

Candidate and Campaign Information

Candidate Name: Bruce Van Allen		
Campaign Address: PO Box 839, Santa Cruz CA 95061		Phone: 831-429-1688
Campaign Website: vanallen-for-board-of-education.org	Email: info@vanallen-for-board-of-education.org	
Campaign Manager Name/Email/Phone: Currently Recruiting		
Office you seek to be elected to: Trustee, Santa Cruz County Board of Education		District Number: Trustee Area 2
Please choose the option best describing your candidacy: Challenger Incumbent Open Seat <div style="text-align: center;"> <input type="checkbox"/> Challenger <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Incumbent <input type="checkbox"/> Open Seat </div>		
Are you a member of the GLBT Alliance? If so, when did you first join? Member in spirit for a long time, with occasional payment of dues or other contributions.		
Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQ community? If not, do you identify as an LGBTQ ally? LGBTQ Ally		

Questionnaire (please answer questions directly and keep responses succinct and brief)

1. Please describe your qualifications for the position you seek (include your key issues, priorities if elected, and any key endorsements you'd like to share), plus anything else that you'd like our members to know about you and your candidacy.
2. Why are you seeking the endorsement of Santa Cruz County's grassroots LGBTQ political organization, the GLBT Alliance?
3. Please tell us about any past or current experiences or involvement you've had addressing LGBTQ issues, or working to support the LGBTQ community.
4. What political or civil rights issues were you aware of, prior to reading the attached informational materials, regarding LGBTQ equality?
5. What is your philosophy about working with minority communities of which you are not a member, and how will this manifest in your future work with the LGBTQ community?
6. Please describe any programs you know of that impact the LGBTQ community and that are governed by or funded through the elected office you are running for, and include any suggestions you may have for improvements.
7. If elected, how would you use your position to help further issues of importance to the LGBTQ community?
8. If you receive the GLBT Alliance's endorsement, will you display it in your campaign literature?

GLBT Alliance of Santa Cruz County
Candidate Questionnaire
for endorsement in the November 2016 general election

Questionnaire (please answer questions directly and keep responses succinct and brief)

1. Please describe your qualifications for the position you seek (include your key issues, priorities if elected, and any key endorsements you'd like to share), plus anything else that you'd like our members to know about you and your candidacy.

I was appointed to cover a vacancy on the Santa Cruz County Board of Education in early 2015. I represent Trustee Area 2, which includes most of the City of Santa Cruz east of the river, and a large portion of Live Oak and the foothills. I want to continue this service as an elected Trustee.

From my experience in government, non-profit, and private sector positions, I believe I have the knowledge and skills to be an effective Trustee.

- I have had extensive experience with the County Office of Education and local school districts through my work on San Lorenzo River restoration.
- I oversaw expansion of an award-winning program in which artists taught at-risk youth ways to express themselves non-violently.
- I have taught computer technology at Cabrillo College.
- I have actively campaigned to pass local school finance ballot measures.
- Direct experience with my partner's kids showed me how important our local alternative education and special needs programs are.

My priorities are safety and access for all students, support for teachers and staff, and financial accountability.

I support occupational training, special needs programs, and alternative education, as well as enhanced training for new teachers.

In today's world, schools open each year amidst growing challenges as the shifting impacts of gender, race, and class intersect in students' lives.

I believe our community wants our schools to address these challenges with openness and respect for all. That will be my goal if elected.

2. Why are you seeking the endorsement of Santa Cruz County's grassroots LGBTQ political organization, the GLBT Alliance?

I believe that it is important to have active LGBTQ organizations to surface issues and advocate for change. Also, we are currently in a time when our society is actively engaged in discussion and revision of assumptions and restrictions around gender and sexuality, emerging from too long a time of avoiding or suppressing that discussion. I believe it is especially crucial now that there be a strong political voice for LGBTQ folks, to advance rights and respect and also to counter backlash. In this context, I have been an ally and supporter of the Alliance since its beginnings, and consider myself part of the movement that the Alliance provides leadership for in our region. So it would be an honor to receive the Alliance's endorsement.

3. Please tell us about any past or current experiences or involvement you've had addressing LGBTQ issues, or working to support the LGBTQ community.

I have been a supporter and advocate for LGBTQ rights and freedoms since the late 1960s. In my teens as I explored my sexuality I realized that my own health, pleasure, and personal autonomy required me to reject externally-imposed roles and assumptions for how I should be. And it followed that this would be true for everyone. I regard my own freedom of choice about my sexuality to be at stake in the struggle for LGBTQ rights, irrespective of my choice of partners. I have tried to apply this understanding in my personal and work life, and having chosen political activism as a lifelong path, of course I have included this perspective in my advocacy and political alliances.

Over the years I have participated in nearly all of the Santa Cruz Pride marches/parades, worked in local campaigns against ballot measures attacking LGBT teachers and persons with AIDS/HIV, advocated for inclusion of healthcare and counseling for LGBT persons in local social service funding, written non-discrimination and anti-harassment policies for non-profits I managed, refused to provide election campaign consulting for candidates unwilling to embrace LGBT rights, affirmatively included LGBT folks in my own campaign committees, and sought to constructively remind people of how their language choices and jokes could change from reinforcing oppression to aligning with liberation.

4. What political or civil rights issues were you aware of, prior to reading the attached informational materials, regarding LGBTQ equality?

- The long march through laws and regulations that persist in limiting options and dignity for LGBTQ people, at the local, state, & federal levels (examples: adoption rights, partner access during health crises, inheritance and taxation issues);
- Completion of the movement for marriage equality and defeat of the un-American "religious liberty" excuse for discrimination;
- Provision of non-gendered access to restrooms in all public and business locations;
- Lack of adequate funding at all levels for services tailored to needs of LGBTQ people, especially those experiencing further vulnerability due to factors such as age (both youth and elders), race & ethnicity, homelessness, and immigration status.
- Issues of bullying & queer youth suicide, which must be addressed proactively by schools, employers, religious institutions, and government;

5. What is your philosophy about working with minority communities of which you are not a member, and how will this manifest in your future work with the LGBTQ community?

Our community and our nation have large inequities in how the benefits and privileges of society are allocated and apportioned. As I see it, the state of our system reflects the ongoing struggle for rights and equality, and I do not think history always brings progress.

This means that I align myself with the struggles of under-represented communities in two ways:

- I look to follow their leadership and initiative in raising issues and engaging in struggles; and
- I consider it a lifetime project to continuously do my best to understand how I may benefit from inequitable social relations - and to take responsibility to work for changing that when I find it.

6. Please describe any programs you know of that impact the LGBTQ community and that are governed by or funded through the elected office you are running for, and include any suggestions you may have for improvements.

The Santa Cruz County Office of Education, directed by the County Superintendent of Schools and overseen by the Board of Education, plays a central role in ensuring that local education meets the needs and aspirations of ALL students. This mission is expressed in two main ways:

- By promulgating policies and best practices, and
- By supporting and directly providing educational situations designed for students not fully served by the standard schools.

The latter, in the form of alternative education, special needs services, and occupational training, are especially important for students & youth marginalized by factors such as racial exclusion, gender-based discrimination, bullying, and lack of support for those questioning & exploring their sexuality.

The County Office of Education actively promotes policies and best practices to local school districts that recognize the prime importance of access, inclusion, and safety for all students. In the time I have served on the Board of Education, I have found the whole Board as well as the Superintendent to be solidly committed to progress on the challenges faced by LGBTQ students and their families. My intention in continuing to serve on the Board is to make sure that this commitment does not waver.

It should be noted that no new discretionary funding comes to the Office of Education, following the transition to the new Local Control Funding Formula that devolved most education funding directly to the local school districts. Because of this, the Board of Education no longer has the ability to initiate new programs, and this situation is expected to last for the foreseeable future. Absence of new funding means that the Board must increase its role promoting practices and policies that support and respect LGBTQ students; my particular emphasis in this is to be sure that the students and families affected, along with the teachers and support staff, are inclusively involved in formulating policies and identifying best practices, rather than having everything come down from above.

7. If elected, how would you use your position to help further issues of importance to the LGBTQ community?

As described above, I consider the struggle for LGBTQ rights and dignity as integral to my own commitment to political action and social change. Service on the County Board of Education follows from my long background intersecting with local schools and districts, and I apply my values in this work as I do in all of my political and community work. I am always available to hear concerns and I am committed to actively surfacing issues and problems that affect LGBTQ students. I use my role as an elected Board member to show support for civil rights. Education touches many aspects of family and community life, so gender-related issues are always present in various dimensions. My approach is to make sure the local educational environments support constructive progress rather than maintaining the status quo due to ignorance, resistance, or waiting for other institutions to lead the way.

8. If you receive the GLBT Alliance's endorsement, will you display it in your campaign literature?

Yes of course – with Pride!