

Quality Neighborhood Schools for All

Whereas, San Francisco residents and parents have declared time and again that they support a neighborhood-based school assignment system; and

Whereas, the current school assignment system frequently denies families access to neighborhood schools, thereby deterring enrollment and participation in public schools; and

Whereas, students are safer when they attend a school closer to their home; and

Whereas, the only way in which communities are created within San Francisco is when families participate in their neighborhood schools with other parents, students, teachers, school staff, and neighbors; and

Whereas, independent studies have shown that a neighborhood-based school assignment system will increase the racial, ethnic, and socio-economic diversity within City schools; and

Whereas, the current school assignment system has failed to address the achievement gap, though that is what it was originally intended to do, and has contributed to one of the worst achievement gaps in any urban school district in the State of California; and

Whereas, a neighborhood-based school assignment system will enhance the quality of life for all students and for all residents of San Francisco by reducing travel time, stress, traffic congestion, pollution, and wasted resources for busing.

Now, therefore, the people of the City and County of San Francisco declare as follows:

1. This Declaration of Policy shall be known as **“Quality Neighborhood Schools for All.”**

2. Every family in every San Francisco neighborhood should have the opportunity to send their children to a quality neighborhood school, and the system for assigning children to schools should give the highest priority to the proximity of a child’s home to the school.

A. Allowing students to attend quality schools near their homes will help foster a sense of community, increase the involvement of parents and other caregivers in

schools, and decrease travel time between home and school, thereby increasing family time and decreasing the impact on the environment.

B. Allowing students to attend quality schools near their homes will also attract and keep more San Francisco families in the public school system.

C. Basing school assignment on factors other than the proximity of a child's home to the school disengages families from their neighborhoods, creates uncertainty for families, discourages families from attending public schools, makes it more difficult for parents and other caregivers to volunteer at schools and participate in school activities, and puts more car trips on City streets.

D. San Francisco families also should have the opportunity to have their children attend schools with language immersion programs, newcomer programs, and other schools with specialized programs, including but not limited to Lowell High School, the School of the Arts, and K-8 elementary schools, based on the specific admission and enrollment policies for these schools, even if these schools are not located near their homes.

3. It shall be the policy of the City and County of San Francisco that:

A. All children within the City and County of San Francisco should have the opportunity to attend a quality neighborhood school; and

B. The system for assigning children to schools should give the highest priority to the proximity of a child's home to a school, after assigning siblings to the same school; and

C. The system for assigning children to schools should also provide for the opportunity to send their children to schools with language immersion or other specialized programs, even if these schools are not located near their homes; and

D. The San Francisco Board of Education, School Superintendent, Mayor, and Board of Supervisors shall take any and all actions possible to effectuate this policy.

4. If any section, sub-section, sentence, or clause ("portion") of this Declaration of Policy is held to be invalid or unconstitutional by a final judgment of a court, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions. The voters hereby declare that this Declaration of Policy, and each portion, would have been adopted irrespective of the fact that any one or more portions of the Declaration of Policy are found invalid. If

any portion of this Declaration of Policy is held invalid as applied to any person or circumstance, such invalidity shall not affect any application of this Declaration of Policy which can be given effect.

5. This Declaration of Policy shall be broadly construed to achieve the purposes stated in this Declaration of Policy. It is the intent of the voters that the provisions of this Declaration of Policy be interpreted or implemented by the Board of Education, City and County of San Francisco, courts, and others in a manner that facilitates the purposes set forth herein.

6. This Declaration of Policy shall become effective upon the approval of the voters, so that it applies to the student assignment system used for the 2011-2012 school year and every school year thereafter.

DEPARTMENT OF ELECTIONS

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