



Latino Democratic Club Questionnaire
November 2019 Candidate Endorsements

Name: Jenny Lam

1.) Why are you running for this position?

Quality education is the right of all children. We must put learning first, build pathways to success and excellence, and develop our students contribute towards improving a better society for everyone. Public education is fundamental to a strong democracy.

I am running for School Board because I have a deep connection with public education. I am a daughter of immigrants. My parents immigrated to Oakland the year I was born with few resources. I was an English learner--my first language is Cantonese/Chinese and learned to speak English the day I started Kindergarten. I am a proud product of K-12 public schools and am the first in my family to attend college – University of California, Santa Barbara.

Public education is what gave me and my family the opportunity for economic and social mobility. I've dedicated my professional life to public service and social justice including working for nonprofit organizations most notably OASES (Oakland Asian Students Educational Services) and the civil rights organization, Chinese for Affirmative Action in San Francisco.

I have lived in San Francisco for twenty years, raising two children who currently attend San Francisco public schools. Being involved in our schools and SFUSD for ten years, I have directly experienced many exceptional educational practices in our public schools. But I have also witnessed various school challenges in my work with immigrant and limited-English-proficient parents in Chinatown and southeast neighborhoods.

2.) What are you going to do for the Latino Community as an elected official?

I will continue to be a strong ally and advance the rights of the Latino community. I worked seven years in a number of dynamic multi-racial community coalitions on a range of issues from

immigrant rights, language access, Census reform and participation of undercounted communities, voting rights, equitable education, and workforce.

Housing:

3.) Can you tell us your position on SB 50 and your reason for that position?

While I have not studied SB50 in any detail, housing—and who gets to live in our city—is a critical issue that we face. It cannot be ignored.

As a school board member, I am charged with delivering a world-class K-12 educational system that ensures fairness and equity to all communities—especially communities of color. That has been the scope of work over my career, as an advocate to build up community empowerment. And that remains my focus.

I believe my education work is part of a larger conversation about civil rights, and who gets what opportunities to succeed in our society.

But as a rule, I absolutely support the construction of more affordable housing so current and future families of diverse backgrounds can live and thrive in San Francisco. I also am a strong supporter of teacher housing in our city and making sure that we have responsible growth that does not displace our existing communities.

4.) Do you support sustaining the shelter for students and their families at Buena Vista Horace Mann? What should we do to expand this program city wide?

Our schools are a safe sanctuary for families, especially our homeless families. I support being creative in supporting our families experiencing homelessness in ways that our community finds best and that are most effective for those families.

As Commissioner, I voted to support the Stay Over program at Buena Vista Horace Mann (BVHM) and open it to include all SFUSD K-12 families. I support the families and students in Buena Vista Horace Mann if they feel it is best to continue the shelter. I am also supportive of making sure the school has the resources to maintain the property in good working order for the families that use it at night and for everyone who uses it during the day.

5.) Should the Affordable Housing Bond be \$500 million or \$1 Billion in the next upcoming San Francisco election? Why do you support that amount over the other?

I am an outspoken supporter of the affordable housing bond.

This housing bond is critically important to our school district as it provides funding for our vulnerable families to stay in the city as well as support for the FSK teacher housing site and down payment assistance for educators who want to buy their first home. It must pass! To do so requires 8 votes of the board of supervisors and 2/3rds of the electorate

My understanding is that there are realities about the city's overall bond indebtedness and its cap that will determine the size of the bond. I am in favor of the largest bond that can pass.

6.) Do you oppose the Monster in the Mission? Do you support the Marvel in the Mission?

These projects involve a number of stakeholders and competing interests. While I do support housing, I am concerned about the Monster in the Mission project unless the developer addresses the issues the project would have on the Marshall school community. The project casts a shadow on the school playground that creates a significant impact on the outdoor space. It's critically important for children to have exposure to the outdoors, including sunlight. Many of these children may not have access to outdoor space in their homes.

Education:

7.) About 50 non-citizen parents voted for school board in 2018. What can you do to expand the access and security for Immigrant Parent Voting (Prop N 2016) for the 2020 School Board Election?

I tri-chaired Prop N (2016) Non-Citizen Voting in School Board Elections. Unfortunately, the measure didn't pass. In the third attempt, San Francisco became the first city in California to allow noncitizens to vote for School Board elections in 2018. 59 out of 65 registered noncitizen voters voted. This is the highest voter turnout of any demographic.

To expand access, more resources are needed for community outreach and education so people have the information they need to register and vote. We must also make sure that non-citizens feel safe in casting their ballots and making their voices heard.

The Immigrant Voting Collaborative that includes the organizations Chinese for Affirmative Action and Central American Resource Center and the City/County of San Francisco Department of Elections had limited time to implement this new law. The Department of Elections is responsible to carry out outreach, education and registration. The City/County must continue to build out and support the Collaborative to increase voter education, access, and risks.

8.) Spanish speakers comprise almost half of English Learners (ELs) in the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD), yet only 8% were re-classified in the 2015-16 school year. This is only halfway to the goal and outcomes for other English Learners. How can you support bridging this disparity?

This is a personal issue for me, as I was an EL myself.

SFUSD has learned a lot in recent years about how to best support strong outcomes for our English learners, and research suggests that continued prioritization of two-way dual immersion programs is a strategic investment in their success.

A recent study by Stanford researchers of SFUSD's pathway programs for English learners found that, while students in English immersion programs perform better in the short term, over the long term students in classrooms taught in two languages not only catch up to their English immersion counterparts, but they eventually surpass them, both academically and linguistically.

By late elementary or middle school, ELs who spend their elementary school years in two-language programs have test scores, English proficiency levels, and reclassification rates that are, on average, as high as or higher than similar students who were in English immersion classrooms. This study looked at SFUSD's English learner students and followed their progress over 10 years. Given these strong outcomes, I will continue to prioritize investment in two-way immersion programs in order to better serve the district's EL students. For these programs to be successful, we also need to ensure an adequate supply of qualified bilingual teachers to teach in these programs. SFUSD's teacher residency program and Classified Staff Teacher Training program is an important source of well-prepared bilingual teachers.

9.) Latinos went without an elected school board member from 2004 to 2016 (12 years), yet comprise the second largest SFUSD population at 27%. Do you believe district elections for school board elections can bring more equitable representation to latino parents?

Lack of representation at the decision-maker level is always deeply concerning. It is something that deserves our focused attention.

It is critical we are intentional in developing and fostering leadership, particularly parents with children in the School District. I served a total of 9 years between the Public Education Enrichment Fund (PEEF) community advisory committee and the Parcel Tax Oversight Committee for the School District. During this time, I learned more about the School District as a public educational institution including budget, curriculum, educational support programs experiences of school sites. Not only do we need to encourage people of color to run for public office but provide ongoing coaching and peer support to ensure their positive growth and success. It's imperative SFUSD personnel teachers, administrators, program staff, school board reflect our student body. I am committed to supporting diverse candidates for School Board.

Immigration:

10.) Asylum seekers at California border ballooned from 17,284 in fiscal 2017 to 38,269 in fiscal 2018. A backlog has grown to more than 820,000 CA immigration cases, each takes several months to process. San Francisco has done a great job supporting legal defense for asylum seekers. What should San Francisco's role be to provide social services to asylum seekers while awaiting justice?

This is a great question. As someone who worked to advance the civil and political rights of immigrant families, I applaud San Francisco for taking the strong stance it has as a sanctuary city.

That said, San Francisco needs to continue to provide legal services and safety net programs for asylum seekers. It is our responsibility to be a safe and welcoming city no matter the immigration status of residents. Further, asylum seekers need access to key social service supports, including housing, food, employment. Community schools are a model to provide supports for our students and their families. Currently, we have legal services provider partnering with a school – between San Francisco International High School and Legal Services for

Children. The Mission Promise Neighborhood Center is a community collaborative leveraging programs and services among x organizations including Mission Graduates, Jamestown, and Instituto Familiar de la Raza.

11.) Would you have you advocated for a Clean Dream Act that includes TPS recipients?

Yes, I support/have supported the Dream and Promise Act The bill would provide a pathway to citizenship to over two million people, including immigrant youth and beneficiaries of the Temporary Protected Status (TPS) and Deferred Enforcement Departure (DED) programs. As a school board member, I will support policies and programs that protect our undocumented students and their families. As a school district and city/county we must do what we can to create security for our immigrant communities.

12.) Do you have any plans to advance the rights for undocumented immigrants to receive housing services?

The current HUD policy eliminates housing benefits subsidies. This policy greatly impacted our undocumented communities, including mixed status families. The City/County has been offering workshops and supportive services to assist families navigate the changes of the HUD policy. It is now upon the state and city to help remove barriers related to immigrant status to live with dignified lives.

Criminal Justice:

13.) Are you for or against tasers for use in San Francisco?

I support the practice of de-escalation and more resources in trainings for our police officers. I don't know that tasers are the answer.

14.) What is your plan to add supportive services and reduce revisitation?

I support providing services to our most vulnerable communities, including formerly incarcerated individual. We must focus on rehabilitation, and provide wrap around services to support community members, with a particular focus on workforce development and retention, economic stability financial counseling, and housing. I supported "ban the box" prohibits employers from asking about applicants' conviction history before making a job offer.

Equity:

15.) How would you support cannabis and alcohol parity for the Mission and Excelsior with other San Francisco neighborhoods?

I support evidence-based and age-appropriate education about cannabis, alcohol and tobacco use and risk behaviors more broadly, as they are critical for students and families. SFUSD, community partners and city agencies should continue to enhance and deliver a regular curriculum.

16.) How would you and how have you supported Latinx parity for Commissioners, Elected Officials, and Legislative Staff?

I strongly support people of color including Latinx serving in elected office, legislative staff, and serving on public commissions. Further, I've participated in leadership development programs including Urban Habitat's Board and Commissions Leadership Institute (2nd cohort) which is dedicated to building the leadership and skills of people of color to effectively serve on public commissions. As an elected official, I will support and advance Latinx leadership with strong values.

17.) How do you measure the Latinx community receiving equity of San Francisco resources? How would you ally to help the Latinx receive equity?

Conduct a spending/funding analysis of City programs serving Latinx community would be one way to measure. I support the mission of the San Francisco Latino Parity and Equity Coalition to bring address the needs of low-income Latinx communities.

While at Chinese for Affirmative Action, I worked with several founding coalition organizational members including the Central American Resource Center (CARECEN), La Raza Community Resource Center through SFILLEN, the San Francisco Immigrant and Legal Education Network to provide legal and supportive services.