywide with board members, staff, educators, parents and community leaders from diverse backgrounds to address the needs of our children and families. My dedication to listening to and understanding the challenges faced by families has driven me to spearhead initiatives to improve infrastructure and streamline service delivery at Wu Yee to better serve our children. I believe in building bridges between organizations, sectors, donors, volunteers, and community members to create a more inclusive and supportive educational environment for all.

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

I fully support the superintendent's plan to tackle SFUSD's budget deficit, which may involve classroom consolidations and school closures. As I see it, we need to closely examine the plan and monitor the engagement with community and board members as the plan progresses.

The Resource Alignment Initiative decisions should be done with clear data, planning and engagement with the community: parents, educators, staff, and students. I believe that school consolidations cannot solve the budget deficit alone, although it is a necessary one. As a leader, I understand the need to make tough decisions with compassion but keeping the focus on children – and

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their educational outcomes – as the basis of those decisions.

Transparency, data-driven planning, and community engagement are paramount in this process. Decisions must be made collaboratively, with input from parents, educators, staff, and students. While school consolidations alone won't solve the budget deficit, they are a necessary step forward in ensuring the long-term viability of our educational system.

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

Every parent wants the best possible life and outcome for their child and every child has the potential to be a positive contributor to our society. The public school system has the most power to close the racial equity gap by providing the best experience and education for young children in their academic and individual development to become global leaders and lead us into a brighter future.

To achieve that, I believe that the San Francisco Board of Education decisions must be data-driven. That includes not just high-level assessments, but also narrative information derived from its families.

For example, SFUSD must increase parent engagement and create a better understanding of families' socioeconomic barriers. The Resource Alignment Initiative must consider family constraints when making RAI decisions because it will affect the many decisions parents need to juggle for their families livelihoods.

We must incorporate culturally affirming best practices to fully engage students of all cultures and lived experiences. We must equip our teachers with the tools and training to engage with families with cultural competence.

We must close the equity gap for our historically marginalized populations, including Black/African American, Latino/x, and Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander populations by working with parents to understand the many systemic barriers they face to ensure the success of all our children.

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

Every child in our district should have access to high quality and differentiated instruction to reach their full potential. My experience at Wu Yee has taught me the transformative power of early exposure to diverse languages, cultures, math, literacy concepts, and socio-emotional support in shaping lifelong success.

As a child who struggled with verbal communication throughout elementary school, I am grateful for a dedicated kindergarten teacher who recognized my potential and placed me in the Gifted & Talented Education program. I was exposed to complex concepts early on, laying the foundation for advanced studies in algebra by 8th grade. However, I've also experienced firsthand the detrimental effects of teachers who did not believe in my abilities. This underscores the urgent need for cultural competence in our education system.

We must equip every teacher with the support and training necessary to provide differentiated instruction that engages students of all levels and interests. Regular assessments, surveys, and communication can help tailor programming to meet diverse needs and interests.

Equitable access to advanced coursework, such as AP and A-G plus courses, is essential. We need to create more pathways to success in various interest areas, mirroring the successful models of Lowell and Ruth Asawa School of the Arts. Collaborating with parents and the wider community will enrich our curriculum and expose students to a broader range of opportunities as they prepare for their futures in college and beyond.

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?

It is critical for SFUSD to adopt a district-wide culture shift towards excellence, ensuring every child and family receives a world-class experience, regardless of their background and neighborhood. Parents should feel confident that their child will receive an excellent education at every entry point.

To increase enrollment, we must build trust by delivering high-quality curricula with qualified, well-trained teachers across all schools. Addressing the perception of disparities among schools is crucial to retaining students and parents who may otherwise seek alternatives, such as private schools or leaving the district altogether.

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Our enrollment system can be daunting, particularly for immigrant, limited English proficient, and low-income families who face disproportionate systemic barriers. We must simplify the process and provide support to ensure all families can navigate it effectively.

Additionally, individualized support and counseling services will help students and parents make informed choices that optimize their educational journey. Parents should be partners in their child's education and be supported to improve retention of students from elementary through middle and high school.

Drawing on my background in early education and family services, I will foster stronger relationships between early education programs and SFUSD, streamlining the enrollment process for incoming students. We can create a seamless experience that empowers every child to thrive.

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

As a parent navigating the lottery system, there were many factors to consider such as location, accessibility, school reputation, pathways, and safety.

While most families get into one of the top schools of their choice, some families are still left struggling to find a good fit for their child. Perceptions of different schools also contribute to overemphasis on some schools while some schools are under enrolled which contributes to uneven distribution of resources, segregation, and inequitable experiences.

The timing and unpredictability of the lottery system contributes to anxiety among families who are juggling multiple schedules, commutes, applications, caregivers, and more. Parents opt to leave the school district due to poor communication and late acceptance announcements compared to private schools.

The unpredictability of the enrollment process disproportionately affects those with limited English proficiency, single parent households, students with special needs, low-wage earners, and families living in low-income and underserved neighborhoods that lack transportation options and infrastructure.

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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 support 8th grade algebra. As an individual who benefited from 8th grade algebra, I'm a strong proponent of early exposure to math concepts to ensure success. We must set high expectations for all students, provide training and continuous quality improvement for teachers, and implement early interventions for students who require ongoing support.

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

I am grateful for the parent community and elected officials who organized the recall. I did not agree with the former BOE Commissioner priorities during the pandemic. Time was lost that could have been spent on returning students to the classroom, strengthening finances and administration, preparing teachers, implementing continuous quality improvement, and planning for the future. Unfortunately, our children paid the price from the lack of focus and foresight. It was a learning experience to watch the events unfold leading up to the recall. I am committed to working with parents to focus on student outcomes and avoid distractions that diminish the student experience.

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?

I will partner closely with parents, community members, staff, educators, BOE Commissioners and mentors. Throughout my time in San Francisco, I have engaged with stakeholders from diverse backgrounds from language immersion education, arts, cultural organizations, family and community services, human and social services, and early childhood education. As the communications and outreach lead at Wu Yee, I have developed partnerships with community leaders across the city which is inclusive of communities who face the highest disparities such as Asian American, Native American, Pacific Islander, Black/African American, Latino/x, and immigrant communities with limited English proficiency.

During my tenure at Wu Yee, I worked across the city with multiple coalitions, small businesses, peer educators, and community leaders to educate hard-to-reach populations on public services, civic engagement, and health and safety initiatives. I am committed to continuing my work to remove barriers and improve access for underserved families. Some of the ways I will engage with community members may include meetings, focus groups, surveys, and outreach through trusted community partners and messengers.