



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: Kim Garcia-Meza
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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? There are currently no educators with extensive experience in our Preschool-12th Grade public schools in San Francisco. I will add a very knowledgeable and respectful voice to the Board of Education. I am a long time advocate in public schools for teachers, parent voice and bilingual education. I am dedicated to promoting early literacy. I strongly believe that all students should have the opportunity to access higher education and be prepared to enter a career of their choosing. I know this opportunity begins in pre-school and must be nurtured and supported through early literacy and positive school experiences

that keep students engaged throughout their school career. I have a vision to closing the Achievement/Opportunity Gap between students and I will work to help San Francisco public schools to be a place that will provide a quality education to all our children.

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

I have been an early childhood educator for over 20 years. I was a bilingual public school teacher for over 10 years and I have been working with SFUSD since 1989. I am now a small business owner (Founder and Director of Las Mañanitas Preschool). I am a parent of 3 school age children. MY two oldest attend an independent school, SF Friends and my youngest attends a San Francisco public school (Flynn ES) and is in the first grade. I am an advocate for parents, teachers, and children. My experience as a prek-12th grade public school teacher, a labor leader in UESF, successfully running my own small business, and as a parent raising three children in public and independent schools, uniquely qualifies me to serve on the Board of Education and help ensure we have a quality education in all our schools

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

The top three challenges facing public education in San Francisco is:

-Getting enough financial resources to meet the learning needs of all our students. I support increasing revenue for public schools at the state level and support both education tax measures on the ballot, this November. I will work to close the loophole in corporate benefits in prop 13 and fight for more significant tax reform in California, especially ending the 2/3rds budget requirements.

-Closing the opportunity/achievement gap by investing in the classroom, better professional development, smaller class size and increase use of instructional support staff(teachers aides/paraprofessionals)

- Involving educators, parents and youth in budget and policy decisions. I will seek out the feedback of parents, youth and educators to support a public process that would increase transparency to ensure every dollar was accounted for and focus on the importance of human resources and having everyone working together to ensure that every child is successful.

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

We must fight for small class size and equal education opportunity (I am talking about actual courses A-G for all is only start), for students. All schools should have art & language opportunities not just school with a wealthy parent base. To close the achievement gap you fund the classroom, the course work and support that goes directly to students. You fund classroom opportunities first before downtown or administrative projects or administrative overhead. Closing the achievement gap starts with involving and giving leadership to parents and students in their own outcomes. I will also work to implement a policy of returning paraprofessionals to the classroom to support instruction and help with classroom management. I support having a structure of increased prep-time and financial support to students

who are struggling (similar to the current AP structure). I will continue to support a stronger bilingual and language capacity building programs for SFUSD.

continued

5. What are your views on charter schools?

I do not support the privatization of public schools. I believe the recent proliferation of charter schools is about privatization. In general I do not support charter schools. I however I do support schools like Gateway or 5 Keys Charter (in the SF Jails) that seek to serve the students SFUSD has failed or not provided for. Any approved Charters should have to offer something distinct and effective, than what the district is able or willing to provide.

Nationally Charter schools are part of a gross anti-education rhetoric and practice that shifts responsibility away from the people most responsible for undermining public education.

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

7. How would you address the problem of truancy?

Truancy is often a direct result of the relationship between students, their families and the school. I support both new and experienced teachers receiving regular trainings to teach in more culturally competent and engaging ways and most importantly to build healthy relationships with students and families through restorative practices, better classroom management and student discipline techniques.

I support free muni for youth & seniors and increase route frequency and limited stop routes to facilitate students traveling to and from school. SFUSD should be working closely with Muni and Bart to offer discounts to school employees, students and families to reduce truancy and cost for participating in our enrollment system. I support SFUSD expanding the program currently in schools that give free muni passes to families who meet specific criteria and who are low income. This is really beneficial in removing barriers to students coming to school on time and prepared.

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

Proposition 30 yes support ___ oppose

Reason: Adds much need resources to our public schools. Though it is only temporary and not enough, its a temporary reprieve.

Proposition 31 no support ___ oppose

Reason: This encourages cuts in all the wrong places and ties the hands of legislators from making the right decisions for schools.

Proposition 32 no support ___ oppose

Reason: This is a very deceptive piece of legislation that targets labor organizations to undermine the voice of working class people. This would force unions to expend considerable resources just to maintain the administrative cost and leave them little room to be solution oriented and

address important concerns, especially in schools and in our health and safety service sectors .

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