

Dear Candidate:

The San Francisco Democratic Party (SFDCCC) is eager to learn more about your candidacy and invites you to participate in our endorsement process.

If you would like to be considered for an endorsement by SFDCCC, please complete the attached Endorsement Questionnaire and return to [info@sfdemocrats.org](mailto:info@sfdemocrats.org) by Monday, August 13 at 5:00pm. Our Endorsement Committee will meet candidates for interviews on August 18, 2018. The exact time of your interview and location will be provided to you after we review your completed Candidate Endorsement Questionnaire and have determined that you meet our bottom line requirements to be considered for an endorsement. At the time of the interview, you may also provide additional information to supplement your questionnaire. You are limited to four (4) total pages, and you must provide 5 copies.

SFDCCC seeks to encourage the election of qualified local candidates who will help to advance our shared Democratic values. We are only able to endorse registered Democrats, except in the case of a nonpartisan race in which no registered Democrat has qualified for the ballot. We also seek to support those candidates who express agreement and have demonstrated support for our core issues and priorities, which are included in the California Democratic Party Platform, our Bylaws, and Policies and Procedures Manual (which can all be found at [www.cadems.org](http://www.cadems.org) and [www.sfdemocrats.org](http://www.sfdemocrats.org)).

To qualify for an endorsement interview, all candidates must indicate that they support the Democratic principles in our party platform, complete the Candidate Endorsement Questionnaire, and return it by the deadline of August 13, 2018 at 5:00pm.

Candidate interviews will be brief and will be open to both SFDCCC members and members of San Francisco's chartered democratic clubs. Following the Endorsement Committee interview, the full body will deliberate and vote on a final endorsement at our meeting scheduled for August 22, 2018, at 6:30pm, at the Tenderloin Community Elementary School. Meetings are open to the general public and are live streamed on our Facebook page. You are welcome to attend or follow our progress online.

The following rules also apply to the SFDCCC endorsement process and any violation may be subject to further actions, including a revocation of the endorsement: 1. Candidates may only use the "SF Democratic Party" name and image after the full membership endorsement; 2. Once endorsed, the SFDCCC will provide a high-resolution copy of our logo which may be used in your materials only for the race for which you were endorsed; 3. In the case of elections in which Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) is employed, listing of the SFDCCC endorsement must accurately reflect the ranked endorsement as detailed in our Policies and Procedures Manual; 4. Third parties wishing to utilize the SFDCCC name or logo in their campaign materials must submit a request to our Executive Director.

Thank you very much for your interest in the SFDCCC endorsement. Please do not hesitate to

contact us should you have any questions. We look forward to learning more about your candidacy and your campaign.

Respectfully, The San Francisco Democratic Party

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.

Gabriela López  
(name)

Board of Education  
(position you are seeking)

  
(signature)

August 13, 2018  
(date)

## SF DCCC Candidate Questionnaire Board of Education

Name: Gabriela López

Address: 1762 Pine Street Apt. 6

City, State, Zip: San Francisco, CA, 94110

Campaign Phone Number: (415) 879-8683

Cell Phone Number: (213) 509-0704

E-mail Address: gabriela@gabrielalopez.org

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?

I was appointed by Board of Education Commissioner Mark Sanchez to the Public Enrichment Education Fund Community Advisory Committee for the San Francisco Unified School District. Also appointed by President of United Educators of San Francisco Lita Blanc to the English Language Learners Committee for the California Federation of Teachers.

### 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](mailto: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)**

**Are you a registered member of the Democratic Party?**

Yes! I have been since I was 18 years old.

**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 recent years.**

As an educator, teacher and community organizer I engage with my local community on a daily basis. Working immigrant families in my community are often left out of policy conversations involving their children and/or themselves. I have worked hard to support and organize with them by providing resources and offering community spaces where they can engage in local democratic spaces. Although many of the working immigrant families I work with may not be able to vote, I have put my efforts in empowering their voices so that they can volunteer, organize and support issues and policies they are passionate about.

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

I am on the executive board of the Latino Democratic Club as VP of Communications. And I am also a member of a number of other democratic clubs across San Francisco, including Harvey Milk Democratic Club, San Francisco Latin@ Young Dems, San Francisco Young Dems, and other organizations doing civic engagement! My work as an educator has been informing the people in various communities the importance of being involved in local/state and national politics, and registering people to vote! Specifically women, people of color, and communities where there are language barriers.

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

I have been working in education for over 10 years, and I am the only public school teacher running who is currently in the classroom. I will also be the only bilingual educator on the board of education. I started my career as a paraeducator in the same public school district I attended, and I also worked in arts education at a non-profit that provided professional development for public schools to bring arts instruction into the classroom. I attended Cal State Dominguez Hills and UCLA to get my Bachelor's in Liberal Studies, teaching credential, BCLAD certification

and Master's in Education. I am now a fifth grade Spanish Immersion teacher and the mentor of a teacher candidate from USF. At my site, I am a teacher leader as the representative of our Union Building Committee, being on the School Site Council and the Arts Coordinator.

In addition to these roles, I am on the English Language Learners Committee for the California Federation of Teachers. I am also the only teacher serving on the Public Education Enrichment Fund Community Advisory Committee which oversees the \$74+ million budget in arts education, sports and libraries. I am a core member of Teachers 4 Social Justice and I volunteer with the Academic Peer Education Project in San Quentin. Having this wide range of experience in education and policy lets me see firsthand the challenges facing our public schools, which is what we need on the Board of Education.

**Please list any organizations or elected officials who have endorsed you.**

I am proud to have the support from the following people and organizations:

Jane Kim, Board of Supervisors District 6

Sandra Lee Fewer, Board of Supervisors District 1

Hillary Ronen, Board of Supervisors District 9

Hydra Mendoza-McDonnell, President San Francisco Board of Education

Mark Sanchez, San Francisco Board of Education

Matt Haney, San Francisco Board of Education

David Campos, Chair San Francisco Democratic Party (DCCC)\*

Art Agnos, Former Mayor San Francisco

Brigitte Davila, President City College of San Francisco Board of Trustees\*

Jen Low, San Francisco Democratic Party\*

Kelly Groth, San Francisco Democratic Party (DCCC)\*

Alysabeth Alexander, San Francisco Democratic Party (DCCC)\*

Peter Gallotta, San Francisco Democratic Party (DCCC)\*

Frances Hsieh, San Francisco Democratic Party (DCCC)\*

San Francisco Latino Democratic Club

Rose Pak Democratic Club

San Francisco League of Pissed Off Voters

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

My concerns are affordability for families and educators. I understand that this crisis is first and foremost a salary crisis. Investments in affordable housing for educators are important, but do not replace the need for competitive salaries. I will support the call for an independent audit to clearly see where money is being spent, making it more helpful to learn how we can raise the 38% of SFUSD budget to something more competitive.

Another is the systemic racism in the allocation of resources and the school assignment system. We must recognize as a community that the root cause of segregation in our schools run deeper than the assignment process, and SFUSD needs to seek families' reasons for leaving.

And lastly, the opportunity gap for African-Americans, Latino, Pacific Islanders and other marginalized groups. I think we should look to fundamentally change the classroom supports, ensuring that classrooms have more paraeducator support, and that every school has full-time social workers, nurses and counselors. I believe we need more community based initiatives that address, not just the quality of instruction, but poverty. And look closely at how we can expand and strengthen the most successful aspects of such programs like those in community schools.

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

To me that means supporting communities, especially communities of color. That means empowering and amplifying the voices of organizers and community members so that they can advocate for the needs of their respective community. In order to build healthy, livable, and sustainable communities, that demands putting community voices first. The California Democratic Party can push its party platform by supporting and advocating with communities to support their needs.

**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?**

Yes! As an educator I see first hand what the lack of funding can do to a students long term success. I understand that the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) can help high-needs students receive more funds. Yet, being a teacher in the school district, I don't believe that there is enough transparency to adequately inform educators and the public on the SFUSD budget. Members of school communities, including myself, know best the needs of our own schools yet

we are often not involved in the decision making over budgets and programs. It takes adequate administrators to make the effort to include various community voices when discussing funding and making information accessible to people in schools who will be directly impacted by these decisions.

## **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?

**No**

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? (9)

**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?**

I would prioritize development of affordable family and educator housing, advocate to provide more resources to support students and families experiencing homelessness, increase language access for families and students. Additionally, I would push for quality schools for all, from childcare to college. Meaning, smaller class sizes with more teaching assistants, increase before and after school programming in arts and technology and develop tools for teachers and families to understand student learning styles and expand special education services.

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

They would be more money for schools and classrooms. Flipping the imbalance between what is currently spent on classrooms and what's spent on administration, outside contractors and consultants. Also, language support for families, students and teachers. Including expanded translation services, language opportunities for every student and more inclusive support for English Language Learners. And supporting the expansion of the community school model to bring more resources to various school communities.

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

Student assignment is an important tool for desegregation, and I believe it needs reform. The Board of Education has an obligation to ensure that schools are not segregated and all students have equitable access to education opportunities. I support a mix of neighborhood and city wide school preferences, and other equity factors determining student assignment. Student Assignment

is something we have to revisit and monitor on an ongoing basis. This can be done by looking at data and listening to the needs of families while holding close our values for diversity.

While we cannot control all the trends of demographic shifts for the city, we can control how families experience the process. Currently, the district's process creates so much unnecessary stress for families. We have to increase the transparency at Educational Placement Center and provide more support for the student assignment process. We have to shorten the process, allow for parents to apply online, do virtual tours and easily see the program offerings and facilities for each school. These basic customer service strategies can go a long way in improving our student assignment process and could also have a positive impact in how diverse our schools are because families would be better informed.

I also support some level of preference for teachers and all school staff. This would also have the dual impact of helping with the recruitment and retention of educators.

**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 problem with Common Core Standards is the forceful attempt to place all students of similar age across the country at the same level. While there is a meaningful approach, many educators and school personnel know that not all students learn in the same way. We need to have a variety of ways to teach students who have a variety of skills and needs. Placing them all under the same category, requesting that they learn in this manner does not meet the needs of students.

As a teacher working with Common Core Standards, I find myself evolving much of what I need to teach in order to meet all of my students where they are. We need to have more teacher input in working with standards, and especially in related standardized tests, which more often than not, show the growing opportunity gap.

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

Two things happen that drive our educators out of the city: affordability and treatment within SFUSD. SFUSD has a big role it can play in supporting the development of public housing, offer development locations, but more importantly, offering salaries that realistically reflect the cost of living here so that educators don't leave to work in nearby bay area districts that offer better pay. Also, working with city and local businesses to provide more cost relieving benefits in childcare, further education, transportation, support for homeownership, as well as health and wellness.

**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 oppose charter schools because we have to keep public funding with public schools. It is well established that on the whole Charter Schools do not outperform public schools and that is despite the overwhelming emphasis many charters place on test scores. My first year of teaching I was in a charter school with educators who had not gotten raises in over ten years, had no union representation and was the only teacher in my grade-level creating curriculum. Our working conditions were not safe for students and staff as our school rented space from a local church that had no playground, no sinks in the classroom and room dividers separating classrooms. Charter schools thrive off of our schools by taking much needed space and funding, meanwhile attacking public schools and teachers.

I would advocate for highlighting the work the district has been able to achieve. There is a myth that innovation cannot happen within public school districts without charter schools. I was on the design team at my site through SFUSD's iLab where we applied for and won a grant that will provide our school with access to technological tools and teacher training. When teachers, support staff and administrators work together, they can be drivers of innovation within public schools. If we divest from our public schools, it will be harder for teachers to champion initiatives such as these. We have an obligation to do right by our students and we undermine us all when we give into the narrative of charters and privatize our most valuable resource in creating equity, our public schools.

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

Schools Board members should set policy and play an active role in overseeing the quality of their implementation. It is the responsibility of the board to hold the Superintendent and their staff accountable for implementation of the policies the board creates and/or approves. They must get regular reports from the Superintendent to inform them of how things are going but they must also be out at school sites, getting feedback from educators, parents and students, as well as labor and community partners to really monitor how things are being implemented.

Then based on that feedback the members of the board of education must ask tough questions and make adjustments and changes to plans to ensure success. Board members must oversee the quality of program implementation especially for policies such as Safe and Supportive Schools because it has such an impact in the daily lives of students and educators. The Board must put in place mechanisms for getting authentic feedback from educators and families to inform their policy decisions and how things are being implemented by central office and school site administrators. Board members must listen and take action to make things right. It is essential for educators and all school staff to have input and be involved throughout the policy development

and implementation process. It is through their input that Board members are able to best make decisions on what is needed and how to get it done.

**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?**

The Board has a critical role in overseeing the implementation of steps that help prevent the occurrence of sexual assault between students. One of the first steps I will take is to audit the sexual education curriculum, to make sure that students are receiving a progressive sexual education curriculum beginning in middle school. Second, we need to ensure that students, and in particular female students, have clearly identified safe channels of communication to report such behavior. The landscape of online harassment is particularly important to tackle. The online world evolves so quickly that it is absolutely vital that we involve the voices of our high school students in the evolution of our sex ed curriculum. No pre packaged curriculum will be able to keep up with the pace of change. We need to not only educate our students but listen to them and help them transform into leaders ready to educate others.

**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?**

I am troubled when any school receives more funding than another. First and foremost we need tackle the root cause of this problem- de facto school segregation. We can make progress through greater parent outreach, changes to the school assignment system, and improvements to the quality of education in our public schools. In the short term we should be tracking the amount of money that comes in through parent fundraisers and I would support efforts to compensate for large gaps with money from the general budget. I want to call on San Franciscans to view the overall health of our school system and our schools as a shared responsibility.

**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?**

Another priority of mine is addressing the continued affordability and housing crisis facing educators, families and workers across the city. As an educator and a renter trying to stay in San Francisco I understand that this crisis is first and foremost a salary crisis. Investments in affordable housing for educators are important, but do not replace the need for competitive salaries.

I will support the call for an independent audit to clearly see where money is being spent, making it more helpful to learn how we can raise the 38% of SFUSD budget to something more competitive compared to other schools districts in the Bay Area. I will continue to push for raising the minimum wage. I have helped collect signatures, endorsed and will continue to support the Our City, Our Home and Affordable Housing Act campaigns.

We need to prioritize families and children who are currently homeless. No child in San Francisco should be homeless and they should absolutely get priority. Then, workers in San Francisco who are far from being “low income,” which include many educators who are leaving our schools for more competitive salaries. We need to ensure that the people working in our schools to support our students not only get to live in the communities they serve, but that they get to stay.

**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?**

From my perspective as an elementary school teacher in the Mission there are a few factors at play. One being an exaggerated perception of danger in our neighborhoods and on our public transit system. What we need to do more of is model for students in San Francisco the importance of walking and biking by doing it ourselves. I am one of the fortunate few who gets to live and work in the same community, so many of the students and families I work with see my efforts in walking to work.

In regards to public transit, students and families simply need more education and experience with the system. We need to incentivize teachers to plan field trips that use public transit. In the last year in my classroom, we went on a field trip every month, and public transit made this possible. Beyond the great experiences we had at our destinations, my students also became increasingly familiar with the system and the people who ride on it.