

## LOWELL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION STATEMENT REGARDING PROPOSED CHANGES TO LOWELL ADMISSION POLICY

Dear Alums and Lowell friends:

We are writing with another update regarding Lowell admissions. As you may have seen, last week Dr. Matt Wayne, Superintendent of the San Francisco Unified School District, unveiled a proposal to change the admissions from the current three-band system which has been in place for several decades. The [Chronicle](#) featured an interview with Dr. Wayne and his [presentation](#) was included in the draft agenda for next week's meeting of the Board of Education. The [Examiner](#) has also covered the proposal. In short, the idea is to determine Lowell admissions solely based on middle school grades, with a lottery for all students with grades above a minimum level, perhaps 3.0.

The proposal is at its earliest stages, and will be considered for the first time by the Board of Education on Tuesday, November 14. **Please read below for additional information about how you can get involved.**

Yesterday, [we issued a forceful letter to Dr. Wayne](#) expressing the LAA's serious concerns after having been blind-sided by Dr. Wayne's endorsement of wholesale changes to Lowell's traditional academic-based admission policy that include elimination of any use of standardized test scores or consideration of factors evidencing the ability to overcome hardships. Although Dr. Wayne claims to espouse data-driven decisions to improve student outcomes, his proposal to conduct lottery-style admissions for all students with a B average is unsupported by any study or analysis regarding the likelihood such students could thrive at Lowell.

In our letter, we also set the record straight regarding the recently-concluded High School Task Force that Dr. Wayne cites. After spending \$500,000 of scarce SFUSD funds and several months of meetings, with no in-depth analysis regarding academic outcomes at Lowell for students admitted via lottery in the 2021-22 and 2022-23 school years, the Task Force issued a five-page report. One of the only important, fact-based findings from the report is that 89% of SFUSD families (including 89% of families with children at Lowell as well as 89% of families with students attending schools other than Lowell) support academic-based admission for Lowell.

Additionally, the LAA letter calls Dr. Wayne's attention to his apparent dismissal of the [31-page report by Task Force member Phillip Shinn](#), LAA Vice President, regarding the important challenges facing SFUSD middle and high schools. Dr. Wayne's ill-considered proposal threatens to shift attention from pressing needs at all of our city's public high schools, such as increasing access to Advanced Placement courses and developing pathways for college and career readiness (given that barely half of SFUSD high school graduates are considered "college/career ready").

Finally, we demanded that Dr. Wayne remove the Lowell Alumni Association name from his planned presentation at the Tuesday, November 14 Board of Education meeting because he erroneously lists the LAA as a “community/business partner,” a baseless reference.

## **CALL TO ACTION**

We expect that Dr. Wayne will present his proposal to the Board of Education at their next meeting at 6:30pm on Tuesday, November 14 at 555 Franklin Street, San Francisco. We encourage alumni and Lowell friends to join us at that meeting and share your opinions with the Board. Additional information is available on the Board of Education's [website](#).

We also suggest you contact Dr. Wayne and the members of the Board of Education. Below you will find contact information and an email template you can consider using, but please feel free to share your personal thoughts.

Thank you as always for your dedication to Lowell. Please feel free to reach out to me with any thoughts or questions at **[feedback@lowellalumni.org](mailto:feedback@lowellalumni.org)**.

Sincerely,  
Kate Lazarus  
LAA President

Email for Dr. Wayne and BOE members:

waynem@sfsd.edu  
kevineboggess@sfsd.edu  
lisaweissman-ward@sfsd.edu  
MattAlexander@sfsd.edu  
JennyLam@sfsd.edu  
lainiemotamedi@sfsd.edu  
MarkSanchez@sfsd.edu  
alidafisher@sfsd.edu

Suggested email:

Dear Superintendent Wayne,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to your proposal to replace existing academic admissions for Lowell High School based on test scores, grades and individual evaluations of students by their middle schools with a single requirement of a 3.0 middle school grade point average.

This proposal flies in the face of the 89% of Lowell and non-Lowell parents surveyed who support the academic admissions system and majorities of SFUSD students attending Lowell

and other schools who also support academic admissions. Rather than reducing the academic requirements for Lowell, the District should work to raise the academic performance of all middle school students, less than half of whom today are ready for high school when they graduate 8th grade (according to SFUSD's own data.)

For decades, Lowell High has been recognized locally and nationally as an academically challenging school of opportunity for students of all backgrounds, income levels and neighborhoods. We want to work together to increase the number of students eligible by improving their education rather than reducing the standard for admission.

We ask that you remove your current recommendation to change the existing admissions process at Lowell, and focus your attention on the immediate issue at hand: the learning gap that exists with the majority of our middle school and high school students.

Sincerely,