



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](mailto:contact_us@phdemclub.org) no later than **Tuesday, September 4**, to confirm your speaking slot at the September 11 endorsement meeting.*

Candidate name: Sandra Lee Fewer
Contact person: Sandra Lee Fewer
Mailing address: 767-22 <sup>nd</sup> Avenue
Telephone: 415 722-5419
Email address: Sandra@sandrafewer.com
Web address: www.sandrafewer.com

Please write a brief response ( $\leq 150$  words) to each question. We will make these questionnaires available to the public before the endorsement meeting.

1. 1. Why are you running for office? **I am running for the Board of Education to continue the work I started when I was sworn into office in January 2009. I believe public education is the foundation of our democracy. I am running because I believe public education has a profound affect on individuals and society as a whole and that the success of public school system shapes the next generation of San Franciscans. SFUSD is on an upward trajectory to closing our achievement gap but we need to continue to give voice for those who are not on track to graduate. I have been that voice on the board and I think I have something to contribute to the students and parents of SFUSD.**
  
2. What are your qualifications for this position? If you are an incumbent, describe your major accomplishments while in office.

**I have been a PTA President 12 terms, served on 11 school site councils, for 8 years I worked as the Director of Parent Organizing and Education Policy at Coleman Advocates for Children and Youth, and I have served almost 4 years on the Board of Education. I am a fourth generation San Franciscan Chinese American and 4 generations of my family have attended San Francisco public schools, including my three children. I have trained hundreds of parents on parent rights, wrote the resolution to create a Parent Advisory Council to the Board of Education now in its eight year, and helped create the first Education Equity Platform for San Francisco public schools. I have served on the Public Education Enrichment Fund Community Advisory Committee for 4 years. I have a BA in Justice Administration and a MA in Public Administration. I am a proud SFUSD graduate as are my husband and children. I have served on the Board since 2009 and while there I have authored resolutions to implement restorative practices, bring ethnic studies classes to our high schools, create a parent engagement plan to bring us from a model of dependency to one of empowerment and recommitting to anti-discrimination of our LGBTQ youth.**

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

**1) graduating all students prepared for college or a living wage job 2) closing the racial achievement gap 3) budgeting through the lens of equity.**

**I will support the direction the district is pursuing, and monitor closely the progress toward these goals. The data tells us that we still have a persistent and wide achievement gap, although we are slowly narrowing it. For those students already in high school and must graduate under the new graduation requirement of completing the A-G sequence, we must provide an opportunity to make up classes or take classes they are missing. In this limited budget time that means afterschool options, summer school, night school, and other provisions. It also means we must provide students with a variety of A-G courses to take so they are engaged in what they are learning. We must also offer pathways to living wage jobs, within the A-G course sequence, such as union jobs in the trades.**

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

**We have started to narrow the gap by focusing first on a cluster of schools that have a majority of Black, Latino and Pacific Islander students and providing professional development on new techniques and strategies to be used in the classroom. We have also provided coaches and common planning time so teachers can be supported while they implement these changes in the way they teach. We have used these schools to be “incubators” for change and so far, it is working.**

*continued*

5. What are your views on charter schools?

**Charter schools give parents another option for public education. . My feeling is that Charter schools serve public school children and if they can prove they are**

doing a better job than we are to help us close our achievement gap, then I am more inclined to renew the charter. I am not hostile to Charter schools but I have voted to approve only one new Charter school (KIPP High School) while my time on the Board, and there have been many requests for new charters I am a huge fan of the charter schools we have in the county jail system and attend all their graduations.

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

***The student assignment process is a really difficult and complicated issue. It is not a perfect system by any means, but I do think we can better ensure it meets its goals by closely monitoring it and evaluating it. The factors in demographics change quickly so things like the CTIP areas need to be readjusted in response to population changes. I think the Board had hoped that the assignment system would be a tool to help us desegregate schools and bring more equity to schools but learned that we can only hope to meet these goals minimally through the system and most probably the main thing the system should do is assign students to schools in the most efficient and easy way possible for parents. We have included a neighborhood attendance zone preference in our revised plan, but still the majority of parents chose schools outside their attendance zone. The criticism has been that the neighborhood preference comes after the CTIP preference. We are monitoring the data every year to see if that preference should be changed.***

7. How would you address the problem of truancy?

**I am not a supporter of threatening to incarcerate parents because their children are truant. I am in support of taking each case separately to see what the challenges are for those chronically truant students. We also must stop the practice of “sending kids home” when schools feel like it as it sends the wrong message that being in school is not important and that the student is not wanted at the school. We have made great improvements in chronic absenteeism by being less punitive and more supportive of family situations.**

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: Although if this passes, it will not give schools more money, it does allow the bleeding. If it doesn't pass, we will have to shorten the school year by 15 days.**

Proposition 31     support     oppose

**This would allow the Governor to cut or eliminate any existing program during a fiscal emergency and could implement midyear cuts to K-12 education, the state's public university system, and health care services for low-income households. The only way to prevent this would be a two-thirds vote of each legislative house - no small feat given that neither party holds a supermajority in the Assembly or Senate.**

Proposition 32     support     oppose

**Reason: It would give unfair advantage to big business super PACS and silent the voices of organized labor.**

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