

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#) *

Michelle Parker, Board of Education, 415-634-7218, michelle@michelleparker.org, FPPC# 1426573

What are your qualifications for Board of Education? *

I am a 22 year resident of San Francisco and have spent the last 15 years active in our public schools. I am a single mother of three who have all attended SFUSD schools since kindergarten. I am a parent leader, advocate and organizer, and I bring the critical leadership we need as we face several crises of massive proportion in SFUSD.

Governance experience:

- * Past President of Second District PTA, serving and supporting more than 60 schools across our city
- * Arts education nonprofit Board President, guiding org through an organizational merger, through complicated process with the City as we took on the master lease in the Geneva Powerhouse to provide free arts programming to our city's youth, and as we continue to implement anti-racist instructional practices in classrooms and internally with staff.

Oversight experience:

- * Co-chair of SFUSD parcel tax oversight committee for 4 years, ensuring \$32mil in taxpayer funds were spent responsibly to improve quality teaching in our district
- * Current chair of SFUSD charter school oversight committee, making sure charter schools are transparent with data and accountable for serving students
- * LCAP task force member, making sure district spending is aligned with the student learning outcomes we seek

Leadership characteristics:

- * Able to help folks with differing experiences/perspectives work through contentious situations
- * Collaborative; able to work with anyone I can find some shared value with
- * Seek underrepresented voices in decision-making
- * Known as thoughtful, a good listener and reflective

A more complete bio can be found at <https://www.michelleparker.org/about>

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

Thankfully, many of the priorities I list below are capital rather than operational, and thus can be facilitated with an SFUSD Climate Justice Bond, rather than through ongoing revenue streams, which will see extreme strain. Greening our schools is important, and particularly if we are going to see buildings vacant for the next many months, the time has never been more ripe to reach net zero here in SFUSD.

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

In terms of waste reduction, we need to double down on compost and recycling in schools in order to reach our goal to divert 85% of waste from landfill by 2025.

On climate, there are two basic issues—heating and transportation. With heating, we need to shift from outdated furnaces to heat pumps, which reduce energy consumption by as much as 80%. They can reduce emissions as much as 90-100% with continued improvements to the electricity grid and refrigerants. And because they can pump the heat in either direction, are all-in-one heating and cooling solutions. We should float a bond to retrofit all our school sites to remove natural gas appliances and hookups.

On transportation, we should subsidize transit and bikeshare passes for our workforce. We should offer subsidies for bikes and trikes. I applaud MTA for their free transit for youth initiative, and hope that we find the money to make Muni free for all kids in the future.

I support onsite solar panels at SFUSD sites to decrease our energy usage by half. This, combined with onsite battery storage, will increase our resilience in future blackouts. Grid blackouts should never mean that our kids go home early, or that our computer labs go dark.

The threat of wildfires to our air quality will continue to grow, increasing toxic, smoke-filled air. We must further retrofit our schools with industrial-scale air filtration, and replace windows that cannot effectively seal schools off from the outside, so that schools are safe for children every day of the year, and can be community shelters from toxic outside air.

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

The current science curriculum has environmental education units about climate change, the human impact on our planet, different ecosystems, and so on. It provides a framework that works for many teachers, though many teachers do adapt it to specific teaching styles (which is good!).

I would want to include more data on CO2 emissions, and to make sure that these figures are updated annually to account for the escalating catastrophe we see globally. I would be interested in tools helping students calculate their own carbon footprint. I might highlight the small changes that students could make that would have a positive climate impact.

I love the Earth Day Every Day Challenge SFUSD issues to its schools to "instill a culture of environmental stewardship and encourage action in support of the District's sustainability goals" of Carbon Neutrality, Water Resilience, Zero Waste, Sustainable Transportation, and Connection to Nature, and look forward to us being able to run it again once the school facilities are open to students. The district's website also has an interactive Sustainability Snapshot that allows schools to see how well they are doing towards meeting district goals. And, I don't think this opportunity is widely known about. This presents a tremendous, coordinated cross-content opportunity for civic education and STEM education as students identify issues that affect their community and then find solutions to address them.

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

Long commutes in from the East Bay—including Vallejo, Fairfield, and even Sacramento—are soul-crushing for those who must spend 3+ hours a day stuck in traffic. But burning that much gasoline is also terrible for the climate. The California Air Resources Board is clear that the transportation sector is taking a bigger and bigger slice of emissions, even as LEED certifications and ending gas hookups make household and commercial buildings increasingly green.

While I support ending gas hookups in all district buildings and transitioning our HVAC to heat pumps as described above, the bigger dent that we can make is leveraging our surplus land to house our workforce and, hopefully, take cars off the road. It is wrong that educators serving our students too often cannot afford to live in our city, and we must prioritize using our district land to create affordable workforce housing opportunities for every educator who wishes to live in the city they serve. While I support a public transportation system and safe network of protected bike lanes, shortening car commutes from fifty miles to two or three miles itself constitutes massive climate progress.

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

You will find me to be a thoughtful partner willing to think critically and be bold in identifying the solutions that SFUSD can take that will leave San Francisco a better, more affordable, more welcoming, more environmentally just place for our children and their children.

We must ensure that every student experiences a high-quality education, regardless of what they look like or what their zip code is. My role on the school board is to elevate the voices of the disenfranchised and to disrupt and improve longstanding systems of oppression. Our job is to create the conditions for each and every student to be successful in our schools and later as they move on to college, careers and civic life. I want our students to be valued, to learn, to build lasting relationships with their peers and teachers, and to be confident. I believe in the power of a high-quality public education to end ignorance and hate.

My long-term commitment and hard work on behalf of families in San Francisco over the past 15 years has earned the endorsement of my campaign by leaders such as Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Former Senator Mark Leno, Mayor London Breed, all of San Francisco's state legislators, SF supervisors such as Rafael Mandelman, BART Board Director Janice Li, and organizations including the Alice B Toklas Democratic Club, the San Francisco Women's Political Committee, and the San Francisco Building and Construction Trades Council. I would be honored to also earn the endorsement of the San Francisco League of Conservation Voters.



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