

Public Statement
from Gaia Democratic School's Board of Directors
June 3, 2015

Gaia Democratic School is a small independent nonprofit school that was founded by and is run by our community of parents, students, and staff. We are a diverse community with a shared belief in the value of academic freedom.

Our field trip to Smitten Kitten, a locally owned business that serves as a community resource, has received sudden media interest. The GDS board of directors would like to address concerns raised in the media about a recent field trip taken by students in our Sexual Health class. This attention has created misinformation about the field trip.

For those who may not know, Smitten Kitten specializes in sexual education that provides literature, classes, products and protection for people of all sexualities and points along the gender spectrum. It is a nationally recognized leader in the promotion of safer sex supplies and human sexuality.

Despite the burst of publicity in our last weeks of school, Gaia Democratic School's board of directors stands behind the premise of the field trip; we view it as a legitimate learning experience that relates directly to topics covered during our year-long Sexual Health class. Our in-class discussions paved the way to a store visit and the participants communicated to us that the trip was a positive educational experience. No student was required to attend.

We understand that sexuality is a complex and sensitive issue, which is why it is important to offer students access to accurate information and resources. We are proud to be a school that encourages health and is inclusive of all. Though the attention our school has received was not asked for, we embrace the opportunity to affirm our community's longstanding commitment to academic freedom, youth empowerment, and student-led learning.

Sincerely,

Gaia Democratic School Board of Directors