



Questionnaire for Board of Education candidates

General Election, November 4, 2008

Candidate/Campaign Information:

Candidate name:	Jill Wynns
Office sought:	Board of Education
Contact person:	Novella Smith
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Anticipated Budget:	\$30,000-\$40,000
Funds raised to date:	\$10,000
Percentage of donations under \$50:	50%

General Questions: Please write a brief response (less than 150 words) to each question. Please return this questionnaire electronically to contactus@phdemclub.org We will make these questionnaires available to our members before the endorsement meeting.

1. Why are you running? Why should we vote for you?

I have been compelled to do everything that I can for the public schools of our City since my children first started to attend in SFUSD in 1979. The challenges facing public schools are profound. I believe that my experience and expertise are an asset to the District and the City.

The Board of Education has almost entirely turned over in the last few years. Having some continuity and experience on the Board is crucial at an intense time of crisis for education in California. The school finance system in California is near collapse. Significant changes will take place in the next few years. San Francisco must have the opportunity to influence that discussion. An entirely inexperienced board cannot give us that position, but I can.

I am also a neighborhood activist who has a long-term relationship with the Potrero Hill neighborhood. I have proudly been endorsed by the PHDC in my previous elections.

2. What sets you apart from your opponents?

I am a sixteen year incumbent. During my tenure, I have been active at the local, state and national level in school reform movements; advocating for public schools and school funding.

I have participated regularly in training for school board members through the California School Boards Association and other organizations, the original Harvard Business School/Graduate School of Education Public Education Leadership Project, and served on several state committees and advisory bodies.

My areas of expertise include school finance, charter schools, healthy food and physical activity in schools, privatizing public education, labor-management programs in public education, school-based budgeting and decision-making, anti-commercialization in schools, de-segregation programs, student assignment processes, school-based community services, and several others.

I have played a central role in the campaigns for and passage of ten local school funding measures in San Francisco, raising more than two BILLION dollars of local tax money for San Francisco public schools since 1988.

I believe that I am uniquely positioned to help SFUSD to achieve its goals

3. What are the top three issues facing San Francisco's schools? What will you do about those issues?

**School funding-nothing can be done without adequate funding. I will continue to do everything I can to raise funds for schools, and ensure that the SFUSD budget process is*

as transparent and responsible as possible. Participating in the process to re-design the school finance system in California will be essential.

**Closing the achievement gap between racial, ethnic, language and other groups. I will support and monitor the development and implementation of our strategic plan, "Beyond the Talk".*

**Improving the public perception of public schools. I will work with the Board and the Superintendent to continue to better inform the public regarding our work and the great accomplishments of our students and schools.*

4. Would you describe yourself as fiscally responsible? Please give an example to support your answer.

I am a fiscally responsible Board member. As the Board's budget expert I have provided leadership to balance sixteen budgets, almost all of which have included some cuts. Many have needed deep cuts to be balanced. These have required some very difficult decisions that I have made even when they required personal or political sacrifice.

5. Would you describe yourself as socially progressive? Please give an example to support your answer.

Yes, I support socially progressive positions on reproductive rights, tax policy, gay rights, gender issues, diversity and many others.

Issue Questions:

1. Given the very real probability of reduced state funding for SF schools in the coming years, what combination of budget cuts and tax increases would you suggest to address budgetary shortfalls?

We cannot cut more from programs funded thorough the general fund. We do not have adequate administration to run the programs that we already have. Strategies that we have developed to address the budget crisis have included securing new finding from the city, the recent parcel tax, site-based budgeting, set-asides in local and state funding and many others.

I have and will continue to support new sources of revenue for schools.

2. Absent radical changes, state and federal mandates (like 8th grade algebra and No Child Left Behind) have laid out difficult goals for our schools to meet. What steps do you think the SF schools should take to meet those achievement goals?

The focused and clearly articulated plan that are developing thorough the strategic planning process will help us to meet our achievement goals. Making sure that the public

and the schools understand what they must do is essential. Such a plan will help us to get everyone together and co-ordinate our efforts.

3. While SF's dropout rate of 21% is not as bad as the state average of 24%, it is far from ideal. How should the SF schools improve enrollment, recruitment, and retention?

Improving our schools is the best way to increase our school population. We have a comprehensive truancy program in partnership with the City that is beginning to show results. Also, the District Attorney is also cooperating in helping us to make clear to parents that they must get their children to school every day. I support the expansion of these efforts.

4. How should the SF schools address the achievement gaps correlated with race, class, and special needs students? How should we address the long-standing gaps between East side and West side schools?

Our school improvement efforts that focus on equity, focusing resources on the highest needs schools and developing programs that help challenged schools to increase student achievement must be fully implemented and supported. A chronically under-funded system has resulted in the East-West gap because we do not give enough funding or staff to any school. Middle class schools have struggled along with parent and community support, but the poorer schools have suffered without any enrichment and support. We now have a clear commitment to focus efforts on the East side.

- 5.. How should the SF school assignment process work, given our goals of race and class diversity (and our current shortcomings in that area), the difficulties parents have dealing with a complex system, and questions of constitutionality arising from the recent Supreme Court decision?

The system needs to be simplified as much as possible and made more predictable and transparent, while maintaining the choice system that families value.

6. Do you support a voluntary system of Clean Elections – full public financing – of candidates for citywide offices? Would you participate in such a system if it were available?

Yes, I would participate.

7. Do you support or oppose the following propositions on the November ballot? Please explain why or why not.

- SF Declaration of Policy in support of SF public high school students participating in JROTC (Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps)

Support X Oppose Reason:

JROTC cadets, their parents, teachers and principals universally support this program. My purpose as a Board member is to create and support opportunities for students, not to deny them positive opportunities.

- CA Proposition 4: Amends California Constitution to prohibit abortion for a non-emancipated minor until 48 hours after physician notifies minor's parent, legal guardian or, if parental abuse reported, an adult family member

Support ____ Oppose X Reason:

I have always opposed any parental notification requirements. They limit the choices for young women and have the biggest negative impact on victims of abuse.

- CA Proposition 5: Provides rehabilitation as an alternative to prison for nonviolent drug offenders

Support X Oppose ____ Reason:

I support any efforts to support and not punish more Californians.

- CA Proposition 6: Requires increased penalties for youths convicted of gang-related crimes, including the possibility that 14-year-olds will be tried as adults; increases spending for prison and parole operations, which would come from California's General Fund.

Support ____ Oppose X Reason:

We should not put more Californians, particularly young people, in jail. This is poor public policy that will never improve our community life.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.