

**Deborah Tracy-Proulx**  
**Santa Cruz City Schools Board of Trustees, Area 1**

1- Please tell us why you are interested in reaching out to the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender community.

**ANSWER: I am reaching out to all groups who comprise our diverse community because I care about serving the interests of every child in our schools. As a trustee, it is not only my duty but my responsibility to represent all voices of our community.**

2 - Why do you want the endorsement of The GLBT Alliance, Santa Cruz County's grassroots progressive gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender political organization?

**ANSWER: It would be an honor to be recognized by the GLBT Alliance as I have tremendous respect for their advocacy on our community.**

3 - Have there been any LGBT people who've had a significant impact on your life as role models, inspirations, mentors, friends, etc.? If so, please tell us a little bit about how they've influenced you.

**ANSWER: I have been very fortunate to have several people in my life who've made significant impacts on the way I lead my life and raise my children: SCCS School Board Trustee Cynthia Hawthorn, the first openly gay school board trustee in our county and pioneer in advocating for LGBT student rights and safety issues; Adam Spickler, who has greatly inspired me both by his courageous and very public journey, and by doing great work advocating for the health and well being of our community; and elementary teachers Raven Graham, Ziesel Saunders, and Robert Ellingsen for not only being exemplary educators, but for teaching my sons about tolerance, patience, kindness, and acceptance.**

4 - Please tell us about your history with the LGBT community, and your awareness of issues specific to our community.

**I moved to Santa Cruz in the mid 1980's as a college student. UCSC had a much more active LGBT community than the area where I had previously lived, and I credit those first few years on campus as bringing me awareness of the social and legal issues facing the LGBT community. Particularly during this time period, and given college culture, HIV/AIDS prevention and education was germane to much of the activism I was involved in on campus. A few years after graduation, I had one of the most life affirming experiences by riding alongside many of my LGBT friends and colleagues in the AIDS/Lifecycle Ride.**

**At this point in my life, marriage equality and the rights of LGBT parents are at the forefront of concerns of my close peers. And, as we all are having and raising children, ensuring that they and all their peers have safety, equality, respect, and protected rights is paramount.**

a - Have you had any opportunities to address LGBT issues in the course of your community service or professional life to date (i.e., have you helped formulate corporate non-discrimination standards, worked on the board of a non-profit that developed a LGBT outreach program, etc.)? Please tell us about this work.

**ANSWER: As a school board trustee, I have always supported policy and programs that address equity and safety issues for our LGBT students. As a parent member of my child's middle school Home and School Club, I supported the formation of the student-run Gay Straight Alliance.**

b - The queer community is diverse, and we work to represent all elements of it. In support of that objective, we'd like to ask, specifically, whether you know any self-identified bisexual or transgender people, and if you are familiar, at any level, with the issues faced by these specific communities?

**ANSWER: I have friends who identify as bisexual - they are confronted with pre-conceived assumptions about their identity, stereotyping, judgement, and disrespect. I also do know transgendered people, and a person currently in transition and again, acceptance, respect, and a general lack of knowledge and ignorance about gender identity are ongoing issues for them, as well as discrimination both socially and legally regarding basic human rights.**

c - As documented in the The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute publication, "Bisexual health: An introduction and model practices for HIV/STD prevention programming" (2007), which is available for download at the

URL below, in many cases bisexual people face even greater health risks and obstacles to accessing effective health care and health information than their peers in the queer community, including higher levels of self-harm, suicide attempts and thoughts of suicide. What specific steps would you take to address the issues raised in this report, and elsewhere, that are specific to bisexuals, including "biphobia" and lack of service provider awareness of bisexuality? [http://www.thetaskforce.org/downloads/reports/reports/bi\\_health\\_5\\_07\\_b.pdf](http://www.thetaskforce.org/downloads/reports/reports/bi_health_5_07_b.pdf)

A summary of the top ten health issues for the bisexual community, sourced from the above report, can be found here: [http://brown.edu/Student\\_Services/Health\\_Services/Health\\_Education/lgbtq\\_health/bisexual\\_health/health\\_concerns\\_for\\_bisexuals.php](http://brown.edu/Student_Services/Health_Services/Health_Education/lgbtq_health/bisexual_health/health_concerns_for_bisexuals.php)

**ANSWER: Ongoing education and training for all staff is essential in ensuring the needs of all students are being met. Including the issues raised in the Task Force report as part of our health and sex education curriculum would be a second step. I will also request that district staff provide a yearly report to the board as to what programs and policies are in place and how they are being implemented to support the needs and concerns of our LGBT students so we may hold ourselves accountable to maintaining awareness of health and safety issues.**

5 - Please describe your philosophy for working with under-represented communities of which you are not a member and, specifically, how this would manifest itself in your tenure in office.

**ANSWER: As an elected official, my number one responsibility is to represent the rights and interests of every member of my community, particularly to advocate and give voice to the under-represented. I have had several years experience working with the English Language Learner community in our schools, working to form stronger bonds between English Only and ELL communities to give our ELL families a stronger voice. I make the effort to reach out and listen to my constituents, not just react to the loudest voices, and will continue to advocate for the rights all under-represented groups in our community.**

6 - Are you aware of the various local organizations which serve the LGBT community; do you support any of these organizations, financially or as a volunteer? Would you like to know more?

**ANSWER: Yes, I am familiar with many local groups as well as school groups. I have attended events supporting local groups including fundraisers for The Diversity Center, and have donated to the Queer Youth Task Force in addition to attending their events. I am always open to learning more about positive organizations in our community.**

7 - If elected, will you be willing to work with the GLBT Alliance, The Safe Schools Project of Santa Cruz County, and/or other appropriate organizations, to be sure that the schools in your district have a curriculum for awareness training for staff and faculty concerning LGBT issues?

**ANSWER: Yes. I currently support the Safe Schools Project and am proud that in 2013, during my tenure as SCCS Board President, SCCS District was awarded a Pride Proclamation by the Diversity Center, recognizing the work our district has done to support our LGBT community, including training and curriculum for our staff. I am very open and willing to work with the GLBT Alliance and other organizations in order to ensure that our district's practices continue to evolve.**

8 - It is not unusual for a school district to have a relationship at some level, such as by providing subsidized services or access to district property, with otherwise meritorious organizations (such as the Boy Scouts and the Salvation Army) who have formal policies that discriminate against LGBT people, and a documented history of doing so. If it emerged that such a relationship existed or was proposed to exist in your district, how would you resolve the situation?

**ANSWER: My personal belief is that there is no place for any organization with such practices on our campuses. At this time our district does not have rental agreements with these organizations. In accordance with the California Ed Code Civic Center Act, our district cannot discriminate against organizations wishing to lease our facilities, but I would and do advocate that our district administration and site leaders encourage these organizations to seek alternative rental space.**

9 - What, in your opinion, is the most effective way for the school board to enforce the California Student Safety and Violence Prevention Act of 2000? What do you know about your district's policy concerning safety from harassment for LGBT students? (If you'd like to know more, see <http://www.cde.ca.gov/re/lr/sv/>)

**ANSWER: Ongoing awareness training for school staff and its board members is crucial in enforcing important safety legislation. Our district currently has a variety of mechanisms supporting safety from harassment for our LGBT students, including student lead campus organizations such as Gay Straight**

**Alliance, and workshops lead by rights groups such as the Southern Poverty Law Center, which empower students to advocate for their peers and work towards keeping their campuses safe for all students.**

10 - How would you encourage schools in your district to apply The California Student Civil Rights Act (<http://www.eqca.org/atf/cf/%7B687DF34F-6480-4BCD-9C2B-1F33FD8E1294%7D/SB%20777%20FACT%20SHEET.PDF>)?

**ANSWER: Continue to support existent policy in compliance at every site, and continue to support funding allocation for training and staffing around student rights issues at each site.**

11 – How would you encourage schools in your district to implement The Safe Place to Learn Act (<http://casafeschools.org/SafePlacetoLearnLow.pdf>)?

**ANSWER: Continue to support ongoing training, awareness, and funding as with all California Ed Code policies and request annual reports to the board regarding compliance and implementation of all student safety and rights policies.**

12 – How would you encourage schools in your district to implement The California Comprehensive Sexual Health and HIV/AIDS Prevention Act (<http://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/se/>)? Are you committed to ensuring that schools in your district are including LGBT sexuality in their sexual health education classes?

**ANSWER: I am very pleased with the level of frank and clear information my own children have received in sexual health education classes at SCCS, including HIV/AIDS prevention and LGBT sexuality. I am grateful that our district's curriculum has encouraged open dialog about these issues within my own family.**

13 - Do you support HR 1199/S 403, the Safe Schools Improvement Act, which would amend the Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act (part of the No Child Left Behind Act) to require schools and districts receiving federal funds to adopt codes of conduct specifically prohibiting bullying and harassment, including on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity? (You can find information at <http://www.hrc.org/laws-and-legislation/federal-legislation/safe-schools-improvement-act>)

**ANSWER: Yes.**

14 – Do you support the California PTA's May, 2008 resolution calling for school districts to promote current, medically accurate, age-appropriate, comprehensive sexual health and HIV/STD prevention education in the schools, taught by instructors trained in the appropriate courses, and for districts to make available current medically accurate educational programs and materials to parents about comprehensive sexual health and HIV/STD prevention education (<http://www.capta.org/sections/advocacy/downloads/Resolution-2008-01-Adopted.pdf>)?

**ANSWER: Yes.**

15 - Do you support S. 1088, The Student Non-Discrimination Act, which would prohibit public schools from discriminating against any student on the basis of actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity, or because of the actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity of a person with whom a student associates or has associated?

(<http://www.hrc.org/laws-and-legislation/federal-legislation/student-non-discrimination-act>)

**ANSWER: Yes.**

16 - Do your district's existing drug abuse prevention programs contain LGBT specific elements that address the high rate of drug and alcohol abuse among LGBT youth precipitated by stigmatization, bullying and other stress factors?

**ANSWER: I am not aware that at this point our prevention programs specifically address LGBT issues - I will definitely follow up with staff at the start of this next school year.**

17 - California contains the largest concentration of homeless youth in school in the nation, disproportionately queer and people of color; what is your district doing to serve these students, and do you have any ideas for improving and expanding existing programs?

**ANSWER: The state of California has a new funding model, the Local Control funding Formula, or LCFF, mandates that districts emphasize services to homeless, foster, and English Language Learning youth. As part of this mandate, I have worked closely with staff to get feedback and input from representative stakeholders in each focus group. We have a newly adopted budget that puts additional funds to supporting these key minority groups and will review the Local Control Plan [LCAP] on a yearly basis to ensure that we are targeting resources to these key groups.**

b - What does your district do to serve students in foster care, and do you have any ideas for improving and expanding existing programs?

**ANSWER: With the formalized emphasis on funding for foster students, the LCFF mandates coordination with sister agencies such as CASA and Foster Ed in order to best meet the needs of this growing population in our district.**

Between 2010 and 2011, alone, the number increased by 10 percent. The largest concentration of homeless youth in school are in California, which has about 35 percent of the national homeless youth population, followed by Florida, Texas and New York.

Studies show that LGBT youth are at particular risk of becoming homeless. In 2010 it was estimated that, although only five to seven percent of youth overall in the U.S. identify as LGBT, between nine and 40 percent of homeless youth identified as such. According to a new report from the Center for American Progress (CAP), that number is now as high as 45 percent.

[\(http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/report/2013/09/26/75746/seeking-shelter-the-experiences-and-unmet-needs-of-lgbt-homeless-youth/\)](http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/report/2013/09/26/75746/seeking-shelter-the-experiences-and-unmet-needs-of-lgbt-homeless-youth/)

According to the Congressional Research Center, 32 percent of homeless youth are black, more than double the proportion of black youth in the total population.

[http://colorlines.com/archives/2013/11/homeless\\_youth\\_in\\_focus.html](http://colorlines.com/archives/2013/11/homeless_youth_in_focus.html)

18 – Is Triangle Speakers (<http://www.trianglespeakers.org/>), the LGBT speakers bureau, consistently welcome in all level of schools throughout your district? If not, would you encourage administrators and teachers to invite panels of speakers as part of their diversity education? Would you support teachers who invite Triangle Speakers to their classes?

**ANSWER: Yes - the Triangle Speakers present at our secondary schools on a regular basis - generally at the invitation of teachers or student groups such as our GSAs.**

19 – Is diversity education (including LGBT culture) through lectures, speakers and/or the arts considered controversial in your district? Do you support diversity education, and would you take a leadership position in advancing it in your district?

**ANSWER: I feel fortunate to have children in a school district that integrate LGBT culture and issues in its enrichment curriculum.**

20 - What kind of volunteer/outreach programs does your district have in place? Do they have LGBT specific elements? Does the training associated with these programs include LGBT specific cultural competency elements?

**ANSWER: Our District's outreach programs are primarily volunteer through our student and parent support groups. I encourage our school GSAs to get guidance in compliance with LGBT cultural competency issues, particularly for straight supporters to gain a greater understanding of the issues facing their peers.**

21 - Would you be willing to meet with the Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) student clubs in your school district at least once a year? If the middle school in your district does not have a GSA, would you be supportive of attempts to start one as an additional support system for LGBT students and their allies? Please explain.

**ANSWER: Absolutely. I am a strong proponent of our support groups and encourage our parent groups to support our student efforts both in spirit and financially. I am quite proud that both our middle schools have active GSAs.**

22 - Have you in the past, and will you in the future, attend LGBT events, such as LGBT Pride, Queer Youth Leadership Awards, or the BAYMEC dinner? If you have not attended, why not?

**ANSWER: I have participated in the Santa Cruz Pride parade over several years, attended events and dinners honoring local GLBT pioneers including John Laird, and our local Queer Youth Task Force, and look forward to future events at which the community can honor our LGBT community in spirit and by financially supporting their efforts for equality and acceptance.**

23 - If you receive The GLBT Alliance's endorsement, will you display it in your campaign literature and on your website?

**ANSWER: Yes - it would be an honor.**

24 - Have you received endorsements which you think might be of interest to the LGBT community?

**ANSWER: Members of our local LGBT community who have endorsed me are Cynthia Hawthorne, Ziesel Saunders, Nancy De la Pena, and Janet Gelman. Additionally, I have been endorsed by community leaders and elected officials including Fred Keeley, Ryan Coonerty, Bonny Hawley, and Dan Haifley.**

25 - Is there anything else you'd like to tell us?

**ANSWER:**

**It has been an honor to serve the students and families of our community. Equity for all students was activated me to volunteer in our classrooms and ultimately run for school board. I feel that our district has made great progress in supporting the diversity of our student body, but there is always more work to be done and I remain committed that every student in our district be safe, known, respected, and supported.**