

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.

*Josephine Zhao* SF Board of Education

(name) (position you are seeking)

*Josephine Zhao* 8/13/2018

(signature) (date)

## SF DCCC Candidate Questionnaire Board of Education

Name: Josephine Zhao

Address : 945 Taraval Street,

City, State, Zip: SF, CA 94116

Campaign Phone Number: 415-886-7822

Cell Phone Number: 415-886-7822

E-mail Address: josephine\_zhao@yahoo.com

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? San Francisco 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](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)**

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

I am running for School Board to help students compete in the 21st century. San Francisco has abundant opportunities, but our future workforce must be prepared to meet the challenges of a global economy. I believe that all of our students, in every school, must excel so they can have access to all of our city's opportunities.

I am a public school mom of two daughters, a longtime parent advocate, and an experienced Paraeducator/Family Liaison in SFUSD. I served in Mayor Breed's Education Transition Policy Team. And, I am a recognized leader for finding solutions for students who were delayed access to advanced math in 8th grade.

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 have been a strong advocate of the democratic value in the immigrant and parent communities, and have actively engage with the constituency in the media and social media to promote and advance Democratic Party's agenda.

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

I am an immediate past Vice President at Chinese American Democratic Club. I'm also a member at ENDC UDC, Alice B. Toklas, SFDWIA, SFWPC, RDDC, Edwin M. Lee APDC and more.

Please summarize your leadership qualifications positions and within experience the School for the District office you, are seeking.

I have served in several leadership positions in the School District since 2009, including Parent Advisory Committee, English Learner Advisory Committee, School Site Council and the PTA. Also, being a paraeducator and has the experience working as a Family Liaison give me a unique experience in serving

different stakeholders at the School Board.

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

State Senator Scott Wiener, Board of Equalization Fiona Ma, Assemblyman David Chiu, Mayor London Breed, Assessor Carmen Chu, Sheriff Vicki Hennessy, Supervisor Katy Tang, Supervisor Catherine Stefanie, Chinese American Dem. Club, Ed Lee Asian Pacific Dem. Club, LiUNA! 261, Northern California Carpenters Regional Council

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

If elected, I will:

- \* push for options on advanced math and technical education;
- \* advocate for individualized learning to improve student achievement;
- \* treat parents as partners and support their needs;
- \* listen to educators and ensure they are motivated.

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

It means urban planning should center around a variety housing options, and make it possible for residents to walk, bike and take public transportation. It should also incorporate open space, recreation as well as fitness areas for all residents to enjoy.

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, I believe LCFF that allocates funds based on student needs is working. LCAP can ensure English Learners, students from low-income families and youth-in-transition are getting additional targeted funding with the accountability, and it is essential to support those in need. We should look for more areas to bump up funding, s.a. for small group learning environment for students who need additional learning support.

## **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?

Yes

### **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

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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

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

Yes

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## **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. The proponents of Proposition 10 have good intentions, but I have concerns over the possible effects if Proposition 10 is approved by the voters in November 2018. Chief among them is a concern that housing construction may decline or slow to a crawl when housing developers shy away from constructing new multi-family housing subject to new rent control measures. We need more housing in the state as California's population continues to grow. Furthermore, Section 5 of Prop 10 includes language that is vague regarding rents that can be charged by housing providers. The inclusion of the terms "fair rate of return" does not offer strict guidance and, if passed, this Proposition will undoubtedly end up in the CA Supreme Court where I worry it may be overturned. Our legislators need to do the jobs we elected them to do and develop clear and enforceable housing laws that will lower rents for all renters in California. That said, I believe there is room to study and possibly enact reforms to Costa-Hawkins that will stand up to scrutiny in the Supreme Court. I am hoping to see a legislative compromise that provides the flexibility for amendments.

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?

- a) Give more opportunities to kids by putting in place student-centric and culturally competent curriculum.
- b) Treat parents as partners and ensure families are supported through family coaching, social-emotional support and wrap-around services.
- c) Respect educators. As a paraeducator at the school district, I know that our educators deserved to be listened to and valued.

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

I believe that most of our dollars should be used in the classrooms, to support student-centric and culturally competent curriculum and practices, as well as to provide options for students to access advanced math, science, engineering and career technical educations in order to allow our next generation workforce to afford staying in the City. I would also make it a priority to increase teacher pay, as well as to build mix-use teacher housing on top of a school at school sites in order to combat the affordability issues.

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

It is a hard act to balance the need for neighborhood schools and racial diversity in school assignment.

There are advantages to both the neighborhood school assignment model and the diversity-oriented lottery assignment model. Historically, SFUSD had tried both models and neither was a full success. And now, it has rested in a compromise in which neighborhood assignment for kindergarten/elementary schools, and the feeder pattern for the middle schools - where a few nearby neighborhood schools are fed into a middle school to achieve diversity are the norms. .

There are advantages for neighborhood school assignment - it provides a sense of community for the students and family, and it reduces stressors on families who are faced with poor quality options for commuting. Working parents who rush to work, as well as grandparents and caretakers who can't drive, can easily take small kids to school if it is a neighborhood school assignment. Otherwise, we have to rely on busing. Yet most busing has been cut due to budget shortfall over the years.

There is definitely an advantage for the full lottery assignment model which offers the promise of racial diversity. However, during the time it was tried in SFUSD, it created a massive uproar from the parent community. One of the biggest reasons for families to leave our school district is the lack of assignment predictability, and burdens associated with commuting in an ever crowded city. Families leaving SFUSD (but not necessarily the City) has resulted in San Francisco having the largest number of private and parochial school per capita in the nation. About half of our City's school age students are enrolled in private and parochial schools. In addition, at 12%, our City has one the lowest school age populations, lower than the 16.9% in California, which ranks 23rd in the 50 states. Retaining families in SFUSD and maintaining family satisfaction is key to the vitality of our school district.

Therefore, retaining a level of predictability in assignment is essential in family retention.

On one hand, the makeup of neighborhood schools are predisposed by the neighborhood. Our City is diverse yet neighborhood oriented. As the City's demographics are changing, we see that the biggest minority in the City is now Asian (33%), followed by Hispanics(12%) and African Americans (6%). Most residents fight to stay in the neighborhoods and communities they have built. Therefore, we see San Francisco is full of culturally unique and attractive neighborhoods - Chinatown, Latino Culture District, Japantown, Fillmore, etc.; these neighborhoods determine a big portion of the racial makeup in the schools within. A general concentration of population by race in the City naturally leads to the population concentration of neighborhood schools.

While we celebrate the diversity of neighborhood culture, on the other hand, we struggle to bring diversity within neighborhood schools. Historically, SFUSD has tried different assignment models, from strict neighborhood school assignment to full lottery system, neither was able to strike a balance between the need for neighborhood school and diversity, until the 2010 reform of school assignment.

As an advocate in the 2010 Neighborhood Kindergarten Assignment and the Middle School Feeder Pattern, I'm proud to have helped bring racial diversity and a level of predictability to the school assignment.

There is still lots of work to do to fine tune the assignment process, the best way to advance increased diversity in neighborhood schools is by improving the performance and offering of EVERY neighborhood school, so that families of all backgrounds have no hesitation to send their children to any school.

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?

I am a believer of Common Core Standards seeing its effectiveness in elementary and middle grades students. We also need to accommodate students who gears towards college preparation in order for every student to grow to their fullest potential.

As a recognized leader in fixing the 8th grade algebra issue, I was able to bring a 10th grade summer geometry course as a compromise in providing options for college-bound students to complete 5 math classes in 4 years of high school. I think we can expand equity while supporting excellence.

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

77% of educators surveyed said they have a hard time affording it in the City and 71% said they can't find suitable housing (for their growing families). SFUSD educators are severely underpaid compared to other wealthy school districts like Palo Alto, but are also paid less compared to Bakersfield School District which has a much lower cost-of-living index. There is no doubt that we have to increase educator salaries to demonstrate the respect for SFUSD educators. We should work to get our educators paid on par with the top paying school districts. Even though we don't have the flexibility like other school districts have, s.a. higher property value, higher property and sales tax rates, bigger tax base, and bigger class sizes, etc., we do need to continuously develop funding sources for teacher retention.

I would work on the following areas when elected to retain educators:

1) tuition subsidy or waiver for educators training; 2) pay educators more hours on professional development through the QTEA act or the Living Wage for Educators act; 3) find additional funding source to increase educator pay to be competitive with other school districts - glad I have helped the passing of Prop. G in June ; 4) empower each and every educator - many educators told me, salary is not everything but able to have the flexibility and tools to help each student individually is the key to job satisfaction. We need to do a better job listening to the educators.

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 can not support the expansion of charter schools in SFUSD. I believe the majority of our public funds should be spent in traditional public schools. We should look hard in improving the performance of every school in order to attract students and retain families.

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

Yes, we should continue to reduce suspension rates and promote learning for all students, by expanding restorative practices, maintaining the effort to push hallway students back in the classrooms, increasing MTSS (Multi-Tier Support System) staff for onsite social workers, outreach workers, family liaisons, nurses and psychologists, as well as exploring small group learning environment to make sure every student is engaged and every learning style is supported.

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?

Yes. We should make sure that the Sexual Harassment Policies, Bullying Policies and the Safe & Supportive School Policies painstakingly developed and put in place over the years by SFUSD are fully implemented and made aware of at every level of the school district. Sensitivity training should be done for all students, faculty and staff. We should also promote the availability of the Uniform Complaint Form from the Office of Family Voice, so that every victim can directly report the incident to the School District without fear of retribution.

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?

On one hand, the resources brought in by parents to some schools demonstrate a strong commitment from the parent community, a commitment to be partners in their children's education. It also shows that these schools are doing a great job in building community and making families come together in improving their schools. The more the parents can do for the schools, the less taxing it would be on the schools and school district. It also frees up the much needed rainy-day resources from the school district in order to target the high need schools.

On the other hand, we should collectively work on getting the help the resource-strapped schools need. Worth noting, if the parent money from the well-funded schools are distributed to other schools, these parents may not continue to contribute. We should consider working with philanthropic sources to fundraise for the under-resourced schools, and pair the schools up with companies on volunteering opportunities.

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?

SFUSD should do its share in helping to fight housing crisis, such as maximizing the utilization of SFUSD vacant property by developing mixed use constructions at unused school sites for both the school district and educator housing - build teacher housing on top of a school on district vacant land. I think one reason that SFUSD hesitate to build on its vacant land is the anticipation of future needs to build more schools. If we can build educator housing on top of a school, then we can get around the dilemma.

Also some part of the housing that the school district builds or owns, could also be used to house students in transition, homeless or underhoused students and their families. The housing model at the Buena Vista Horace Mann school is good in providing temporarily overnight shelters for school 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?

Just like the Democratic Party's advocacy on building healthy, livable, and sustainable communities, we should focus on urban planning that centers around a variety housing options, and make it possible for families to walk, bike and take public transportation to schools. It should also incorporate open space, recreation as well as fitness areas for all residents to enjoy.