



**Candidate questionnaire for
San Francisco Board of Education
General Election, November 4, 2014**

Please return this questionnaire electronically to contact_us@phdemclub.org **no later than Saturday, August 30**. Candidates who do not return the questionnaire by the due date will not be invited to participate in the September 9th forum. Questionnaires will be made available to our members online.



Candidate name: Lee Hsu

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1. Please describe your qualifications for this office.

I am a parent of two kids in public school. If elected, I would be the only school board member with children in public elementary school. Out of seven members, there should be at least one who has kids in elementary school, since that's such a critical period for literacy, life skills, and love of learning. I am on our School Site Council and active in our parent communities.

As a volunteer, I helped turn around a low-performing school in a predominantly-Latino neighborhood. I built a thriving after-school enrichment program from the ground up that included affordable classes in music, arts, computer programming, chess, sports, board games, and more. I am President of the Greater West Portal Neighborhood Association, where I lead teams in playground improvements, commercial district revitalization, and local service projects. I have experience in nonprofits, community building, law, finance, and technology.

My parents brought me to America in search of a brighter future for their kids. Public education gave me a chance to attend college, law school, and get a decent job. I want to make sure all our public school kids can have such opportunities.

2. What are the top three issues facing SFUSD, and what will you do about those issues?

(1) School assignment. The number of racially isolated schools is increasing. Our achievement gap persists. There is a massive loophole that's relevant to Potrero Hill. Savvy parents know they can move to Potrero Hill to apply, get priority for any school in the entire city, then move closer to that school. It's not great for Potrero Hill community when someone passing through can bid up rents or home prices just to get a government benefit. Many people don't fully understand this loophole, and others don't want to talk about it. I will discuss it openly and tackle it head on by focusing on fairness, means testing, and predictability.

(2) Quality schools in every neighborhood. I want to expand high-demand language-immersion, arts, and technology programs in struggling schools. That will bring families and resources into lower-income communities instead of suggesting to a child in Potrero Hill that her best chance at a great education is to get out of Potrero Hill. Starr King and Daniel Webster are blueprints that we should follow throughout the city.

(3) After-school programming. I'm here because of my experience in building after-school programs that attracted families to a school they might otherwise ignore. I'd like to make our after-school programs in San Francisco both affordable and the toast of the nation.

3. Please tell us about one teacher who had a significant influence on your life.

Miss Brown was my senior year English teacher. For most of grade school, I assumed that my future was in math and science. My parents wanted me to be a doctor, because that's a field where they thought an immigrant could find respect and earn a living and face the least amount of discrimination. I thought maybe I could be a computer guy, and they'd still be happy with that.

Miss Brown gave me confidence in my ability to write and create with words. I remember her feedback on several of our reading and writing assignments, and it made me better and more willing to express myself freely. She nominated me for a writing competition, which floored me, because I had never thought of myself as a good writer. Now that I think about it, the other nominee was a girl named "Leigh," so maybe she just thought it'd be neat to have a girl named Leigh and a boy named Lee. Leigh did better than Lee, but I was happy for her and happy to have had a chance to compete.

I went through various points in my college career where I questioned my ability to think clearly and write well, but I always remembered Miss Brown nominating me as one of two students for a writing contest. I ended up going to Yale Law School, being an Articles Editor for the Yale Law Journal, and writing an en banc opinion for a federal judge. And I still think of Miss Brown every time I feel good about something I wrote.

Thank you for your time and your commitment to public service. We look forward to seeing you at the Potrero Hill Neighborhood House on September 9th.