



SFUSD SAN FRANCISCO
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

WRITTEN TESTIMONY:

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BEFORE:

**THE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION & THE WORKFORCE
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

HEARING:

**“BREAKING TRUST: ATTACKS ON PARENTAL RIGHTS,
INAPPROPRIATE CONTENT, AND LEGAL ABUSES IN AMERICA’S
SCHOOLS”**

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Thank you for inviting me to testify on behalf of the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD). As the district's Superintendent, I come to this role as a parent, a longtime public servant, and someone deeply committed to the students and families of San Francisco.

My core academic responsibility as Superintendent is clear: to ensure that SFUSD students become strong readers, effective writers, and confident mathematical thinkers, and that they graduate prepared for college, career, and life, and able to contribute to their communities.

That work requires us to create the conditions in which learning can happen. Students need safe schools. Families need clear communication. Teachers need support. We at SFUSD take seriously our obligations to follow the law, serve every child, and remain focused on academic excellence.

San Francisco is proud of its history. The City is known as a pioneer in LGBTQ rights and we have a long tradition of embracing diversity and welcoming everyone, including those who feel marginalized or overlooked. As a school district, we were one of the first to recognize the importance of teaching about our diversity so that students can learn and grow together.

I want to focus my testimony on three areas. First, I will discuss SFUSD's core work serving a diverse set of students. Second, I will address parents and guardians as essential partners in that work. And third, I will provide information about SFUSD's curriculum and school policies governed by public processes, state standards, parent-notice requirements, and the legal obligations that apply to every public school district.

1) OVERVIEW OF THE DISTRICT

SFUSD is a diverse public school district serving students and families across San Francisco. We have over 49,000 students, from every neighborhood, background, culture, faith tradition, language community, and family structure represented in our city. We do not pick and choose who we serve. We are proud to take each student as they are, and we work to create schools where every student can feel safe, respected, and ready to learn.

Our students attend 125 schools supported by 9,000 hardworking educators, school leaders, counselors, paraeducators and other dedicated professionals.

At its best, a public school district is both academically rigorous and deeply responsive to the students and families it serves. That is the work we are pursuing in San Francisco.

I have been Superintendent for a little over 18 months. When I entered this role, SFUSD faced serious fiscal and operational challenges. We have taken difficult steps to stabilize the district, including passing a balanced 2025-26 budget and a multi-year plan to responsibly manage the



district's finances. Those decisions are not abstract: fiscal stability is necessary to protect classroom instruction, maintain local control, and foster trust with families and educators. We now have a budget that restores local control and gets the district back on its own two feet.

In that time, we have also made strong progress to modernize our curriculum guided by state law, build community with families, and create school environments that make it possible for students to learn.

Our first responsibility is academic achievement. Students must be able to read clearly, write effectively, reason mathematically, and develop the knowledge and skills they need for college, career, and life. That is why SFUSD is focused on high-quality instruction and support.

We know that students arrive at school with different needs, strengths, challenges, and experiences. Our job is to meet every student where they are and help them move forward academically.

SFUSD serves students with disabilities, English learners, foster youth, refugee and immigrant youth, students from various economic backgrounds, students of different faiths, LGBTQ students, and many others who navigate complex circumstances but have the same right to a high-quality education. We serve them because they are our students. We serve them because every child deserves to learn.

SFUSD's academic outcomes are above the statewide average in English language arts and math, but we are not satisfied. In 2025, overall English Language Arts proficiency remained above 50 percent, and math proficiency remained approximately 46 percent; at the same time, unacceptable opportunity gaps persist for some student groups. That is why SFUSD has adopted new math and language arts curricula and set measurable goals for third-grade literacy, eighth-grade math, and college and career readiness. We offer academically rigorous classes for students, which includes ensuring all our students in eighth grade who are ready have access to algebra.

Supporting those students is indivisible from academic excellence. A student cannot focus fully on reading, writing, and math if they cannot access essential services, if their family cannot understand district information, if they do not feel safe, or if their school does not have the tools to support them. That is why our Student Nutrition Services are proud to serve more than 37,000 meals per day, ensuring our children are fed and ready to focus on academics. Our on-site Wellness Programs offer our students safe settings to work with trusted adults and experts in adolescent health, so that they can connect with resources when coping with complex issues such as stress, trauma, suicide, bullying, depression, and self-esteem. These programs are important because creating a sense of belonging for every student so that they feel welcomed and supported in their learning environment is how we do our core job: teaching.



SFUSD also works to connect classroom learning with college and career opportunities. Our Dual Enrollment work with City College of San Francisco allows students to access college-credit courses while still in high school to prepare them for careers in fields including nursing, teaching, and as emergency medical technicians. For Fall 2025, SFUSD offered 11 Dual Enrollment classes across our high school campuses, while approximately 376 additional students enrolled independently in Dual Enrollment courses at City College of San Francisco.

These rigorous educational opportunities matter. Dual enrollment helps students see themselves as college-ready. It exposes them to higher expectations. It expands the high school coursework that we can offer our students. They can earn college credit, build confidence, and begin imagining a future after graduation. It is one way SFUSD helps students understand that their work in school is connected to what comes next.

SFUSD also emphasizes college and career readiness more broadly. Our school counselors provide information about University of California and California State University admission requirements, career technical education opportunities, and resources that may help cover Advanced Placement testing costs. Mission High School in our district has the highest acceptance rate for UC Berkeley of any high school in the state.

This is part of our commitment to opportunity. A student's ZIP code, family income, language, disability status, or personal circumstances should not determine whether they can access a quality education or a meaningful pathway after high school.

2) PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

We recognize that families are the first and most influential teachers in a child's life and are essential partners in their child's education. SFUSD's role is to support that relationship. We *want* parents and guardians involved in their child's education, and we are grateful to partner every day with many engaged and supportive families across San Francisco.

As a public school district, we must also comply with federal and California laws governing parental notice, student privacy, nondiscrimination, student safety, and access to education. Parents and guardians in SFUSD have rights to information, participation, and complaint processes. Families may raise concerns at the school site and through district channels; where applicable under the Every Student Succeeds Act, they may request information about teacher and paraprofessional qualifications; they may review and opt their child out of comprehensive sexual health education; and they may use district complaint procedures when they believe the district has not met its obligations. SFUSD's responsibility is to make these rights understandable and accessible, including for families who speak languages other than English.



Family involvement is not an add-on to the work of schools. It is central to student success. When families feel welcomed, informed, and respected, students benefit. SFUSD works to make sure families have the information they need, understand how to get involved with their child's school, and know how to raise questions or concerns.

SFUSD maintains family support structures designed to help parents and guardians navigate district resources and resolve concerns. The goal is simple: families should not feel lost when they need assistance. They should be able to find help, receive answers, and stay engaged in their child's education.

This is especially important in a district as diverse as ours. We serve families who speak many languages, families new to the school system, families navigating special education, families facing economic hardship, LGBTQ families, families of many different faith traditions and backgrounds, and families who need help understanding district processes. To serve students well, we must also communicate well with families.

Families should be able to begin with their child's teacher when they have a concern. If a concern is not resolved, they should be able to speak with a principal or assistant principal. And if more support is needed, the district should help connect them with the right person or process.

We know that trust must be earned: by listening, by being transparent, by following through, and by staying focused on what families rightly expect from their schools – strong academics, safe classrooms, respectful treatment, and clear communication.

3) AGE APPROPRIATE CURRICULUM

SFUSD works to ensure that instruction is aligned to state standards, age appropriate, and guided by state law. Educators need clear expectations. Students deserve instruction that is academically rigorous and appropriate for their grade level.

Families have a right to understand what their child is learning. SFUSD does not ask families simply to trust that materials are appropriate. Our curriculum is governed through public processes, SFUSD Board Policy, state standards, and legal notice requirements. In areas such as comprehensive health education and comprehensive sexual health education, SFUSD Policy and California law require instruction to be age appropriate, factual, skills-based, medically accurate, and objective. Parents receive notice before these lessons are taught, may review written and audiovisual materials, and may request that their child not receive reproductive-health lessons without penalty.



At the same time, students need schools where they feel safe to learn. We serve students and families from many cultures, faith traditions, languages, viewpoints, abilities, and family structures, and we work to ensure every student can participate fully in school and focus on learning.

SFUSD does not seek to direct any student's identity, beliefs, or family values. Our role is educational. We are responsible for ensuring that every student can attend school, access instruction, and be free from harassment, bullying, discrimination, and violence. Hate has no place in our schools. Our responsibility is to create an environment where every student feels safe, respected, and valued so that they can learn, grow, and thrive.

We also take our legal obligations seriously, including where the law requires parent notice, review, or opt-out. Where the law protects student privacy, SFUSD complies with those obligations as well. Our responsibility is to make these rules clear to families and staff so that families understand how decisions are made and how to raise concerns. When relevant questions arise, our goal is to empower families, support students, and follow the law. That is how we maintain trust and keep the focus where it belongs: on student learning and academic outcomes.

4) CONCLUSION

Like any large school district, we recognize that SFUSD has work to do and must continually improve. Public education is difficult work, but I am proud of the progress we are making. We remain focused on our core responsibility of strengthening academic instruction. We are improving fiscal management. We are building trust with families. And we are working every day to set our educators and students up for success.

Ultimately, our purpose is simple. We want our students to become strong readers and writers, critical thinkers, problem solvers, and responsible members of their communities. We want them to feel seen, valued, and supported so they can focus on learning. We want them to graduate prepared for college, career, and life.

That is what the families of San Francisco expect from us. That is what our students deserve. And that is the work I am committed to leading as Superintendent.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.