

School Board | League of Pissed Off Voters

November 2020 Questionnaire

Hello candidates! Thank you for filling out the League's questionnaire. Please use THIS FORM rather than formatting it into a Word document or PDF. If you have any questions, you can contact us at TheLeagueSF@gmail.com.

Candidate Info

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Office Sought

SFUSD School Board Commissioner

Website

<https://jennylam.org>

Where is one place in San Francisco you'll want to go celebrate when the pandemic is over?

I love music, and look forward to being able to go to concerts at the Fillmore again in person.

Tell us about yourself.

Why are you running for this office?

I am running for re-election to continue fighting for the students and families of SFUSD. I believe that all of our children have the right to a welcoming and safe environment with access to the kind of quality education that leads to successful outcomes. I want to ensure every student feels cared for and supported in both academic and social-emotional growth. We must provide a diversity of learning experiences that allow students to explore different careers and interests and be challenged to develop their talents, discover their voice and find purpose.

Why do you want the League of Pissed Off Voters' endorsement?

Progressivism is as much of a cornerstone of my campaign and work as it is of the mindset behind the League of Pissed Off Voters. I actively work toward a school board that champions equality and accountability in our schools, similar to the aims of the voter guide the League of Pissed Off Voters publishes. Some of my championed policies include working toward a lessened police presence on school campuses, as recent national protests indicate that racial equality is as pressing and unaddressed as ever. Through delegation of resources to school staff such as counselors, we can make our campuses safe and comfortable for students of color, who often express discomfort with police presence. I will continue to make every effort to protect school site budgets and onsite student support services and fund our schools. These are values and policies that I share with the League of Pissed Off Voters.

What are your values and how did you get them?

Equity is a core value of mine – supporting policy that champions opportunity and learning for SFUSD students, and increased support for our most vulnerable youth and families. As a woman of color and English learner myself, I have been subjected to discrimination and stereotypes firsthand, both inside and outside the classroom. As a current board member and public school parent, I have seen firsthand the great potential for public schools to provide opportunities for students. I've also seen how difficult it can be to change entrenched norms, even when stakeholders voice agreement with progressive values. I firmly believe that public schools are not just a critical fixture for everyday San Franciscans, but also hold the potential to move the needle on racial equity, social justice, and socioeconomic opportunity.

What communities do you represent and how do they hold you accountable?

I represent women, Asian Americans, immigrant families, EL students and families, social justice leaders, and educators. I am committed to these communities, and they have backed my campaign for School Board. My continued endorsements are a form of accountability to all those I serve. The daily conversations with these members and organizations allow me to stay rooted to the communities I've grown from. My 2020 community endorsers include (as of 7/31/2020):

United Educators of San Francisco

Building and Construction Trades Committee on Political Education (COPE)

Rose Pak Democratic Club

Coleman Action Fund

LatinX Young Democrats

What three endorsements are you most proud of?

All my colleagues on the Board of Education who I admire and enjoy working with.

Parents and families who attend our public schools who have felt the impact of what we have done since I joined the Board of Education and believe in the change and potential we bring going forward.

Dedicated staff and educators including the United Educators of San Francisco who support and devote their time, energy, and effort into providing a quality education for all of our students.

As well as Jeremiah Jeffries and Karen Zapata, founders of Teachers 4 Social Justice

What for-profit or non-profit boards do you serve on, including political organizations?

I currently do not serve on any nonprofit or political organization board of directors. I dedicated ten years as a volunteer and Board Member for the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF) NAPAWF is dedicated to women empowerment with a larger vision of mobilizing power for justice, equality and peace. The organization's work is focused on reproductive health and rights, economic justice, and immigrant rights. During my tenure, NAPAWF had fifteen chapters and thousands throughout the country.

What local and state commissions and policy bodies have you served on -- currently or in the past?

I have served on several public commissions and non-profit boards directing education funding, supporting teachers, expanding political fairness and empowering women, including: the San Francisco Redistricting Taskforce; Co-Chair of the San Francisco Unified School District's Public Education Enrichment Fund and the Quality Teacher and Education Act Committee.

Local Issues

Do you support San Francisco Employees' Retirement System (SFERS) fully divesting from fossil fuels within three years and holding SFERS accountable at the ballot if they do not divest?

Yes

No

Do you support San Francisco purchasing PG&E assets to create public power in San Francisco?

Yes

No

Do you support the closure of 850 Bryant, jails #3 and #4?

Yes

No

Did you support SB 50 (Senator Wiener's Zoning Bill) as written?

Yes

No

If not, are there amendments that would make you support it?

Do you support congestion pricing for the downtown core?

Yes

No

Do you support creating a Public Bank in San Francisco?

Yes

No

If Costa Hawkins was repealed at the state level, would you actively support legislation enacting vacancy control in San Francisco?

Yes

No

Do you support a baseline percentage of 40% of affordable housing in developments when negotiating the number of housing units?

Yes

No

Do you support requiring 100% affordable housing on public land?

Yes

No

If not, under what circumstances would you support allowing a percentage or all market-rate housing?

Have you previously and/or will you in the future accepted donations from any law enforcement officers or associations?

Yes

No

If yes, please explain why.

What percentage of the SFPD budget do you think should be reallocated towards housing, homeless services, social workers, health, and education?

70

Would you support legislation to implement the Budget Analyst's recommendation to adopt a more efficient weekly staffing schedule for the SFPD? (Recommendation 2.2 here: https://sfbos.org/sites/default/files/BA_Report_PA_of_San_Francisco_Police_Department_061218.pdf)

Yes

No

November 2020 Election

Who are you supporting for US Representative, District 12?

Nancy Pelosi

Who are you supporting for State Senate, District 11?

Scott Wiener

Who are you supporting for District 1 Supervisor?

Marjan Philhour

Who are you supporting for District 3 Supervisor?

Aaron Peskin

Who are you supporting for District 5 Supervisor?

Vallie Brown

Who are you supporting for District 7 Supervisor?

Myrna Melgar

Who are you supporting for District 9 Supervisor?

Hilary Ronen

Who are you supporting for District 11 Supervisor?

Ahsha Safai

Who are you supporting for Board of Education?

Mark Sanchez, Matt Alexander, Kevine Boggess

Who are you supporting for Community College Board?

Alan Wong, Aliya Chisti, Tom Temprano, Shannell Williams

Who are you supporting for BART Board, District 9?

Bevan Dufty

Do you support the charter amendment to create a Workforce Education and Recovery Fund for City College (WERF)?

Yes

No

Do you support "Vote 16" the SF charter amendment that authorizes youths aged 16 and 17 to vote in municipal elections?

Yes

No

Do you support the charter amendment to allow non-citizens to serve on boards, commissions, and advisory bodies?

Yes

No

Do you support the charter amendment creating the Office of the Public Advocate?

Yes

No

Do you support the charter amendment creating a Public Works Commission, Sanitation and Streets Commission, and Sanitation and Streets Department?

Yes

No

Do you support the charter amendment establishing term limits for City boards, commissions and bodies?

Yes

No

Do you support the charter amendment creating the Sheriff's Department Oversight Board and Inspector General?

Yes

No

Do you support the charter amendment to remove the minimum police staffing requirement and require the Police Department to submit a report and recommendation regarding police staffing levels?

Yes

No

Do you support the ballot measure to increase the gross receipts tax on businesses with a greater than 100:1 ratio of the pay of their highest-paid employee to the median pay of their SF employees?

Yes

No

Do you support the gross receipts ballot measure proposed by the Board of Supervisors (Yee, Haney, Peskin, Fewer) [File No. 200648]?

Yes

No

Do you support the gross receipts ballot measure proposed by Mayor London Breed [File No. 200645]?

Yes

No

Do you support the ballot measure authorizing development of up to 10,000 affordable rental units in the City?

Yes

No

Do you support California Proposition 15, Tax on Commercial and Industrial Properties for Education and Local Government Funding Initiative?

Yes

No

Do you support California Proposition 21, Local Rent Control Initiative (Costa-Hawkins changes)?

Yes

No

Do you support California Proposition 22, App-Based Drivers as Contractors and Labor Policies Initiative (AB5 Referendum)?

Yes

No

Do you Support California Proposition 25, Replace Cash Bail with Risk Assessments Referendum (Cash Bail Referendum)?

Yes

No

March 2020 Election

Who did you support for Superior Court Judge?

.....
Maria Evangelista, Michelle Tong

Who did you support for DCCC?
.....

Did you support March 2020's Prop D, a tax on vacant storefronts?

Yes

No

Did you support March 2020's Prop E, limits on office development?

Yes

No

November 2019 Election

Who did you support for District Attorney?

Suzy Loftus

Who did you support for District 5 Supervisor?

Vallie Brown

November 2018 Election

Did you support November 2018's Prop C "Our City Our Home" tax on gross receipts of businesses to fund homeless services?

Yes

No

June 2018 Election

Did you support June 2018's Prop F "Tenant's Right to Counsel"?

Yes

No

Did you support June 2018's Prop H "Arm Police With Tasers"?

Yes

No

Past Elections

Did you support 2016's Prop D "Let's Elect Our Elected Officials" to have special elections to fill vacancies on the Board of Supervisors?

Yes

No

Did you support 2014's Prop G, the anti-speculation tax?

Yes

No

Board of Education

What are the top three issues you will work on and how will you implement solutions in a timely manner?

Emergency preparedness/COVID response

Student health, safety, and wellness

Ensuring (as much as possible) that budget cuts do not impact the classroom

The district's response to our current public health crisis is still a work in progress. I'm proud of how quickly our staff pivoted their usual responsibilities in order to meet the new needs of the time: feeding our youth and their families and providing virtual instruction. And yet, we still have much more to do. My pledge is to continue to put the needs of students and families first, and prioritize transparency and communication so that everyone is on the same page.

Do you support painting over the Victor Arnautoff mural, The Life of George Washington, at George Washington High School?

Yes

No

Do you support changing the names of schools that are rooted in colonization, genocide, slavery, or oppression of any marginalized group?

Yes

No

Do you support Resolution 206-23A3 In Support of Black Lives and the Abolition of Armed Law Enforcement in Schools?

Yes

No

Do you support a moratorium on charter school co-location in our public schools?

Yes

No

Do you think that all SF charter schools should join SFUSD?

Yes

No

Have you ever had a role at a charter school in SF (including parent, staff, volunteer or paid organizer)?

Yes

No

Have you received support from San Francisco Parent PAC?

Yes

No

How would you approach the question of reopening schools in the Fall if you were on the Board of Education? (If you are on the Board, how are you approaching it?)

The health and safety of our students, educators, and school staff is our priority in any Fall 2020 planning. Educators, school site administrators, UESF and SEIU 1021 members, as well as student, family, and community concerns have been at the table to discuss the roadmap for the Fall. This is why I voted to begin the school year with distance learning, as we know the health risks posed by normal face to face instruction are far too severe at this moment. In addition, I am advocating for continued inquiry into a hybrid model that would offer face to face instructional options for our students with special needs along with younger students from pre K to third grade when it is deemed safe by the health officials. Before considering when to go back to school, we will need to provide health promotion training, materials, and resources for educators and all school staff that support healthy buildings, classroom organization, and management practices.

What are your thoughts on the effectiveness of remote education / distance learning?

The district's response to our current public health crisis is still a work in progress. I'm proud of how quickly our staff pivoted their usual responsibilities in order to meet the new needs of the time: feeding our youth and their families and providing virtual instruction. And yet, we still have much more to do. My pledge is to continue to put the needs of students and families first, and prioritize transparency and communication so that everyone is on the same page.

How do you propose tackling SFUSD's budget crisis? What bold solutions and new funding sources are you willing to consider?

As Chair of the Budget and Finance Committee, I spearheaded changes to our funding formula, in order to allocate more funds to our neediest schools. I support pursuing new resources for schools, which is why I support the Schools and Communities First Initiative. We not only need to spend our current resources wisely and keep cuts away from the classroom, but we also need to pursue new resources for schools.

Describe your current engagement with SFUSD. How often do you participate in BOE meetings (in person or online)? Which school sites are you familiar with?

I attend each board meeting, as well as committee meetings. I am familiar with all of our school sites from campus visits and meetings with educators, families, and students. My children have attended SFUSD elementary, middle, and high schools.

How would you modify SFUSD's school assignment policy?

SFUSD school assignment is not transparent and is a stressful and anxiety provoking experience for many parents. The uncertainty of selection, the wide variability of school quality, customer service/accessibility and the application process itself is the source of many of these concerns.

We also know the current system is not fulfilling its goal of diversifying our schools. Over the past couple of decades, despite our efforts to develop systems to address this, our schools have been increasingly segregated. And we know that our families with the greatest needs are among the least likely to take advantage of our choice system. And many families also face uncertainty and confusion in navigating the system.

Now that SFUSD will not renew its MOU with the SFPD, how would you revise SFUSD's District School Safety Plan?

I co-authored the resolution, "In Support of Black Lives in SFUSD and the Abolition of Armed Law Enforcement in Schools #BlackLivesMatter #DefundThePolice #InvestInCommunities #BlackMindsMatter," with Commissioner Alison M. Collins, Board President Mark Sanchez, and Kevine Boggess of Coleman Advocates. The resolution calls on support from the City to set policies that align with SFUSD's goal of protecting youth and families from unnecessary contact with police, such as by investing in Community School Coordinators who can serve as a mechanism for bringing more resources in schools. The resolution also calls on the City to support community and City partners by reinvesting funds currently used for policing and investing those resources into youth development, mentoring, community-based violence prevention, and other social services. The resolution directs SFUSD to not renew its Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD), which expired in 2019. This action enhances the safety of SFUSD students by investing in community-led and centered public safety rooted in restorative practices.

If you're elected, what racial justice policies will you push for?

I will do this by continuing to advocate for Equity Studies to be incorporated into all our curriculum. Research shows that shows ethnic-studies classes boost student attendance, GPAs, and high-school credits for a key student group—a pivotal finding that brings hard evidence to the dispute over adding these courses in public schools. To address the opportunity gap for our African American students, we need to bring more resources to support their instruction. Further, I strongly support additional effort to recruit and retain African American educators. I plan to continue to listen, learn from, and partner with African American families to provide services for their children to thrive.

Last Question

Is there anything else you want to tell us?

Washington High School Mural: I stand by my colleagues and our unanimous decision to support the student and families most impacted by the problematic imagery in the murals. I look at this issue from multiple perspectives, especially that of educators, students and families whose ancestors are narrowly depicted as well as inaccurately represented in the mural. They have been clear with the Board that this 1930's era view of African Americans and Indigenous people is flawed and with outdated stereotypes of their ancestors. They have told us that students have a working knowledge of George Washington's slave ownership, and that they study the history slavery in history classes. It has also been pointed out that the Indigenous people are drawn as half-clothed, wearing face paint and other accessories that are not of any tribe, but a stereotypical notion of all of them.

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