

# SFLCV November 2020 Election Board of Education Questionnaire

Thank you for participating in the San Francisco League of Conservation Voters endorsement process. Please limit answers to the below questions to 2-3 paragraphs at most (250 words). We are accepting responses until Friday August 28, 2020 at midnight. Please note that your responses will be posted publicly on our website at [www.sflcv.org](http://www.sflcv.org).

Please enter your contact info here (Name, District, Campaign contact, Phone, Email, FPPC#) \*

Jenny Lam - Board of Education

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## What are your qualifications for Board of Education? \*

A second generation Chinese American, I was born and raised in the San Francisco Bay Area. I have devoted my career to public service and social change. I'm a member of the San Francisco Board of Education and serve as Mayor London Breed's Education Advisor, where I proudly serve San Francisco's public school kids, families and educators.

I am an experienced community advocate and leader and have worked to expand educational opportunities for all. Before joining the Mayor's Office, I was the State Engagement Manager at Education Superhighway, bringing technology infrastructure to public schools across the country. As Director of Programs at Chinese for Affirmative Action, I expanded civil and political rights for San Francisco's immigrant youth and families. While Executive Director of GirlVentures and Deputy Director of Oakland Asian Students Educational Services, I built the confidence and leadership of diverse youth through robust educational opportunities not usually offered in the classroom, including peer leadership, experiential outdoor education, financial literacy and the arts.

I have served on several public commissions and nonprofit boards directing education funding, supporting teachers, expanding political fairness and access to parks, including: the San Francisco Redistricting Taskforce; Co-Chair of the SFUSD's Public Education Enrichment Fund and the Quality Teacher and Education Act Committee; and the San Francisco Parks Alliance. I live in San Francisco with my husband and two children, who attend SFUSD schools.

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Given the constraints posed by the COVID-19 crisis, both financial and operational, how would you integrate environmental imperatives with this new reality? \*

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. I will continue prioritizing environmental initiatives that are financially possible and allocating funds to further this work.

With the ongoing pandemic raging, our budget allocations and plans for the future of our district need to be very intentional to account for the multiple crises we are managing. As a way to save money, do our part to help the earth, and minimize environmental inequities, plans to change the route of SFUSD buses would be an overall beneficial investment. Yellow school bus transportation for General Education students has been on the decline for decades and I do not support an increase in yellow school buses and routes. Instead I will advocate for a new yellow bus contract pushing for an all-electric, zero emission fleet, and to improve awareness and new programs that will promote sustainable transportation options for students and employees like public transit, carpool apps, biking, and walking.

A fleet of zero emission school buses will help reduce pollution in our most vulnerable impacted communities and an equitable school transit plan will address accounting for environmental and transit justice.

What should the School District do to improve its environmental and climate justice practices? \*

This is a very important issue because our schools not only serve tomorrow's leaders through instruction, but also need to lead the way in preserving the environment for current youth and future generations. When we make greener decisions, we benefit our students' learning, as well as the environment. The district has made such improvements in the past, like when SFUSD made the switch to greener cleaning products, and when it integrated air quality monitoring and education into the curriculum. We saw the benefits of this strategy: documented improvements in respiratory health among students.

I intend to increase SFUSD Sustainability's Earth Day Every Day program, and find ways to expand and maintain SFUSD's Green Schoolyard programs. I will do this because I wholeheartedly support wellness for our students, including ways that they can help themselves, their peers and adults around them to lead a healthy life.

What is your opinion of the School District's current environmental education curriculum? How can it be improved? \*

Our students live in a dense urban environment. I believe that access to nature is essential to students' wellbeing, which leads to their ability to learn and thrive. I support SFUSD's goal to provide all SFUSD students with free and easily accessible opportunities to explore, learn and play both in nature and on school grounds around San Francisco.

Further, as the Executive Director of GirlVentures, an outdoor experiential education and empowerment organization, I expanded programs in San Francisco that served a broad and diverse group of young women.

SFUSD established the Office of Sustainability in 2008, which has been steadily growing not only its environmental curriculum, but students' ownership of their school and home environmental practices. However, there is more work to do.

This includes a curriculum that focuses on student empowerment to create a more sustainable world for themselves, and learning that grows a healthy respect for the earth, and in turn, for oneself.

How could school district policies encourage the most environmentally-beneficial use of school property surrounding its buildings? \*

Greening current sites and building new, green sites has been a priority of the District for more than 20 years. SFUSD has one the most ambitious climate action plans of any school district in the nation.

I believe that SFUSD can access more SFPUC Green Infrastructure grants, which funds stormwater management features on building sites. Our school properties can also be used to promote biodiversity through planting of indigenous plants that promote native insects and wildlife.

I also would encourage schools to adopt storm drains surrounding their schools, as it sponsors sense of community service and investing in your neighbors' welfare here in the city.

Further, the Green Schoolyard program has been successful throughout the district, transforming blacktop yards from urban heat islands to cooler places on the yard for students to enjoy and learn in.

I will continue to support sustainable building designs in our school capital program that will eliminate the use of natural gas in buildings, improve stormwater capture with green infrastructure, increase water and energy efficiency, and support onsite energy generation projects. I believe these projects will create a healthier environment for our employees and students, and will instill the environmental values and learning opportunities that are crucial to create new generations of environmental stewards. I further pledge to defend the practices if budgetary discussions begin to question the cost and usefulness of greening.

Why should the San Francisco League of Conservation Voters endorse you? \*

Quality education is the right of all children. We must provide all students with an equal opportunity to succeed. Put student learning first, build pathways to success and excellence, and develop our students to contribute towards improving a better society for everyone. Public education is fundamental to 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, speaking only Chinese the day I started Kindergarten. I am a proud product public schools and am the first in my family to graduate college from the 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 and the civil rights organization, Chinese for Affirmative Action in San Francisco.

I have lived in San Francisco for more than 20 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.



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