

The Harvey Milk LGBTQ Democratic Club Questionnaire for November 2020

Dear Candidates and Ballot Measure Representatives,

Congratulations on declaring your candidacy! The Harvey Milk LGBTQ Democratic Club invites you to get to know us a little better as we plan our endorsements for the November 2020 election.

There are a few steps in our endorsement process:

- 1. Complete and submit your questionnaire by July 23rd*
- 2. Sign up for an endorsement interview*
- 3. Interview with the club on either July 25th or 26th via Zoom*

From there, our PAC will vote on endorsement recommendations on Tuesday, August 11th, with the final endorsement vote taking place at our general membership meeting on August 18th.

Your participation in our Club's questionnaire and interviews will allow our Membership to better understand who you are, what you stand for, and what you plan to accomplish if you are elected to office.

There are three parts to our questionnaire, plus additional questions for individual offices: Part 1 is a series of short-answer questions, with a 150-word limit on answers. Part 2 is a series of Yes or No questions covering a broad set of issues. Part 3 covers whom you have endorsed for office currently and in the past.

Please return your completed questionnaire to pac@milkclub.org and to correspondent@milkclub.org no later than July 23rd.

In addition to this questionnaire, we invite you to participate in a recorded video interview on Zoom with Club leadership on either July 25th or July 26th from 10am to 5pm. This virtual interview replaces the typical in-person presentation to our Membership, and the recording will be shared with our Members ahead of our endorsement recommendation and final vote.

To schedule your interview:

- 1. Sign up for a time slot [here](#)*
- 2. Register on Zoom [here](#)*

Your questionnaire responses and interview answers will weigh heavily in our overall endorsement process, so please take both seriously.

Good luck!

-- The Harvey Milk LGBTQ Democratic Club

Required Information

Full Name: Michelle Parker

Office: Board of Education

Campaign Address: 3015 Balboa Street, 94121

Campaign Phone: 415-634-7218

Campaign Email: michelle@michelleparker.org

Campaign Website: michelleparker.org

Political Party: Democrat

Are you a Member of the Harvey Milk LGBTQ Club?: No, but I need to become one!

If so, since when?:

Do you identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and/or queer (LGBTQ)?: No

PART 1:

Questions for All Candidates

1. Describe your qualifications for the office you are seeking. Feel free to add anything that you would like our Members to know about you and your candidacy.

I have been an active member of the SFUSD community for 15 years. I am a renter, an SF resident of 22 years, and a single mother of three who have all attended SFUSD schools since kindergarten. I have devoted limitless time and energy to supporting our schools as District PTA President and now as VP of Legislation, working with families all over the city, understanding the San Francisco and California public education systems work, and advocating for issues ranging from funding to equitable afterschool programs to more literacy support. I've taken on the hard work of identifying shared values to move stakeholders through contentious situations, of organizing parents to help pass ballot measures, and of leading countless trainings to help parents' develop leadership skills.

I have elevated community voice -- facilitating new PTAs in schools serving primarily Black and Brown students, prioritizing anti-racism work with staff and students as board president of an arts education nonprofit, seeking underrepresented voices in community engagement efforts related to SFUSD, encouraging and supporting immigrant and non-English-speaking families' involvement in our schools, and making sure educators were part of PTA decision-making.

My bio can be found at <https://www.michelleparker.org/about>

2. Do you have any key endorsements that you would like to share? Why are these endorsements meaningful to you?

I was grateful to receive the sole endorsement of the Alice B. Toklas LGBTQ Democratic Club when I ran for school board in 2018. I am seeking that endorsement again. I appreciate how collaborative Alice and Milk have been in recent years on many issues, and am looking to support those efforts.

I am honored to share that I have expanded my endorsements with this campaign, including LGBTQ leaders such as Supervisor Rafael Mandelman and BART Director Janice Lee. I am also honored to have the support of LGBTQ community leaders such as Martin Rawlings-Fein and LGBTQ non-profit advocates including Rick Oculito.

I do not take any endorsement for granted. The endorsements above are particularly meaningful to me because when someone is willing to associate their name with mine, it demonstrates trust that I will listen to, work with, and support the issues and communities they represent.

3. What do you see as the most important short-term and long-term solutions to SF's homelessness crisis? What can you do in your office to help end homelessness?

Short-term, we need to expedite the placement of people experiencing homelessness into hotels during COVID—especially as San Francisco continues to see a spike in positive COVID cases. We need to find creative temporary solutions, like the vehicle triage center in D11, while we create for permanent housing for this population. Long-term, we must build more housing. COVID has increased political will to build more 100% affordable housing, and we must leverage that will to identify additional revenue to fund the housing, which must

include supportive services to be successful. I also support building more affordable housing on the west side.

SFUSD has finally begun investing in educator housing. A portion of this housing will benefit paraeducators, who are some of SFUSD's lowest-paid staff—many earning just 44% of AMI. SFUSD also needs to continue increasing educator salaries, including passing the replacement measure for Prop G on the ballot this November. There is still more investment to make to ensure we can retain our educator workforce, to ensure that teachers aren't sleeping on friends' couches because they can't afford to rent an apartment, and that educators also have a path to home ownership.

4. What work have you done to address economic inequality and housing unaffordability in San Francisco? What will you do to address them if elected?

I have supported housing bonds, legislation and ballot measures that would increase the number of affordable and middle incomes units available to working families. I have supported efforts to exempt teachers from eviction during the school year. I support efforts to expand rent control. I support reparations for Black families negatively impacted by redlining, mortgage discrimination, and "urban renewal" in San Francisco.

If elected, I will use my position to put pressure on the City to expand housing and economic policies and priorities that benefit working families, including streamlining the building and permitting process, making it easier for small, family-owned businesses to operate and thrive in San Francisco, and advancing health initiatives that benefit families—because when families experience stability, their children are better able to come to school ready to learn. I will also advance the teacher housing efforts as quickly and strategically as possible.

5. Describe your work addressing racial injustice, economic inequity, and police brutality in San Francisco.

I worked for several years at the African American Art & Culture Complex where I developed programs to support Black artists to learn the skills to make a living practicing their art. I also raised money to support these programs. I was the Board President of an arts education non-profit that is deeply invested in anti-racism work—both through our classroom instruction and through policies and practices internally as an organization.

I fully support the recent vote to end SFUSD's relationship with SFPD, and especially appreciate and support the many other comprehensive components of this new policy that prioritize Black students' lives and minds, including a reinvestment in youth development resources by our city, an assessment of the supports we provide our students, training for staff, and more.

I also believe this new policy should include an audit of all service calls from SFUSD to SFPD over the past several years because part of the way we heal and repair harm done to communities, is by acknowledging past practices that resulted in that harm so that we know exactly which practices and behaviors need to change.

6. How have you supported LGBTQ San Franciscans, and how will you continue to do so if elected?

I actively solicit input from LGBTQ educational leaders when exploring ideas and issues related to our schools, and ask what more we can do to support LGBTQ students. I've supported many LGBTQ candidates for years, and support issues of importance to the queer community, including safety, housing, safe injection sites, mental health and

healthcare more broadly, etc., particularly for homeless youth and seniors. I will always commit to placing people before politics.

Speaking specifically about transgender students, I support the recent state law allowing transgender students to use the restroom of their choice, and believe it is critical that our schools are a safe place for every student. As part of this policy, we need to make sure SFUSD is taking proper steps to protect transgender students' right to privacy, including in the way we store student records. We should also make sure that staff privately communicate with transgender students regarding how they want to be addressed in use of names and pronouns, and then refer to the student in that way. This is critical for creating a safe, supportive and inclusive environment.

One thing the school board can do around LGBTQ and transgender-specific policies is to ask – ask for regular updates from leadership on how policy is carried out, but also ask our communities, especially those who the policy is supposed to help – how the policies are working.

7. Describe your work addressing the climate crisis, and what specific steps you would take if elected to confront climate change and environmental injustice.

I personally try to minimize time in cars, opting for public transit or walking instead. I compost, recycle and reuse. I am always looking for more ways I can make a personal impact in the fight to reduce climate change.

In our schools:

- Support green spaces and opportunities for our students to experience
- Support the Department of Sustainability and request regular report-outs. Since 2008, SFUSD's energy use has dropped by 22%, water usage is down 29%, and waste diversion has doubled to 66%.
- Support efforts to reduce car-traffic through how we structure our student assignment system, and encourage partnerships with the SFMTA to make it easier and affordable for students and families to use public transit
- Support high school career pathway programs that expose students to opportunities in environmental science as they begin to think about their future. My own son is a Forestry and Natural Science major at Cal Poly, as a result of the impact of his experience in an SFUSD environmental science course.
- Incorporate environmental justice into our science and ethnic studies courses, so that each of our students is aware of the disproportionate impacts of environmental policy on communities of color

8. Describe a time when you worked against an established power structure or entrenched authority to achieve progressive change. How was this positive change accomplished?

Several years ago I worked with other SFUSD parents to implement Afterschool for All. At that time, afterschool programs were distributed throughout the city (some free and some expensive), and not every school had a program on site. If they did have one on site, it was not necessarily affordable for all families. This was an immense barrier for working families who often couldn't afford paid programs, and also didn't have the flexibility in their work schedules to transport their child to another site with a free program in the middle of the day when school ended, as opposed to having their child stay at their school and extending the school day.

We pushed the issue. We called SFUSD and city officials. We talked about the inequities of the system and the need for San Francisco to support working families. We were able to get SFUSD Commissioner Jill Wynns to take on the issue, sponsoring a policy at the district to

put an equitable afterschool policy in place, and then-Supervisor Jane Kim to sponsor legislation at the City level. Both policies passed, and a plan was implemented. As a result, all elementary schools have afterschool programs that are affordable and available to any family who wants them.

Only School Board Candidates

1. Do you support charter schools in San Francisco? Why or why not?

I do not believe we should expand charter schools in San Francisco. Research shows that charters, as a whole, do not outperform traditional public schools and can in fact have a negative impact on students within the district.

I strongly support increased transparency and accountability of charter schools. I currently chair SFUSD's newly formed Charter School Oversight Committee where we are compiling a data library to ensure the public has access to information about charter schools' impact on student outcomes, as well as make recommendations to the school board about practices these schools should adopt. We must ensure charter schools adequately serve any and every student who enters their doors, e.g. English Language Learners, students with special needs, etc.—without counseling them out.

I also always want us to ask questions about why some students and families aren't choosing district schools, why some students aren't served well, and then challenge ourselves to deliver solutions within district-run schools. SFUSD schools should be a place where all families can be confident that their child will thrive.

2. Do you support Common Core education standards?

Yes, for a few reasons, though there are mixed results about whether they have been successful yet—but it could be too early to tell.

Common core state standards establish a clear set of expectations about which high-quality standards students across most states in this country are working toward in order to be college, career and life-ready. They are also internationally benchmarked. They encourage critical thinking and not “one way to do things.” For example, students are expected to talk about how they figured out a math problem rather than just doing it. This process helps them more deeply understand concepts that can be applied in multiple ways, and learn how to make arguments based on evidence. It also helps increase student creativity in a way previous approaches did not necessarily do. Students are also better able to interact with non-fiction text.

We are long past the implementation of CCSS, but when they were first being implemented, some of the controversy was about HOW they were rolled out, not necessarily about the content itself. I'm happy to discuss these if there is interest.

3. What is your plan to address the bullying of LGBTQ students, as well as students of traditionally marginalized communities?

My plan to support these students includes:

- Believe students when they say they are bullied, and help with follow up on next steps; don't just let it sit there.
- Prioritize a system that creates space and provides training for how adults can build strong connections with LGBTQ youth.
- Regularly use language, following up with action that shows LGBTQ youth we accept them as they are, regardless of how they identify, reveal, or conceal their sexual identity.
- Protect all youth's privacy. We must be careful not to disclose or discuss sexual identity issues with parents or anyone else, without the young person's prior permission, unless there is an immediate threat to their safety or wellbeing.

- Invest in more resources to support students through SFUSD Wellness Centers and mental health professionals on site because students who aren't in good health, including mental health, are not in their best position to learn.
- Normalize the use of pronouns in our school district, including in staff email signatures, nametags for events, commissioner names on virtual meetings, etc.
- Make sure staff and students can easily find resources to support queer and trans students; these can be listed on all schools' websites and in front offices.

4. How will you address the needs of homeless students?

I think it is in SFUSD's best interest to take responsibility to work with city and community partners to address housing for youth and families. Partnerships like the one SFUSD has with Hamilton Families (Heading Home Campaign to house 800 homeless families by 2020), and the coordinated community plan to end youth homelessness, are both appropriate and important. If we don't work together to address these issues, we can't possibly expect our students to be able to be in school ready to learn. As a school board member I would regularly ask for updates on these projects, initiate new projects if necessary, and allocate funding to support them. And, importantly, to listen to our students and families who are experiencing homelessness to be able to help meet their needs.

SFUSD and the City piloted a project two years ago to turn Buena Vista Horace Mann into a temporary family shelter in the evenings for the 10% of families who attend the school who are housing insecure or homeless, when the school isn't being used for instruction (starting in November). This is a creative way to use the facilities we have available. I support it and think we should expand it where possible.

5. What are your plans to protect undocumented students and their families?

It is critical that every student feels safe in our public schools. The school board passed a resolution after the election of Donald Trump called "Undocumented, Unafraid, and United Students" to address the impact of the threats of legal action, and particularly of separation and deportation, against students and their families, which create severe emotional, psychological and physical barriers to learning and education.

I fully support this policy. Unfortunately, I have not heard public follow-up to how this resolution has been implemented or how it has impacted students—even though I attend nearly every school board meeting. When I am elected to the board I plan to follow up to make sure the steps detailed are being carried out, and that we are supporting them with adequate resources.

I also supported noncitizen voting in school board elections all three times it was on the ballot, and actively solicited support from other parents. I did this because I strongly believe in parent engagement and the positive impact this has on children.

6. What are the most important actions that you can take in your office to stabilize and support African American students?

- Expand early education in partnership with the City, so that all children in San Francisco have access to two years of high-quality, publicly funded preschool before kindergarten and can enter SFUSD school-ready.
- Reduce teacher turnover in schools serving large groups of underserved students through support (relevant, high-quality PD; programs like Bayview Ignite; and intense support for new teachers), higher salaries, affordable housing, and recruiting locally.

- Invest in community schools models and practices.
- Invest in more mental health services, as well as fully implement and resource programs like restorative practices, safe and supportive schools, and the new resolution abolishing law enforcement on school campuses that includes a comprehensive set of directives.

I am concerned that some of the central office funds that were cut in this recent budget could directly impact our Black students: I saw reduced funds for recruiting at HBCUs, a reduction in the AAALI office, and reduced restorative practices training for educators.

Additionally, this opportunity gap is closing too slowly. Our students don't have time to wait. We must accelerate this through some of the strategies mentioned above, in addition to others that address foundational issues that affect a student's ability to be ready to learn when they enter a classroom—virtual or in person. These issues include housing insecurity, food insecurity, employment, mentorship programs starting in elementary grades not high school, etc.

7. Do you support alternatives to a student's suspension in instances of disruption or willful defiance?

Yes. Studies indicate that suspension does not lead to positive results for the student or changes in behavior, but instead can increase shame, alienation, and rejection amongst students. One study even found that students are 5x more likely to dropout, 6x more likely to repeat a grade, and 3x more likely to have contact with the juvenile justice system if suspended. Additionally, African American, Latinx, and students with disabilities are disproportionately suspended, with most of those are results of "willful defiance."

San Francisco has been implementing restorative practices for many years, but in my understanding and observation that it has not been done with fidelity. In order to be effective, all members of the school community must understand what restorative justice is and how it works, and trained/skilled educators must be facilitating the process. It must also be fully funded and supported. This must be a priority in SFUSD.

I also believe that we must create more space and support for educators and other adults in our schools to build trusting relationships with students, including creating more mentorship programs.

8. Do you support the removal of the *Life of Washington* mural at George Washington High School? Why or why not? If yes, what form of removal do you support?

Unfortunately, SFUSD did not follow through on its promise in the 1960s when the Crumpler counter-murals were painted. It had agreed to create plaques and curriculum around the LOW murals, which is part of why the BSU and Black Panthers agreed to solution. This is the kind of lack of follow-through that makes our Black families not trust the district.

I don't believe students should be forced to walk by the mural as it currently exists; I also don't think the mural should be permanently destroyed. I think the board should have worked harder to identify another solution—one that embraces both the need to recognize and support historically underserved and undervalued people, and an effort to embrace artistic expression as a potential catalyst for change and truth-tell. While there are various options that could work, one that I would suggest would address the problematic representations in this artwork and comes from ways other communities have attempted to address similar works. It would be similar to how the American Museum of Natural History handled the [Old New York Diorama](#) (description at the link), and would involve covering all/part of the murals with glass or plexiglass and correcting and giving context to the images

so that is impossible to view the images without seeing why these are problematic representations of Indigenous people and enslaved Africans—all done in partnership with Indigenous and African American people and leaders. We could also find other solutions as a community, as this is an issue that will come up again with other WPA art in public spaces across the city.

The most essential thing we can do for our Black and Indigenous students is to collectively address the trauma that has been triggered when some of them view the murals. We must invest the resources in our communities to show them that Black and Indigenous bodies and minds matter. This means we train our staff in trauma-informed teaching practices, we teach and interact in culturally responsive and reflective ways, we make sure that staff receive and practice implicit bias training and coaching, and we treat all of our students like the brilliant and capable beings they are. We build their sense of self-worth and personal voice all the way from Pre-K by treating them with dignity and respect. We should also invest in the strategies I listed in #6. This is where I believe the Board and District should focus the majority of its time and energy.

As a side note on a partially related issue, there is a movement in the district to rename schools after people who more accurately reflect our district's values. I support these conversations and will look to school communities to determine how to move forward based on their collective efforts.

PART 2:

Yes or No Questions

*(Please check **Yes** or **No** for each question.)*

**GENERAL
YES NO**

Are you registered to vote as a Democrat?	Y	
---	---	--

Have you ever sought elected office before?	Y	
---	---	--

School Board in 2018. Came in 5th with 65,000 votes; 3 were elected.

Do you have a campaign consultant or other main point of contact? If so, who? ___Maggie Muir is my consultant, but I am the main contact for now. I hope to hire a campaign manager soon._____	Y	
--	---	--

Have you ever sought a Milk Club endorsement in the past?	Y	
---	---	--

LGBTQ ISSUES & SEXUAL LIBERATION

YES NO

Do you support codifying various relationship structures as a protected class? (For example, a law that would prohibit discrimination against people in consensual nonmonogamous relationships in employment, housing, education, and healthcare.)	Y	
--	---	--

Do you support public funding for workforce programs, specifically for transgender job-seekers?	Y	
---	---	--

Do you support public funding to expand access to PrEP?	Y	
---	---	--

Do you support decriminalizing sex work?	Y	
--	---	--

TENANTS, HOUSING, AND HOMELESSNESS

YES NO

Do you support immediate rent cancellation and mortgage forbearance for all tenants and homeowners impacted by COVID-19?	Y	
--	---	--

Do you support the creation of an independent commission to oversee the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Services?	Y	
---	---	--

Do you support the split-role repeal of Proposition 13?	Y	
---	---	--

Do you support the repeal of the Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act?	Y	
--	---	--

Do you support the repeal of the Ellis Act?	Y	
---	---	--

Have you ever evicted a tenant?		N
---------------------------------	--	---

Do you support the sweeps of homeless encampments by the Department of Public Works or SFPD?		N
--	--	---

Do you support the public acquisition of hotel rooms for permanent shelter and/or supportive housing for the homeless?	Y	
--	---	--

Did you support Measure D, the vacant property tax, this year?	Y	
--	---	--

If you're referring to Peskin's vacant storefront tax from last year, yes.

Would you support a licensing system for landlords in San Francisco?		
--	--	--

I am a renter in San Francisco. I don't know anything about this issue, including pros and cons, so don't have a position at this moment.

Do you support a public municipal bank in San Francisco?	Y	
--	---	--

Do you support this year's proposed real estate transfer tax for properties valued at or over \$10 million?	Y	
---	---	--

IMMIGRATION JUSTICE ISSUES

YES NO

Should U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement be abolished?	Y	
---	---	--

Do you support San Francisco's Sanctuary City status?	Y	
---	---	--

Do you support due process protections for immigrant youth accused of crimes?	Y	
---	---	--

Do you support allowing undocumented San Franciscans to serve on City boards and commissions?	Y	
---	---	--

Do you support increased funds for immigrant defense services?	Y	
--	---	--

RACIAL & SOCIAL JUSTICE

YES NO

Do you support the death penalty?		N
Do you support the use of tasers by law enforcement?		N
Do you support requiring an independent investigation of all police officer-related shootings?	Y	
Does your campaign accept contributions from law-enforcement associations, unions, or organizations?		N
Do you support disbanding the SFPD and requiring officers to reapply to a newly constructed, less violent police force?		
I believe we have the opportunity to fundamentally re-envision how we deliver safety and support communities. It can't just be reforms that haven't caused fundamental change to agencies' cultures and practices. We have to work with community to create what this new structure looks like.		
Should the San Francisco Police Officers Association be disbanded or at least have its political influence in the City severely curtailed?	Y	
Do you support qualified immunity for police officers?		N
Do you support reparations for Black San Franciscans?	Y	
Do you support the implementation of supervised injection/consumption sites?	Y	
Do you support extending voting rights in local elections to currently and formerly incarcerated people?	Y	
Have you ever crossed a union picket line or ignored a union boycott?		N
Do you support the right for public sector employees to go on strike?	Y	
Do support repealing California's Proposition 209?	Y	
Do you support the California App-Based Drivers Regulations Initiative?		N
Do you support rebuilding the county jail at 850 Bryant?		N

ENVIRONMENTAL AND TRANSPORTATION ISSUES
YES NO

Do you support dissolving Pacific, Gas, & Electric and replacing it with a publicly-owned utility agency?	Y	
---	---	--

Do you support expanding the CleanPower SF program?	Y	
---	---	--

Do you support a plan to provide free transportation citywide?	Y	
--	---	--

Should the mayor continue to appoint all commissioners to the SFMTA?	Y	
--	---	--

It's important to have checks and balances. In this case, I believe there are because the BOS confirms appointments, and has the power to deny any they don't agree with. They also appoint the SFMTA CAC.

PUBLIC CORRUPTION & POLITICAL TRANSPARENCY

YES NO

Did you support the <i>Sunlight on Dark Money (Prop. F)</i> measure on the November 2019 ballot?	Y	
--	---	--

Do you support expanding SF's public financing program to all City and County elected offices?	Y	
--	---	--

Do you support Supervisor Matt Haney's ballot measure to split Public Works into two departments, each with its own oversight commission?		
---	--	--

I don't know enough about this issue as of today and so haven't formed an opinion yet.

Do you support Supervisor Gordon Mar's ballot measure to create an Office of the Public Advocate?		
---	--	--

The BOS voted to not place this on the ballot last week. I always support increased transparency and accountability.

PART 3:

Support of Other Candidates

(Please answer whom you support or supported in each race. If you made a ranked endorsement or voted for more than one candidate using IRV, please indicate the rankings.)

2020

Candidate

Democratic Presidential Primary	Elizabeth Warren
CA State Senate, District 11	Scott Wiener
District 1 Supervisor	Marjan Philhour
District 3 Supervisor	
District 5 Supervisor	Vallie Brown
District 7 Supervisor	Myrna Melgar
District 11 Supervisor	Ahsha Safai

2019

Candidate

District 5 Supervisor	Vallie Brown
San Francisco District Attorney	Suzy Loftus

2018

Candidate

Mayor	#1 London Breed, #2 Mark Leno
District 4 Supervisor	
District 6 Supervisor	
District 8 Supervisor	Rafael Mandelman
District 10 Supervisor	Shamann Walton