

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.

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

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I have no FPPC#, as my campaign is not fundraising, seeking or accepting monetary contributions.

What are your qualifications for Board of Education? *

I began teaching in 1993. While a teacher, I co-founded Teachers 4 Social Justice in 1999, and in 2000 became the sole teacher on the San Francisco Board of Education and began teaching 8th grade science in Redwood City School District. After serving on the Board for eight years, I became a principal at Horace Mann Middle School in the Mission District and then at Cleveland Elementary School in the Excelsior District for the next eight years, only leaving site leadership in 2016 to return to classroom teaching as I rejoined the Board of Education, again as the lone educator voice on the Board. I am going into my fourth year as a 4th grade teacher at Panorama School in Brisbane School District. Throughout my tenure as an educator, I have continuously worked to create quality schools for all of our children and amplify the voices of parents and caregivers, educators and all others working for our students. I currently serve as the President of the San Francisco Board of Education.

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

There might be a silver lining here in this regard concerning COVID-19: the District is looking to utilize outdoor spaces, particularly parks, as learning areas. This lends itself to taking advantage of the learning possibilities surrounding plant, bug, animal life, habitats, ecosystems, and conservation.

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

One promising avenue is the construction of educator housing. More than 40% of SFUSD's teachers reside outside of the city. We will be opening our first educator housing development in 2023, which will include at least 130 units of various sizes to accommodate differing needs, from, for example, a single teacher, or a para-educator with a family of four. I am strongly advocating the completion of at least 1500 housing units for educators (which, by the way, includes school nurses, school social workers and others who work with our students) within the next decade. By ensuring that our educators live in the communities they work in assists in lowering the District's carbon footprint.

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

For a span of about five years SFUSD's elementary schools were afforded full-time Education Outside educators who utilized the outdoor spaces of schools to teach life sciences, to garden, and to grow students' interest and sense of urgency to take on and advocate for others to help conserve our natural environment. I witnessed this program firsthand as the principal at Cleveland Elementary School in the Excelsior district.

The outdoor spaces on our campuses over the past 15 or so years have become much more green due to the advocacy of environmentalists who worked to have millions of dollars set aside in our facilities bond programs to be utilized for school gardens as place based learning venues.

Prior to that, the vast majority of schools had absolutely no plant life. I think it's essential to bring back Education Outside and expand the program to middle schools and high schools.

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

District bond dollars need to be amplified to increase the greening at all of our school sites so that students can utilize and learn from life learning labs. As I mentioned in the last question, prior to 2005, the environment surrounding our sites wasn't even a second thought; generally speaking, the District was fine with masses of concrete and asphalt. When I was first serving on the Board of Education in 2003, I sat on the bond program committee--I was the commissioner who worked with environmentalists to ensure that significant bond dollars were set aside for "greening grants" that exist to this day.

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

The League's endorsement is an incredibly important one for me, as I strive to be as environmentally conscious as possible and to continue to work for environmental justice for our most vulnerable students and families. I'm a long time educator activist and leader who has fought consistently for the students and families who have historically been left behind in our structurally racist educationally system.



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