



Questionnaire for candidates for the office of
Member, San Francisco Board of Education
General Election, November 6, 2012

*Please return this questionnaire electronically to contact_us@phdemclub.org no later than **Tuesday, September 4**, to confirm your speaking slot at the September 11 endorsement meeting.*

Candidate name: Beverly Ho-A-Yun Popek
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Please write a brief response (≤150 words) to each question. We will make these questionnaires available to the public before the endorsement meeting.

1. Why are you running for office?

I'm running for school board because board members with children in our public schools have the minority voice. Active public school parents live and breathe public schools from bake sales, homework, to daily face-to-face interaction of public school families, teachers and administrators. The Board of Education needs makes decisions without an understanding and engagement with our greatest stakeholders, public school families. In addition, the Board of Education and SFUSD needs partnership and collaboration from our teachers. As a teacher myself, I appreciate and understand some of the challenges and teachers. I, as an active public school parent and teacher have a unique perspective to ensure that the SFUSD talks about priorities that matters to families.

2. What are your qualifications for this position? If you are an incumbent, describe your major accomplishments while in office.

1. *Active Public School Parent – I have two children in SF Public Schools. I have been active with my schools in fundraising, events and community building. I am immersed in public school life: When dropping off and pickup my children, I interact with our major stakeholders: families and teachers. When I work with my children on their homework or talk about what happened at school, these are public school matters.*
2. *Teacher – I teach Anthropology at Skyline College in San Bruno, CA. I have first hand experience of what happens after students graduate from public schools in terms of how prepared they are for college. I respect and understand the sacrifice our teachers educate our children.*
3. *Nonprofit and Public Sector Background – I have held positions in which I have shown results in fundraising, budgeting, coalition building, community outreach, and serving as a fiscal watchdog as a contract compliance officer.*

3. What are the top three challenges facing public education in San Francisco? If elected, what will you do to meet these challenges?

The mission of the SFUSD is to educate and prepare our students with skills that will allow them to go to college and compete in the job market. These are the top three issues:

1. *Growing the Capacity of our Students*
 - *Setting high and consistent standards for all students. For students that can't perform, there needs to be programs to assist.*
2. *Strategic Community Collaborations*
 - *Develop and leverage strategic collaborations and funding streams with our corporate, civic, and community neighbors to provide needed programs to address student issues such as poverty, the major indicator of the achievement gap. (i.e. wellness centers, increase CCSF's in-kind services, etc.).*
3. *Funding*
 - *Funding priorities should re-examined with stakeholders to ensure we fund top priorities. We have limited resources and we will set ourselves up to fail if we have many priorities and inadequate resources to make these priorities a success.*

4. What are your ideas for lessening the achievement gap between students of different backgrounds?

Here are some programs that I would like to support and implement to lower the dropout rate and increase student achievement:

- a. Consistent high standards for all students. For students that can't perform, there needs to be specialized tutoring and other programs to assist students.*
- b. Keeping the hard to hire schools in communities which get impacted by seniority every year, I would like to work with UESF on various ideas one how to respect the seniority system, yet understand and resolve the critical issue that every year the same schools are impacted by a significant turnover of teachers. This does not allow these schools an ability to gain any footing to progress or provide families a secure and stable education system*
- c. Providing cultural contexts and showing pathways and careers starting in elementary school.*
- d. Allowing schools to become the "center of communities" that will host services in which community based organizations will provide to assist and enhance families and student health and well-being.*
- e. Restorative justice policies and alternatives to suspensions and expulsions. There are many programs that have shown success. We need to adapt these best practices and implement these policies and programs in the SFUSD.*
- f. Expansion of credit recovery programs for students. Every student that would like to graduate on time should be given opportunities to do this.*
- g. Increasing programs offered by third parties to provide students insight to careers and paths beyond high school. Students need to see what opportunities they may have after high school.*
- h. Proactive engagement plan to address common patterns that lead to dropouts.*
- i. Wake up calls – examine and see if wake up calls to students would work in our city. New York City had this program with some success. We can have a corporation or foundation sponsor a pilot program.*

continued

5. What are your views on charter schools?

I feel that overall Charter Schools undermine the funding mechanism and ability for public schools to really fix itself. I don't agree with the privatization of public schools. However, if there are some good practices that we can adapt to a truly public school system, we should take these best practices and run with it

6. What further improvements would you make to the current school assignment system, in particular with regards to access to neighborhood schools?

It appears that the redesigned student assignment system is meeting its stated objectives. I think that the recent "tweak" to the school assignment system is going in the right direction. It appears that there are less complaints and more families happy. However, this system will always be a point of controversy and constant re-examination needs to be done to ensure the assignment system is responsive to the needs of the families.

7. How would you address the problem of truancy?

I would continue working with the current program, currently in year 2, to decrease and end truancy. Data release just a few days ago shows that this program is working. I would also use best practices from other comparable school districts in the country to tweak and adopt.

8. Do you support or oppose the following Propositions on the November ballot? Please give your reason (≤50 words) for each position.

Proposition 30 ** support oppose

Reason:

This temporary solution will help our school avoid a financial crisis.

Proposition 31 ** support oppose

Reason:

It's a two year budget cycle initiative. It's a good idea that will create greater economic stability going forward by having a budget that mirrors the election cycle.

Proposition 32 support ** oppose

Reason:

It will silence the voice of working Americans and allow billionaire and corporate super PACs to spend freely.

Thank you for your time, and your commitment to the children of San Francisco. We look forward to seeing you on September 11th.