

SF DCCC Candidate Questionnaire Board of Education

By signing below, you acknowledge that you will comply with the SFDCCC's Bylaws and Policies and Procedures and you will not utilize the SFDCCC name, the San Francisco Democratic Party, or its logo without written permission.

Phil Kim
Board of Education


_____ (signature)
8/12/18

Phil Kim

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Are you a registered member of the Democratic Party? **Yes**
Have you read the California Democratic Party Platform? **Yes**
Will you fight for its implementation in policies? **Yes**
What office are you running for? **Board of Education**
Are you running for re-election? **No**
What other elected positions have you held previously? **None**

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please complete this questionnaire and bring 5 copies (for the 31 Committee members and for Democratic Clubs) with you to be distributed just prior to your interview appointment on **August 18, 2018**

****IMPORTANT**** Please send electronic copies to info@SFDemocrats.org by **5:00 PM on August 13, 2018**

With the possible exception of a Democratic candidate filing to run after the questionnaire due date, only candidates who return a completed questionnaire electronically by the due date will be allowed to present before the committee.

At the time of the interview, you may also provide 45 copies of up to 4 pages of supplemental information attached to your questionnaire for distribution to SFDCCC members (materials are not to be passed out during the meeting).

We may distribute the questionnaires in preparation for event and post them on the SFDCCC website for the public to view.

If you have not heard from the committee by **Thursday, August 16**, please contact Executive Director, Adam Mehis at 415-626-1161 or info@sfdemocrats.org to schedule a time slot during the Endorsement Interview Meeting.

PART I: GENERAL QUESTIONS (200 words or less)

Why are you committed to serving on the School Board? What stake do you have in decisions made at the School Board (e.g. parent, student, educator, etc.)?

I began my career in education as a 7th grade science teacher. Now I have the privilege of working at the regional, state, and national levels on science education and policy. I have become an expert on science and STEM education. I am the only candidate running who is a credentialed teacher, has a Masters in urban education policy and administration, and who has worked at the state and national levels on STEM education. I am proud of the work I am doing to elevate the teaching profession, and to close the achievement gap across the country.

I also happen to be the only gay Asian male running for office in San Francisco. And, though my identity isn't the reason I am running, I am very aware that diversity matters. I grew up in public schools, the son of Korean immigrants. My mom is a single mother who lives under the poverty line and struggles to make ends meet. I received free lunches at school and we were not able to pay for basic school supplies. I believe the leadership of any organization should reflect the people and communities they serve. My passion for education is grounded in the very real experiences that I had as a student in public schools, and the challenges I still see my family and younger brother face today.

As a learning organization, the District's priorities hinge upon great teaching and inclusive school environments, both of which I have years of experience developing. I'm proud of the work I've done around restorative practices, socio-emotional learning, and broadening opportunities in STEM. I'm excited to bring these experiences and knowledge to SFUSD.

Please describe your contributions to the Democratic Party and/or increasing civic engagement in the democratic process at the local, state and or/national level in the most recent years.

I volunteered for Obama for America in both the 2008 and 2012 elections in my home state of Michigan and on my college campus at Bucknell University in Lewisburg, PA. Since moving to the Bay, I have become a member of various Democratic Clubs including Harvey Milk Democratic Club, Alice B Toklas Democratic Club, and United Democratic Club. I volunteered for local political campaigns and have become an active supporter of Democratic candidates across the country. I participated in the Victory Institute's campaign training and the Equality California's Leadership Institute.

Are there any other civic causes or organizations that you are involved with? Please describe.

I recently joined the board of LYRIC Center for LGBTQ Youth that works to support our school- and transition-aged youth. I also serve as President of the Bucknell University Alumni Club of Northern California

Please summarize your qualifications and experience for the office you are seeking.

The combination of my identities and professional experiences uniquely qualifies me for this office. As an Educator, my professional experience has provided me with a unique perspective and deep understanding of how we can address SFUSD's challenges. As a learning organization, the District's priorities hinge upon great teaching and inclusive school environments, both of which I have years of experience developing. I'm proud of the work I've done around restorative practices, socio-emotional learning, and broadening opportunities in STEM.

I also know first-hand how transformative an incredible teacher can change the trajectory of students. And I believe the leadership of any organization should reflect the people and communities they serve. I am the son of Korean immigrants who lost their failing family business. I received free lunches at school and we were not able to pay for basic school supplies. My passion for education is grounded in the very real experiences that I had as a student in public schools, and the challenges I still see my family and younger brother face today. I benefited from a community who set high expectations and never gave up. I believe we need school board members who not only reflect the communities we serve, but who are willing to offer bold new policies that are informed by the needs of our students and families. I'm excited to bring these experiences and knowledge to SFUSD.

Please list any organizations or elected officials who have endorsed you. (You may attach a list and exceed the word count limit).

- CA State Senator Scott Wiener
- CCSF Trustee Alex Randolph
- Leadership for Educational Equity

If you are elected, what are your top concerns? How would you address these concerns?

1. Achievement and Opportunity Gap. Our data shows that we as a District have been consistently underserving our most marginalized communities, specifically our Black and Brown families in the south eastern portion of our City. This will be my top priority as a board member, and I will push our District to present a plan for how we address this gap, work with our communities to set goals and metrics, and ensure we constantly reflect and revisit this priority. We know that great teaching is the highest in-school factor to closing the achievement gap, which is why I believe I am uniquely qualified to be a Commissioner on our school board (see point 3 below).

2. **Educator Sustainability.** Turnover of teachers and leaders at the school site is painful. We lose out on the progress made throughout the year as each teacher leaves, and we know that our most successful school environments have a stable teaching workforce. I will prioritize the retention of our teachers by ensuring teachers are getting the right professional development and mentorship opportunities to continuously grow in their work.
3. **Focus on Teaching and Learning.** A school district's top priority is to provide the best teaching and learning experience for our students. As a learning organization, our entire foundation is based on great teaching. This is why I find it imperative that we have someone on the Board with deep experience on pedagogy and instruction, who has done the work before. I am the only candidate who has worked as a classroom teacher, has an MA in urban education policy and administration, and has worked at the state and national levels on STEM education policy. I will work to put the needs of our students first, to focus on how we can leverage our best teachers and learn from them so that we can support others, and to center all of our decisions on how it will serve the needs of our families.

The California Democratic Party Platform mentions building health, livable, and sustainable communities, what does this mean to you?

I believe that building a healthy, livable, and sustainable community means that we must build cities where all people feel included, and that all people including new and life-long residents can see hope and opportunity in any city they choose to call home. From an education perspective, that means that families, regardless of the zip code they are in, have access to a high quality public school in their neighborhood. As an educator, this means that our staff can bring their full selves to work, without fear and with pride.

In a City as rich in resources as San Francisco, as diverse and progressive as we are, we should have a world-class education system that meets the needs of all students. Unfortunately, we have a lot of work to do. I firmly believe that families in all corners of San Francisco should have access to a high-quality school in their neighborhood, that doesn't require them to travel across town. We can be a District that elevates our most marginalized communities by providing them with the resources and access to opportunities they deserve. I also believe that we can get to a place where we fund our schools to the levels they need by pushing our state leaders to fully fund public education. We must ensure that teachers can live in the communities that they teach in. I know that with the right people and ideas in place, we can accomplish this and ensure that every child is receiving the best possible education.

Would you support the idea of school districts using local accountability plans to grant funds to reach students with the greatest needs for whom they are most needed? Why or why not?

Absolutely. Our Local Control Funding Formula is a progressive state education funding policy. It is truly an equity-focused funding system that seeks to bring dollars to where it matters most. As a result, I believe that school districts should be explicit on how they plan to use those funds to reach students with the greatest needs, including English Language Learners, foster youth, low-income/free and reduced lunch families, and families of color.

PART II: YES/NO QUESTIONS

While it may seem that some of these questions do not apply to the office you are seeking, they represent California Democratic Party Platform principles and since many people run for higher office where they will be called upon to answer these questions, we would like them addressed.

ECONOMIC JUSTICE

Do you support the divestment of public funds from Wells Fargo and other financial institutions involved in speculative and questionable banking practices? **Yes**

Do you believe that the government should provide foreclosure relief for borrowers who were victims of unethical financial service practices? **Yes**

Do you support the creation of a local municipal bank in San Francisco? **Yes**

CRIMINAL JUSTICE/POLICE REFORM

Do you support overhauling the bail system? **Yes**

Do you believe in ending mass incarceration and supporting the abolishment of capital punishment? **Yes**

Do you support using jails as mental health facilities and substance abuse treatment programs? **Yes**

Will you commit to encouraging “ban the box” to ensure that those formerly incarcerated are given an equal opportunity for housing and employment? **Yes**

Do you support the San Francisco Police Department being equipped with Tasers? **No**

CHILDCARE

Do you support expanding affordable childcare to low- and middle-income families? **Yes**

Do you support expanding child care to include children aged 0-3 years old? **Yes**

EDUCATION

Do you believe in a “debt-free college” and free community college (i.e. Education financed entirely without student loans)? **Yes**

Would you support the idea of school districts using local accountability plans to grant funds to reach students with the greatest needs for whom they are most needed? **Yes**

Do you support that teachers and professional staff deserve commensurate wages? **Yes**

ENVIRONMENT

Do you oppose new fossil fuel infrastructure projects and supporting the divestment of fossil fuels? **Yes**

Do you believe in Free MUNI for youth? **Yes**

Do you support the Safe Routes to Schools program? **Yes**

HEALTHCARE

Do you support a publicly funded single payer health care system for all people? **Yes**

Should SFUSD expand Healthcare Centers to all high schools? **Yes**

Do you support that all students have access to safe and reliable reproductive services and information without their spouse, judicial, parental, or guardian consent? **Yes**

CIVIL RIGHTS AND IMMIGRATION JUSTICE ISSUES

Will you work to implement full Ethnic Studies courses and language immersion? **Yes**

Will you support Sanctuary policies and Due Process for All -- limiting the ability for local authorities to collaborate with Federal government on immigration enforcement which incites fear in immigrant communities? **Yes**

Do you support speaking out in public against all forms of racism, discrimination, hatred and violence and support standing in solidarity with movements that promote equity, including Black Lives Matter? **Yes**

Will you protect the right of all people to use facilities and participate in all aspects of society regardless of their gender identity and the gender assigned at birth? **Yes**

LABOR

Will you support the push for a statewide minimum wage for at least \$15 per hour and living wages for areas that have high cost of living? **Yes**

Do you support that teachers and professional staff deserve commensurate wages? **Yes**

Do you support paid parental leave for school educators? **Yes**

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

Do you support full disclosure of funding sources for political advertisements? **Yes**

HOUSING, TENANT, & LAND USE ISSUES

Do you believe that housing is a human right? **Yes**

Do you believe the split roll for Proposition 13 that treats taxes for commercial and residential property differently? **Yes**

Would you support repealing Costa Hawkins and the Ellis Act? **Yes**

Do you support use of SFUSD property to build affordable housing? **Yes**

Have you read the California Democratic Party Platform? **Yes**

Will you fight for its implementation in policies? **Yes**

PART III: SHORT-ANSWER QUESTIONS ON ISSUES (250 words or less)

1) What programs or initiatives would you undertake to address the educational disparities for SFUSD students?

Though there is no silver bullet in education, we know that high-quality teaching is the biggest in-school factor to driving student outcomes. This means that we must focus in on the resources our teachers are using (curriculum) and providing training and feedback they need to grow. As a learning organization, SFUSD has a responsibility to provide the best possible resources for our teachers and students, including access to a robust and rigorous curriculum, and the adequate training for educators and leaders in our District. This means our teachers have dedicated managers and coaches who are partnering with them on their learning and development, and who are able to provide formative feedback to help our teachers grow. We should also provide teachers with implicit bias training, workshops on race and equity in education, professional development tailored for trauma-informed teaching and socio-emotional learning, and intervention practices to support struggling learners.

Our schools that serve high populations of Black/African American students should be closely partnering with local service agencies and community organizations to both celebrate the Black/African American community and provide direct support services to families and students in our schools. We must continue to invest in our African American Achievement and Leadership Initiative to bolster our targeted intervention and supports, and look to other opportunities to support the African American population through deeper partnerships with organizations such as Black Girls Code and Mentoring for Success.

I also believe that one of the biggest areas of growth for our District is rebuilding our partnerships and trust with parents and families of color, specifically in the Bayview/Hunters Point community, who feel marginalized from years of educationally underserving schools. There is much work to be done to gain their trust, demonstrate our willingness and authentic investment in that particular community, and refocus our efforts to double down on the community schools in those neighborhoods.

2) What would be your budget priorities for the School District?

- Increased funding for teacher feedback and data systems. In order for us to support teachers and leaders in their growth and development, we must have a world-class coaching and feedback system that allows for teachers to get the feedback they need to grow in their practice. I am committed to working with our school sites and District staff to get them both the curricular resources and coaching tools necessary to identify our strongest teachers, learn from them, and scale their practice across our District.
- STEM education access. We must ensure that our students are getting exposure to the skills most relevant today so that we can prepare them for the jobs of tomorrow. I am committed to working with our community and business partners to increase our opportunities for students to engage in

extern/internships, invest more in our STEM courses, and ensure that every school has access to the latest technology and highest quality resources.

- Talent recruitment and retention. From teacher housing to hard-to-staff school stipends, it is imperative that we come up with creative solutions to get our teachers an income that matches their hard work. We need to appropriately invest in our paraeducators, explore housing stipends to keep people in their homes, and consider ways in which we can partner with the City to provide our educators with opportunities to own their homes.

3) Do you believe that SFUSD's school assignment system needs reform? If not, why? If so, how would you change it?

It is clear that the school assignment system has not worked for the families it was meant to benefit most. While I support families having access to schools across our District, I believe we must do more to support our most vulnerable communities in understanding the school assignment process, while also ensuring we rebuild the trust with our parents.

I believe we must make the assignment system transparent by providing more data and information for parents on the quality of every school, and giving parents the ability to engage in the process online. Parents should easily find out how our schools are doing, and we must ensure that this information is both transparent, understandable, and accessible for families looking to send their children to SFUSD.

Additionally, one of the biggest challenges we face is that parents are losing trust in the quality of our public schools and, therefore, feel that their options of high-quality schools are limited. A part of this is how our parents perceive our schools and the reputations our schools carry. We have a lot of work to do to change that narrative around and welcome families into our school buildings. However, we must also push forward with providing the highest quality instruction and stable school environments for all our schools so that we are continuously raising the bar by closing the achievement gap and providing equitable resources and opportunities for our schools.

There are also things we can do immediately to improve the experience for our families engaging in the school assignment system, including broadening opportunities for families to visit school sites, creating virtual school visits so that families can access and explore campuses online, and making our enrollment process electronic.

4) What is your belief on Common Core Standards? In recent years, there has been controversy that the new methodology is placing some students at a disadvantage for high achievement and college preparation. How would you address this concern?

The Common Core Standards allow for greater alignment for educators, more focused guidance on structuring curriculum, and subject-specific training around grade-appropriate learning. I believe that standards, when designed well, can help to increase the rigor of our teaching and learning. This does not, however, mean that every student will necessarily be at that level, and it is up to our schools and educators to appropriately scaffold and differentiate the curriculum and/or instructional practices to meet the needs of students in the classroom.

Therefore, I believe that we must double-down on teacher training and professional development to ensure all our educators are equipped with the tools, resources, and skills necessary to better differentiate their instruction to meet more students where they are at. Programs such as EL Achieve, dedicated to best practices in integrated English-language development, that build on the Common Core can help provide teachers with the strategies to better scaffold their instruction in the classroom. We must ensure that we have teacher coaches who are building deep relationships with staff, who are able to observe and provide weekly feedback, and support our teachers in their growth and development.

5) What do you think are the factors attributing to the teacher shortage in SFUSD? How would you address this?

I believe teacher sustainability is one of our District's most critical challenges. I will focus on building our talent pipeline to ensure we recruit the best teachers and leaders. We must also seek to support our current teachers and create incentives and opportunities for growth that keep talented teachers in the profession.

We need to get creative in how we ensure teachers and staff are able to live in the communities they teach in. I am in favor of exploring ways to not only increase base salary, but to incentivize teachers with increases in stipends for hard to staff schools and vulnerable subject areas such as Special Education, Science, and Math. We live in a beautiful, vibrant, and diverse city. Recruitment should play to those strengths while also addressing our affordability issues head on.

Not only do we need to address the structural issues in our city that can result in the loss of talented professionals, including affordability and housing costs, but we must also address school culture and ensure that teachers feel adequately supported by their supervisors, principals and support staff. This means recruiting talented leadership and managers and in many cases getting out of the way and letting talented teachers teach without placing burdensome demands on them and removing the red tape that can hold our most forward-thinking and creative staff behind.

6) What is your perspective about charter schools and their role in San Francisco? How would you advocate differently than SFUSD's current policies?

I support free, open-enrollment, non-profit charter public schools in exchange for partnership, collaboration, and adequate accountability of improved outcomes for students. I believe our public education system should empower families and students with high-quality school options, and that it is incumbent upon our District to ensure there is adequate accountability systems and equitable structures so that students, regardless of where they live, have access to great schools.

One of the major purposes of a charter school is to bring innovation and creativity to how a traditional school system delivers public education. Therefore, I believe our biggest lever on holding charter schools accountable is by closely following the outcomes of their students and ensuring charter schools are producing outcomes that are exceeding the District.

7) Do you support the Safe and Supportive Schools Policy at SFUSD? How would you further these goals as a School Board member?

Yes, I support the Safe and Supportive Schools Policy at SFUSD. In particular, I will continue to champion progressive legislation to support, broaden, and deepen LGBTQ services, protections, and celebrations, including expanding LGBTQ studies in SFUSD, promoting diversity and inclusivity trainings for all schools, and partnering with community-based organizations to bring more services to LGBTQ students in our District.

8) What role do you feel the Board of Education should play in sexual harassment and assault cases involving students? If elected, how will you address this concern?

Our District has a strict, zero-tolerance policy on sexual harassment and assault cases involving students. Any staff found to have sexually harassed or assaulted a student should be immediately dismissed and not allowed to teach at SFUSD again.

9) There is a perception that parent-led fundraising has widened the educational inequality gap among schools. What are your thoughts on this issue and how would you address distribution of school funds districtwide?

Creating an equitable school system requires us to redistribute funds so that money is going to where it is needed most. We can leverage the SFUSD Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) to allocate funds to our most struggling schools, and ensure that those funds go to targeted initiatives to support our most marginalized communities. Additionally, the weighted student formula and our allocation of funds should be re-examined every year to ensure we are seeing progress on our work, and that we are constantly reflecting on our priorities to best meet the needs of our students.

10) What role do you believe SFUSD should play in the City's housing crisis? How would you address the needs of homeless or underhoused students and their families?

I believe we must act as a city and community to address our housing challenges head on. It starts with increasing the number of available units and I support efforts to ensure new affordable housing is made available quickly by streamlining new affordable housing construction and eliminating the deep bureaucracy that often stands in the way of approving new housing construction. We must also work to stop the recent increase in evictions by addressing the legal framework that makes it easy for landlords to find loopholes in the law. I am committed to supporting efforts to address our housing crisis and will be a vocal supporter of such efforts as a member of the school board.

Income inequality has reached alarming levels and it will take further action on the federal and state level to defend public unions, strengthen the social safety net and address the need for universal health care to ensure everyone can receive access to care when they need it.

I am committed to ensuring that our homeless families and students receive as much support from SFUSD as possible, while partnering with local government agencies and community-based organizations to get them the services and support they need to stay in our City and into stable, long-term housing. We must ensure that our mental health and wraparound support services remain in our schools, and that we invest in our healthcare workers who partner with our schools in delivering services on-site. Our schools should be made accessible to the community, including and not limited to opening our doors for community organizations to meet and provide services to families.

11) Beyond reforming school assignment program, what do you see as the greatest barriers or major issues for families and youth getting to school safely while reducing traffic congestion?

I believe that families should have access to a high-quality school in their neighborhood, within walking, biking, or short transit distance. While I support the intentions of our school assignment system in allowing families to identify schools that they believe will best serve their child, there are clear challenges that arise from this system. As families are matched with schools across the City, often times parents are forced to either travel to drop off students at their schools. In order for that to decrease, I strongly believe we must increase the number of high-quality school options in every neighborhood across the City so that families do not have to travel long distances to send their children to great schools. One of the biggest challenges we face is that parents are losing trust in the quality of our public schools and, therefore, feel that their options of high-quality schools are limited. A part of this is how our parents perceive our schools and the reputations our schools carry. We have a lot of work to do to change that narrative around and welcome families into our school buildings. However, we must also push forward with providing the highest quality instruction and stable school environments for all our schools so that we are continuously raising the bar by closing the achievement gap and

providing equitable resources and opportunities for our schools. This, I believe, is the best way to incentivize families and students to choose their closest neighborhood school.

Additionally, I believe we must make the assignment system transparent and more accessible by providing more data and information for parents on the quality of every school, and giving parents the ability to engage in the process online.