



Questionnaire for candidates for the office of SFUSD School Board  
**General Election, November 2, 2010**

*Please return this questionnaire electronically to [contact\\_us@phdemclub.org](mailto:contact_us@phdemclub.org) no later than **Monday, August 30**, to confirm your speaking slot.*

Candidate name: Hydra Mendoza
Office sought: Member, Board of Education (Incumbent)
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Please write a brief response ( $\leq 150$  words) to each question. We will make these questionnaires available to our members before the endorsement meeting.

1. Why are you running for office? **I am an active parent of children in the San Francisco Public Schools, a graduate of SFUSD and an education advocate. I am passionate about public education and the need to support a public system. I have worked tirelessly as a parent, advocate, advisor and current vice president of the board of education to stabilize funding, create opportunities for our students, improve and expand child development programs, support students and their families and build partnerships for our schools. I have been a lead convener and facilitator of conversations with our state and federal leaders. I have worked closely with my colleagues on the board, the Superintendent and his staff, and other local, state and federal leaders to keep our priorities on track to close the achievement gap and provide learning opportunities for every student in our San Francisco public schools.**

2. What are your qualifications for this position? **I am a graduate of SFUSD, a parent of two children currently in SFUSD, a policy maker for SFUSD and serving as the current Vice President of the Board of Education. I am a partner to SFUSD as Mayor Newsom's Education Advisor and an advocate for our students and parents as the former Executive Director of Parents for Public Schools. I have also served as the Chair of my child's SSC, on the Executive Board of the PTA, a convener for SFUSD and State and Federal officials, a fundraiser and ambassador for our district. These combined experiences make me qualified, set me apart from other candidates and a good choice to serve on the Board of Education.**

3. What are the top three challenges facing public education in San Francisco? What will you do to meet these challenges? **College and career readiness – Leverage our relationships with higher education, expose our kids to opportunities early, provide the resources so that curriculum alignment is consistent and district-wide. Early Childhood Education – Increase the number of high quality preschool programs, increase access for all families to attend preschool and provide professional development and support for our preschool teachers. Funding – This is one of our biggest challenges. We may need to seek additional funds through a parcel tax. We should also build stronger relationships with our private funders, foundations and corporations. We should be more efficient with our real estate and find ways to generate revenue.**

4. If you are an incumbent, please describe your major accomplishments while in office. **I am proud of so many things we have accomplished during my first term on the school board. I am most proud of the work we have done and continue to do to create a college going culture and help prepare our students for college and/or career. We passed several new policies to require students to graduate with the necessary classes that will make them CSU/UC eligible (A-G), aligned our calendars with City College, expanded our career pathways programs, offer AP classes to more students and provide college support services for our students starting as early as 6<sup>th</sup> grade. We have also secured funding for college readiness curriculum (Plan Ahead), guaranteed spots for SFUSD students at San Francisco State University (SF Promise) and most recently, secured funding from the Gates Foundation to double the number of students going to City College and graduating with a degree or certificate (CLIP).**

5. How do you propose lessening the achievement gap between students of different backgrounds? **I am a big believer in early childhood education. One way I think we lessen the achievement gap by not starting with one. I would increase opportunities for more students to have a preschool experience and start their academic career on the same footing.**

6. What are your views on charter schools? **I am supportive of the current charter schools we have in SFUSD. I consider charter schools public schools and appreciate that there have been options for our students who have not found our large**

**comprehensive high schools suitable. I appreciate the charter schools we currently have and would only consider increasing the number if a program was introduced that SFUSD isn't currently providing or couldn't do within our traditional school setting. I would like for us to make efforts to not approve charters, but instead, bring programs into our district through our small schools by design program.**

7. What are your views on the current school assignment system? **I think the board did the best they could to balance the demands of neighborhood schools and choice without using race or ethnicity. During the process, we were able to work with data instead of perception, which helped us to create a policy based on overall stats on not just on information from those who were able to come to the board meeting. I believe that we captured the diverse expressions shared during the development process as well as hard data to support the plan. The plan provides enough wiggle room to adjust, if necessary.**

8. How would you address the problem of truancy among high school students? **This is a citywide issue and I was instrumental in developing and opening TARC (Truancy Assessment and Resource Center), which a partnership with SFUSD, the mayor's office, JPD, DCYF, HAS, DA, SFPD and community based organizations. This is the first center of its kind that has the collaborative support of all partners and is focused on carefully assessing students and providing the proper resources to get them back in school. We have also engaged local merchants, are streamlining case workers, increasing attendance liaisons and working with the larger community to get our kids back in school and keeping them there. We are also requiring attendance information by CBO's as part of their student evaluations and provide additional support to struggling families.**

Do you support or oppose the following Propositions on the November ballot?

Proposition 19      X  support    \_\_\_oppose

Proposition 23    \_\_\_support      X  oppose

Proposition 26    \_\_\_support      X  oppose

Thank you for your time, and your commitment to the children of San Francisco. We look forward to seeing you on September 7<sup>th</sup>.