

# #4

**COMPLETE**

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## Page 1: Questionnaire

### Q1 Candidate Information

**Candidate Name:** Cindy Ranii  
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### Q2 What office do you seek to be elected to?

Santa Cruz City Schools Board of Trustees -  
Trustee Area 1 - At-large

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**Q3 Please choose the option best describing your candidacy:** Incumbent

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**Q4 Do you identify as LGBTIQ?** Yes, I am a lesbian

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**Q5 Are you a member of the GLBT Alliance?** Yes, I am currently a 2018 member!

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**Q6** Please describe your qualifications for the elected position you seek. Include your main issues, priorities if elected, key endorsements, plus anything else that you'd like our members to know about you and your candidacy.

I am an appointed incumbent on the Santa Cruz City Schools Board of Trustees, Area 1 - At-large. I am seeking election to a four-year term so that I can continue my passionate commitment to public schools. I am a retired educator with 25 years experience in diverse communities. I have served as a teacher, principal and superintendent. My most recent position was Supt. of the Los Gatos-Saratoga Joint Union High School District. I have degrees in South Asian Languages and Area Studies as well as a doctorate in Educational Leadership. I think that my distinct perspectives, skills and experiences uniquely qualify me to continue to serve on the school board. My experiences as an educator, mother (of 4), grandmother (of 12), and as a member of the Queer Community distinctly prepare me to contribute towards an educational environment that is based on Equity and Excellence. To provide a world-class education to every student we must develop a welcoming environment for all so that students can reach their full potential. A focus on Equity includes students of color, queer youth, and the socio-economically disadvantaged. Our public schools must provide Excellence in Education for all students with curriculum and instruction that balances academic rigor with social/emotional learning. In addition to Excellence and Equity we must focus on responsible development of budgets, administering limited resources efficiently and effectively. This is particularly important as we implement the complex bond-funded programs while keeping a focus on academic excellence. With the adoption of Social Science Standards for our schools, it will be important for the Board to oversee that the FAIR act is implemented in a timely and comprehensive manner. In terms of endorsements I am honored to be endorsed by all six of the other Trustees on our Board (Claudia Vestal, Deedee Perez-Granados, Patty Threet, Sheila Coonerty, Deb Tracy-Proulx and Jeremy Shonick). I think that these endorsements reflect my ability to be fair-minded, thoughtful, a good listener, and a bridge-builder. Other selected endorsements include Supervisor Ryan Coonerty, Councilperson Cynthia Mathews, Human Services Analyst Adam Spickler, Education Consultant Rob Darrow, County Boardmember Rose Filicetti, County Supt. of Schools Michael Watkins, Supt.-elect Faris Sabbah, School Board Assoc. Leader George Wylie, Retired SCCS Educator Olga de Santa Anna, and Business leaders Doug Lay and Linda Burroughs. My partner Shelly and I have lived in Santa Cruz since 1997, and we both wish for all students that which we want for each of our 12, very diverse, grandchildren: safe, well-run schools with great and caring teachers and staff, an engaging learning environment and excellence, up-to-date curriculum. I would be honored by your endorsement.

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**Q7** Why are you seeking the endorsement of Santa Cruz County's grassroots LGBTIQ political organization, the GLBT Alliance?

An endorsement from the GLBT Alliance would let the voters know that I share the values, goals and projects of this influential grassroots LGBTIQ organization. It would say that I, too, am committed to equality and civil rights for all in the Queer Community. And in coordinating with the GLBT Alliance during the election and in my service on the Board, I could grow as an advocate for LGBTIQ civil rights at the local, state and federal levels. I think that it would be the beginning of my being a more effective and active advocate. I have never before sought public office, and this would be a major step for me as an openly gay woman. I would be both comforting and empowering.

**Q8** Please tell us about any past or current experiences or involvement you've had addressing LGBTIQ issues or work you've done to support the LGBTIQ community.

Most of my involvement in addressing LGBTIQ issues has been in educational settings. Both as a high school principal and as a superintendent I was in a unique position to ensure the safety of all students and to build cultures that honor all people. Hallmarks of my service have always been mutual respect and dignity for all. During my public service I was often called upon to "defend" and strengthen the rights of Queer students and staff. I have dealt with community protests against GSA clubs, against openly gay teachers being on faculties, hate graffiti, and community protests about hiring LGBTIQ staff members. In my leadership position I developed groups to address individual issues and a Diversity Task Force to look at the broader issues of equity, civil rights, and fair, inclusive, accurate and respectful curriculum. My partner Shelly and I campaigned against Prop. 8, and our wedding in 2008 was styled to promote Marriage Equality and to protest Prop. 8. Our home has always been a safe environment for all, and we have raised our children in an environment of inclusivity and respect. We are proud that all 12 of our grandchildren seem to have embraced those values. As a school board member these last ten months I have supported policies regarding Safe Schools and implementing Social Science curriculum that includes that reflects the FAIR Act. I have also actively supported the Queer Youth Leadership Awards and campus groups that promote equality and inclusivity.

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**Q9** What historic political or civil rights struggles are you familiar with that impact LGBTIQ equality?

Historic struggles for civil rights that impact LGBTIQ rights and equality date back as far as the Fourteenth Amendment in 1868. The due process and equal protection language in this amendment has formed the basis of many of the most important legal efforts to bring full civil rights to the Queer Community. The Civil Rights Movement (I was at UC Berkeley in the '60's), the Women's Lib movement (I was active in the '70's), and the marriage equality struggle (we were married in 2008 during the slim window for legal same-sex marriage) are dramatic efforts to address civil rights for all. Be it in voting, hiring, serving in the military, marrying who you love, or being treated as equals in commerce, the struggle continues. At my age, 71, much of the struggle has been a part of my personal experience. They are not just academic to me. Our friend Loretta Coller, for instance, was removed from her successful career in the Air Force in 1953 for being a lesbian. Of course, thousands of others lost their jobs in the military and in government because they were considered "deviant," as they were termed by the US Congress in 1950: "employment of Homosexuals and Other Sex Perverts in Government." This "Lavender Scare" has not fully been eradicated even to this day. Thus, active efforts at the local, state and national level are critically important.

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**Q10** 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 LGBTIQ community?

My personal and professional history reflect extensive experience in working with minority communities of which I am not a member. In my teens I was an exchange student to Finland; in my early 20's I studied in India, in my mid '20's I served in the Peace Corps in Iran; in my '30's and '40's I worked with Indochinese refugee education and Latino English Language learning programs. As a principal and superintendent worked with diverse minority communities and as an adjunct university professor I have taught Cross-cultural Communication and Ethnic Studies. My philosophy is that I approach every individual and every group with mutual dignity and respect. This is a cornerstone of who I am. I have always felt it extremely important to understand cultures, languages and points of view of those with who I work. As a Board Member I will continue to bring that point of view to my work.

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**Q11** Please describe any programs you know of that impact the LGBTIQ community and that are governed by or funded through the elected office you are running for? Include any suggestions you may have for improving these programs.

In the SCCS we have a variety of programs that impact the LGBTIQ community. Each school is required to develop a Safe School Plan (AB 537) which addresses making schools safe and accepting environments for Queer Youth and for all students. Our Board reviews and monitors these plans. Our District is supportive of GSA,s on our secondary campuses, and the Queer Youth Leadership Awards. Our Superintendent served as a judge this year. Our schools, including Delta Charter, are instrumental in this program and in piloting new sex ed materials written by our teacher Jamie Cutter. Our board has supported the adoption of revised Social Science Curriculum which includes implementation of the Fair, Accurate, Inclusive, and Respectful curriculum and instruction. Selected faculty is being trained in implementing the eighth and eleventh grade LGBT History curriculum developed by Rob Darrow, Ed.D., Jamie Cutter, and Ron Indra. It is part of the Safe Schools Project of Santa Cruz County of which our District is a part. I am an appointee of the Board to the Safe Schools Project. I look forward to promoting a more vigorous professional development effort in the area of implementing the LGBT History curriculum and to more active participation on the County Task Force.

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**Q12** If elected, how would you use your position to help further issues of importance to the LGBTIQ community?

I think that my perspective as an out-Lesbian would inform my outlook on various issues that come before the Board. I see it as part of the prism through which I view issues. I also see things from the point of view as a retired educator, as a taxpayer, as a mother, as a grandmother, as a disabled wheelchair user, and as a Citizen. Also, as member of the Gay community who came out much later in life, I have fresh eyes and experience in terms of the particular challenges faced by those who are Questioning. My main focus would be on making all of our schools safe for all students, faculty, staff, parents and community members.

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**Q13** If you receive the GLBT Alliance's endorsement, will you display it in your campaign literature?

**Yes, please send me the GLBT Alliance's logo (jpg file) so I can proudly announce the endorsement on my campaign literature, social media and website!**

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