



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: JILL WYNNS
Contact person: Jill Wynns
Mailing address: 124 Brewster Street, San Francisco, CA 94110
Telephone: 415 828-7204
Email address: <a href="mailto:jwynns@csba.org">jwynns@csba.org</a>
Web address: <a href="http://jillwynns.com">jillwynns.com</a>

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. Why are you running for office?

I have dedicated my adult life to representing the public schools and students of San Francisco. I was an SFUSD parent for twenty-two years and have been on the Board of Education for twenty years, including two years as president. As a board member I have served on every board committee, focusing primarily on the Budget Committee, Rules, Policy and Legislation Committee, and Curriculum Committee. Policy areas that I have championed include parent engagement, opposing commercialism and privatization, charter schools, healthy school food, full-service community schools, de-segregation, and improving low-performing schools to address the achievement gap.

Representing the district at the state and national level, I have served on the national board of the Council of Urban Boards of Education of the National School Boards Association, and am currently President of the California School Boards Association, which is a rare opportunity for San Francisco to influence state policy.

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

I have served twenty years on the Board of Education. Since 1988 I have been a leader on twelve local school funding measures that have raised over two-and-a-half BILLION dollars for local schools. As a school board member, I worked with the local coalition to design a local, long-term funding strategy, including three general obligation bonds, the set aside of local funding through the Public Education Enrichment Fund, re-authorizing the Mello-Roos tax and the parcel tax for teachers and other staff salaries and accountability.

I authored the resolution creating the Parents Advisory Council, the Commercial-Free Schools Act, the Nutrition Policy, programs for chemical-free pest control and cleaning. I am a major supporter of the Weighted Student Formula and Site-Based Budgeting. For the last several years, I chaired the Ad hoc Committee on Student Assignment, an area that I have worked on for over twenty-five years.

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

a) The biggest challenge to the school district is the shamefully inadequate funding. In the coming years, I will be working at the state level, primarily through CSBA to design a more logical and adequate funding system. In the next two years we must re-authorize both the Children's Fund and the Public Education Enrichment Fund, increasing the funding levels and addressing structural weaknesses.

b) Continuing to close the achievement gap by continuing to focus our resources on students and schools in the greatest need.

c) Finding ways to meet the social and emotional needs of our students and their families. Expanding our Community Schools initiative to include more schools and to use the strategy of organizing community resources around local schools is an important step for the city and the district.

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

We have had several support programs for low-performing schools, including the current Superintendent's Zones using School Improvement Grant money from the federal government. One of our strengths is that we have not started over each time, but have tried to build on the work of earlier staffs and programs.

The Board and the administration have agreed on the importance of keeping the focus on our most challenged schools and doing everything we can, even in our current financial circumstances, to support the work in these schools. In addition, we will continue to distribute our resources through the Weighted Student Formula and to focus other resources on the areas of greatest need.

5. What are your views on charter schools?

I have great skepticism about charter schools and have only supported a very few of them, including the Life Learning Academy and the sheriff's Five Keys Charter School. These schools serve populations that the public school system find difficult or impossible to serve.

The presumption that charter schools are innovative or have higher achievement than publicly-managed schools, is incorrect. The data shows that, taken as a whole, these privatized schools do no worse and no better than public schools. However, proponents promised dramatic improvements that would prove that this model was an answer to the challenges of public education. Charter schools are the darlings of corporate “reformers”. The actual impact on public schools has been the erosion of funding, declining enrollment and encouraging the public perception that charter schools are public schools and that they are the only schools doing well. I am particularly disturbed that television and movies have promoted that erroneous concept.

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

We have made significant compromises in our choice-based system, including a real priority for attendance area, or “neighborhood” schools. So far we have not seen the choices of families change very much. I think that we need to continue to step up or outreach to communities and families about the potential advantages of choosing schools close to their homes, and to work with pre-schools and community organizations to recruit families to send their children to neighborhood schools.

Maintaining our choice system is also important. We know that our language immersion and other city-wide programs are extremely popular and effective and keep families in San Francisco and in SFUSD.

I think it is important that we give the new system time to work.

7. How would you address the problem of truancy?

Our current partnership with the city is an important part of our efforts to address truancy and attendance. The District Attorney has begun to work with us to develop an effective program to address chronic truancy.

However, I think the most effective programs are student engagement programs like Peer Resources and other community-based programs aligned through the schools. School must be engaging to students, but they must also get help to change their home habits. Mission High School has developed a student support system that is changing the attendance and achievement patterns of their students.

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 tax increase will plug the hole in the budget that the Republican members of the legislature have allowed to threaten our essential services. However, I also support Prop 38 which will begin to provide the long-term funding that we desperately need for public education.

Proposition 31     support     oppose

Reason: While I appreciate the desire to fix the structural problems in the state budget process, including a two-year budget cycle, I will never agree that the governor should be able to unilaterally cut funding.

Proposition 32    \_\_\_support    X oppose

Reason: Attempts to make it impossible for working people to act collectively to influence the political process and to further concentrate political power in the hands of the rich are a disturbing development. Therefore, I will never support taking political opportunities away from the working class.

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>.