

Candidate: Leticia Segura

Nonpartisan School Board Candidate Questionnaire

RUNNING FOR: Chula Vista Elementary School District-Seat 3



Questions and answers

Do you support providing school staff with training on supporting LGBTQ+ students and complying with California law?	Yes
Would you continue to support LGBTQ+ inclusive policies even if they faced organized community opposition?	Yes
Do you support strong policies and procedures to address bullying and harassment based on a student's sexual orientation or gender identity?	Yes
Do you support including LGBTQ+ topics in school curriculum in accordance with California law?	Yes
Do you support policies that allow transgender students to participate in school sports consistent with their affirmed gender identity and protect them from discrimination and harassment?	Yes
Do you support students using their affirmed name and pronouns at school?	Yes
Do you support allowing students to use their affirmed name and pronouns at school, even if they have not disclosed their gender identity to their parents?	Yes
Do you support gender-inclusive policies for school facilities, consistent with California law?	Yes
If an LGBTQ+ supportive policy failed to pass, would you continue advocating for it?	Yes
Do you support retaining books and curriculum that include LGBTQ+ people and experiences, provided they meet district educational standards?	Yes
Do you support student-led organizations such as Gender & Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) and their equal access to school resources?	Yes

Written responses

LGBTQ+ students often hold other identities as well. For example, being disabled, an English language learner, or a student of color. How does your approach to LGBTQ+ inclusion account for students who may face overlapping barriers? I don't see LGBTQ+ inclusion as separate from the equity work I've done around race, disability, and language access - the students who need the most support are usually standing at the intersection of more than one of these identities. A Black LGBTQ+ student, or an English language learner who is also questioning their gender identity, doesn't experience "LGBTQ+ issues" and "equity issues" separately; they experience them together, often compounded. My approach has always been to ask: who is most likely to fall through the cracks here, and why? For LGBTQ+ students with disabilities, that might mean recognizing that anxiety or school avoidance isn't just a processing issue — it could be connected to how safe a student feels being out, or not out, at school. For LGBTQ+ English language learners, it means understanding that "coming out" conversations, family dynamics, and even the vocabulary to describe identity can look very different across cultures, and that staff need cultural humility rather than a one-size-fits-all script. And for LGBTQ+ students of color, it means being honest that they may face bias on multiple fronts at once, and that a single "safe space" poster isn't enough — adults need to be trained to recognize and interrupt bias that's racialized, gendered, and sexuality-based all at once.
How would you know whether your district's LGBTQ+ student policies are actually working? What information or data, if any, would you want the district to track? Policy on paper and policy in practice are two different things, and I'd want the district tracking data that reveals the gap between them: * Climate and belonging data - anonymous, age-appropriate student surveys asking LGBTQ+ students directly how safe they feel and whether they know an adult they can go to. This should be disaggregated by race, disability, and language status where possible, so we can see where barriers overlap. * Discipline data - are LGBTQ+ students, particularly those who are also students of color or students with disabilities, being disciplined at higher rates or more severely for the same behaviors? * Reporting and follow-through data - how many bias or harassment incidents involving LGBTQ+ students are reported, and what happened after. A policy that generates reports but no visible follow-through teaches students not to bother reporting. * Staff training and confidence - not just whether training happened, but whether staff feel equipped to support LGBTQ+ students. * Attendance data for LGBTQ+ students, since feeling unsafe often shows up first as disengagement or absenteeism. This data only matters if it's reviewed regularly, shared with the community, and used to actually adjust practice - the same way I pushed schools to use discipline data to change culture, not just document it.
What does "equity" mean to you in the context of LGBTQ+ students, and how would you try to put that into practice through district policy? Equity means every LGBTQ+ student has what they specifically need to be safe, known, and successful, which isn't the same as treating every student identically. In practice, that means: * Policies that are specific - clear protections around names, pronouns, and privacy; clear anti-harassment language that names LGBTQ+ students explicitly rather than relying on general statements that are easy to ignore. * Including LGBTQ+ students as equal partners in decisions that affect them - listening to students themselves, not just adults, about what safety and support actually look like from where they sit. * Building genuine trust with LGBTQ+ students and families, many of whom come into a school system wary, expecting to be misunderstood - trust that's earned through consistency * Holding discipline and support systems accountable to a restorative, non-punitive approach, so LGBTQ+ students aren't quietly pushed out of classrooms or schools through disproportionate discipline or unaddressed harassment.

Candidate: Georgine Tomasi

Nonpartisan School Board Candidate Questionnaire

RUNNING FOR: Escondido Union High School District- 5



Questions and answers

Do you support providing school staff with training on supporting LGBTQ+ students and complying with California law?	Yes
Would you continue to support LGBTQ+ inclusive policies even if they faced organized community opposition?	Yes
Do you support strong policies and procedures to address bullying and harassment based on a student's sexual orientation or gender identity?	Yes
Do you support including LGBTQ+ topics in school curriculum in accordance with California law?	Yes
Do you support policies that allow transgender students to participate in school sports consistent with their affirmed gender identity and protect them from discrimination and harassment?	Yes
Do you support students using their affirmed name and pronouns at school?	Yes
Do you support allowing students to use their affirmed name and pronouns at school, even if they have not disclosed their gender identity to their parents?	Yes
Do you support gender-inclusive policies for school facilities, consistent with California law?	Yes
If an LGBTQ+ supportive policy failed to pass, would you continue advocating for it?	Yes
Do you support retaining books and curriculum that include LGBTQ+ people and experiences, provided they meet district educational standards?	Yes
Do you support student-led organizations such as Gender & Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) and their equal access to school resources?	Yes

Written responses

LGBTQ+ students often hold other identities as well. For example, being disabled, an English language learner, or a student of color. How does your approach to LGBTQ+ inclusion account for students who may face overlapping barriers? I don't think holding multiple identities should create any barrier for students. I believe that overlapping barriers should empower, not hinder, students. As a former high school teacher, my foremost duty was to create a safe classroom environment that enabled every student to thrive and reach their full academic potential.
How would you know whether your district's LGBTQ+ student policies are actually working? What information or data, if any, would you want the district to track? The district for which I am seeking to be a board member has LGBTQ+ policies that, I believe, are not being forcefully executed. Additionally, the district does little to track the effectiveness of these policies, if at all. I want the district to take implementing these policies as seriously as it does other policies approved by the board.
What does "equity" mean to you in the context of LGBTQ+ students, and how would you try to put that into practice through district policy? Equity for LGBTQ+ students demands fair treatment and equal access to opportunities for those who identify as LGBTQ+. It is imperative to establish an inclusive environment that empowers these students to thrive without encountering discrimination or barriers based on their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Candidate: Michele Tsutagawa Ward

Nonpartisan School Board Candidate Questionnaire

RUNNING FOR: Carlsbad Unified School District, Area 1



Questions and answers

Do you support providing school staff with training on supporting LGBTQ+ students and complying with California law?	Yes
Would you continue to support LGBTQ+ inclusive policies even if they faced organized community opposition?	Yes
Do you support strong policies and procedures to address bullying and harassment based on a student’s sexual orientation or gender identity?	Yes
Do you support including LGBTQ+ topics in school curriculum in accordance with California law?	Yes
Do you support policies that allow transgender students to participate in school sports consistent with their affirmed gender identity and protect them from discrimination and harassment?	Yes
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Do you support retaining books and curriculum that include LGBTQ+ people and experiences, provided they meet district educational standards?	Yes
Do you support student-led organizations such as Gender & Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) and their equal access to school resources?	No

Written responses

LGBTQ+ students often hold other identities as well. For example, being disabled, an English language learner, or a student of color. How does your approach to LGBTQ+ inclusion account for students who may face overlapping barriers?

Growing up as a low-income student, the daughter of immigrants, and as a limited English speaker taught me early how much a student's ability to get support depends on whether adults can see their whole identity. This is one of the reasons my approach to LGBTQ+ inclusion is part of my decision-making and how I lead. A queer student who is also an English learner may lack access to affirming resources in their home language, a disabled LGBTQ+ student needs support that goes beyond a single IEP conversation, and LGBTQ+ students of color often carry racial bias layered on top of bias tied to identity. As a principal, it was important to me that my teachers and staff were professionally developed around these topics, and equally important that our school community knew I supported all communities. I worked with my neighboring middle school principal to bring Identity Day to our campuses, showcasing all families, their identities, and the intersection that defines their lives. That same commitment shapes my work today because every student deserves to be seen in full.

How would you know whether your district's LGBTQ+ student policies are actually working? What information or data, if any, would you want the district to track?

I'd look at this through a combination of measures, since no single data point tells the full story. Academic growth data disaggregated across all populations shows whether LGBTQ+ students are progressing at rates comparable to their peers, while social-emotional learning surveys give us a direct read on how safe and connected they feel, with trends over time showing whether our efforts are truly working. I'd also want discipline and attendance data disaggregated to catch disproportionate patterns early, alongside input from staff and teachers who often notice shifts in engagement or confidence before it shows up in the numbers. Together, when academic growth, SEL data, discipline trends, and staff observation all point in the same positive direction, that's how I'd know our approach is genuinely working.

What does “equity” mean to you in the context of LGBTQ+ students, and how would you try to put that into practice through district policy?

Equity for LGBTQ+ students means every student is seen, feels they belong, and has what they specifically need to thrive, and not treating everyone the same, but recognizing where barriers exist and building policy to address them. That's why passing our DEIB plan mattered so much to me, and it allows us to build equity into our systems and practices. It's also why I brought forward our Pride resolution to fly the Pride flag, giving visible commitments that tell LGBTQ+ students and families they're truly seen.

Candidate: Bill Shen

Nonpartisan School Board Candidate Questionnaire

RUNNING FOR: Encinitas Union School District Board of Trustees (at-large)



Questions and answers

Do you support providing school staff with training on supporting LGBTQ+ students and complying with California law?	Yes
Would you continue to support LGBTQ+ inclusive policies even if they faced organized community opposition?	Yes
Do you support strong policies and procedures to address bullying and harassment based on a student's sexual orientation or gender identity?	Yes
Do you support including LGBTQ+ topics in school curriculum in accordance with California law?	Yes
Do you support policies that allow transgender students to participate in school sports consistent with their affirmed gender identity and protect them from discrimination and harassment?	Yes
Do you support students using their affirmed name and pronouns at school?	Yes
Do you support allowing students to use their affirmed name and pronouns at school, even if they have not disclosed their gender identity to their parents?	Yes
Do you support gender-inclusive policies for school facilities, consistent with California law?	Yes
If an LGBTQ+ supportive policy failed to pass, would you continue advocating for it?	Yes
Do you support retaining books and curriculum that include LGBTQ+ people and experiences, provided they meet district educational standards?	Yes
Do you support student-led organizations such as Gender & Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) and their equal access to school resources?	Yes

Written responses

LGBTQ+ students often hold other identities as well. For example, being disabled, an English language learner, or a student of color. How does your approach to LGBTQ+ inclusion account for students who may face overlapping barriers? I'm an ally. I want every student in this district supported, and the kids carrying more than one barrier need more attention, not less. I'm the child of immigrants, and I grew up as a person of color in a mostly white part of Orange County. It's not the same thing LGBTQ+ kids deal with, and I won't pretend it is. But I know what it's like to be othered and excluded, and to be on the receiving end of discrimination. I know the toll that takes on a kid who's too young to have words for it. In K-6 a child usually can't tell you what she needs. We hear it from a teacher, or from a parent, or we don't hear it at all. So the real question is whether our systems catch her. A kid who is both disabled and LGBTQ+ sits inside two processes that can each break quietly. An English learner's family may not know a complaint procedure exists. California gives every family a Uniform Complaint Procedure, and I want ours to work for the parent who doesn't already know how to push. I don't think academic excellence and inclusion pull against each other. Kids who feel safe learn better.
How would you know whether your district's LGBTQ+ student policies are actually working? What information or data, if any, would you want the district to track? We already collect a good amount of this. Priority 6 of the LCAP makes school climate a required reporting area, and the California Healthy Kids Survey asks students directly whether they feel safe and connected at school. I'd want the board to review those results in public every year and use them to find where we're falling short. Alongside the survey, I'd look at bullying and harassment reports broken out by basis, Uniform Complaint filings and how long they took to resolve, staff training completion including classified staff, and chronic absenteeism, which usually shows up before anything else does. One caution. We have nine schools, and if you break the numbers down too far you can identify a specific child. Some of this has to stay at the district level. We should still look at it, just carefully.
What does "equity" mean to you in the context of LGBTQ+ students, and how would you try to put that into practice through district policy? Equity means every kid in our schools feels supported and included. The students who are most vulnerable should feel that most. California has settled much of this already. Education Code 220, the FAIR Education Act, AB 1266. Our job on the board is to keep our policies current with the law and follow through on them, so that a child's protections don't depend on who won the last board election. Parents should be partners in that. Equity doesn't happen because a policy says it should. It happens when families, teachers and the district are working on it together, and when parents can see what we're doing and tell us where we're coming up short.

Candidate: Tauna Rodarte

Nonpartisan School Board Candidate Questionnaire

RUNNING FOR: Fallbrook Union High School District Area 1



Questions and answers

Do you support providing school staff with training on supporting LGBTQ+ students and complying with California law?	Yes
Would you continue to support LGBTQ+ inclusive policies even if they faced organized community opposition?	Yes
Do you support strong policies and procedures to address bullying and harassment based on a student's sexual orientation or gender identity?	Yes
Do you support including LGBTQ+ topics in school curriculum in accordance with California law?	Yes
Do you support policies that allow transgender students to participate in school sports consistent with their affirmed gender identity and protect them from discrimination and harassment?	Yes
Do you support students using their affirmed name and pronouns at school?	Yes
Do you support allowing students to use their affirmed name and pronouns at school, even if they have not disclosed their gender identity to their parents?	Yes
Do you support gender-inclusive policies for school facilities, consistent with California law?	Yes
If an LGBTQ+ supportive policy failed to pass, would you continue advocating for it?	Yes
Do you support retaining books and curriculum that include LGBTQ+ people and experiences, provided they meet district educational standards?	Yes
Do you support student-led organizations such as Gender & Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) and their equal access to school resources?	Yes

Written responses

LGBTQ+ students often hold other identities as well. For example, being disabled, an English language learner, or a student of color. How does your approach to LGBTQ+ inclusion account for students who may face overlapping barriers? Every child is unique, they are a combination of their nature (how they were born, race, gender, etc) and their environment (identify, culture, family, etc) and must be allowed to fully be themselves.
How would you know whether your district's LGBTQ+ student policies are actually working? What information or data, if any, would you want the district to track? As a current Trustee, I know our school's policies on books, bullying, etc. We have a very fair library system, and we have zero tolerance policies on any bullying, including about gender. That's why it's key we keep my seat democratic.
What does "equity" mean to you in the context of LGBTQ+ students, and how would you try to put that into practice through district policy? Equity means all have the same opportunities for involvement and how they are treated. It is one of our key values, whether regarding LGBTQ+ or racial or gender issues.

Candidate: Olga Espinoza

Nonpartisan School Board Candidate Questionnaire

RUNNING FOR: San Ysidro School District Board member seat



Questions and answers

Do you support providing school staff with training on supporting LGBTQ+ students and complying with California law?	Yes
Would you continue to support LGBTQ+ inclusive policies even if they faced organized community opposition?	Yes
Do you support strong policies and procedures to address bullying and harassment based on a student's sexual orientation or gender identity?	Yes
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If an LGBTQ+ supportive policy failed to pass, would you continue advocating for it?	Yes
Do you support retaining books and curriculum that include LGBTQ+ people and experiences, provided they meet district educational standards?	Yes
Do you support student-led organizations such as Gender & Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) and their equal access to school resources?	Yes

Written responses

LGBTQ+ students often hold other identities as well. For example, being disabled, an English language learner, or a student of color. How does your approach to LGBTQ+ inclusion account for students who may face overlapping barriers? ALL STUDENTS SHOULD NOT BE LEFT BEHIND DUE TO ANY DISABILITY OR RACE, AT THE END DIFFERENT SUPPORT AS NEEDED WE ARE ALL DIFFERENT BUT HAVE HEARTS WE HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF ALL CHILDREN NO ONE DTSYING BEHIND 100% Support to there necessities.
How would you know whether your district's LGBTQ+ student policies are actually working? What information or data, if any, would you want the district to track? Confidentiality 100%, asking by in person or questionnaire To see the percentage of children or young adults asking if theres any difference on how they are being treated.
What does "equity" mean to you in the context of LGBTQ+ students, and how would you try to put that into practice through district policy? All students are students not based in any sex identity should be defined and specially not be left aside. District needs students nothing will change and noone should be judge, All students need feel safe and not be consider in any way as a person and will continue being a student always.

Candidate: Jerry Garcia Avila

Nonpartisan School Board Candidate Questionnaire

RUNNING FOR: Oceanside Unified School District, District 1



Questions and answers

Do you support providing school staff with training on supporting LGBTQ+ students and complying with California law?	Yes
Would you continue to support LGBTQ+ inclusive policies even if they faced organized community opposition?	Yes
Do you support strong policies and procedures to address bullying and harassment based on a student's sexual orientation or gender identity?	Yes
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Do you support gender-inclusive policies for school facilities, consistent with California law?	Yes
If an LGBTQ+ supportive policy failed to pass, would you continue advocating for it?	Yes
Do you support retaining books and curriculum that include LGBTQ+ people and experiences, provided they meet district educational standards?	Yes
Do you support student-led organizations such as Gender & Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) and their equal access to school resources?	Yes

Written responses

LGBTQ+ students often hold other identities as well. For example, being disabled, an English language learner, or a student of color. How does your approach to LGBTQ+ inclusion account for students who may face overlapping barriers? My approach to student success is rooted in treating every child as an individual with unique strengths, challenges, and potential, rather than viewing them through the lens of rigid categories. When a student faces overlapping challenges— whether they are navigating identity questions, mastering English as a second language, or managing a learning disability—our school system must be agile enough to meet their specific needs. To effectively account for these barriers, my strategy focuses on three core pillars: 1. Individualized Student Support: I support maximizing the impact of our Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and Special Education resources. By focusing on targeted, data-driven interventions, we can ensure that an English language learner or a student with an IEP receives immediate academic and emotional support tailored to their specific situation, without any child slipping through the cracks. 2. Universal Safety and Belonging: Every student, regardless of their background or identity, has a fundamental right to a safe, distraction-free learning environment. I support strict, uniform enforcement of our district's anti-bullying and harassment policies. Campus safety should never be selective; it must be an absolute standard that protects every single student from day one. 3. Efficient and Equitable Resource Allocation: Building a broad coalition means ensuring taxpayer dollars are spent where they matter most: directly in the classroom. I will advocate for prioritizing funding toward tutoring, language acquisition programs, and mental health counseling. This ensures our educators have the practical tools necessary to dismantle barriers to learning, helping every student achieve academic excellence. Ultimately, my goal is to lead a school district where every child—no matter their background or the unique combination of challenges they face—is safe, respected, and fully equipped to achieve their highest academic potential.
How would you know whether your district's LGBTQ+ student policies are actually working? What information or data, if any, would you want the district to track? To evaluate whether any district policy or support program is truly effective, we must look to objective, quantifiable data rather than political rhetoric. As a trustee, my standard for success is simple: Are our students safe, are they attending class, and are they achieving academic growth? To measure the effectiveness of our student support and safety policies without creating unnecessary administrative bureaucracy or compromising student privacy, I would focus on tracking three key categories of existing data: 1. Campus Safety and Climate Metrics: I would closely review anonymized data from the annual California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS), specifically focusing on metrics related to perceived school safety, experiences of harassment or bullying, and connectedness to the school community. A declining rate of reported bullying across all student demographics is the clearest sign that our safety policies are working. 2. Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism Data: When students feel unsafe, unsupported, or excluded, absenteeism rises. I would advocate for monitoring chronic absenteeism trends among vulnerable student subgroups—including English language learners, foster youth, and students utilizing specialized counseling services—to ensure our interventions are keeping kids in the classroom where learning happens. 3. Academic Progress and Graduation Rates: The ultimate goal of a public school district is academic achievement. I would look to the California School Dashboard metrics to evaluate English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics proficiency, along with high school graduation rates. True inclusion means ensuring that every student population is making measurable, year-over-year academic progress. By anchoring our evaluation to hard, transparent data regarding safety, attendance, and academics, we can ensure that taxpayer resources are being used effectively to foster a stable, successful learning environment for every child in our district.
What does "equity" mean to you in the context of LGBTQ+ students, and how would you try to put that into practice through district policy? In the context of public education, equity means ensuring that every single student—regardless of their background, identity, or unique life circumstances—has full, unimpeded access to a safe learning environment and the high-quality resources necessary to achieve their maximum academic potential. It is about equality of opportunity, recognizing that different children require different tools to successfully cross the same graduation finish line. For LGBTQ+ students, as well as students with disabilities, English language learners, and those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, putting this into practice through district policy means focusing strictly on practical, student-centered solutions rather than political ideology. I would work to implement this through three policy priorities: 1. Strict and Uniform Anti-Bullying Enforcement: A student cannot learn if they do not feel safe. True equity means ensuring that our district's zero-tolerance policies for harassment, intimidation, and bullying are applied swiftly and equally to protect every child. No student should have their focus taken away from their academics due to fear for their personal safety. 2. Targeted Academic and Counseling Resources: I support policy frameworks that direct resources to where they are needed most—such as robust mental health counseling, academic tutoring, and peer-support structures. If a student is struggling with personal, social, or identity-related challenges that impact their education, our campus support systems must be accessible and equipped to help them stay on track academically. 3. Preserving Rigorous Academic Standards: Equity should never be used as a justification to lower expectations or dilute our curriculum. Putting equity into practice means keeping our academic bar high for all students, while providing the necessary foundational ladders—such as specialized reading intervention or language assistance—so that every individual student can climb up to meet those high standards. By focusing district policy on universal safety, individualized resource allocation, and unwavering academic rigor, we can ensure that every child in Oceanside schools has a fair, stable, and excellent foundation for lifelong success.

Candidate: Joey Pearson

Nonpartisan School Board Candidate Questionnaire

RUNNING FOR: Oceanside Unified School District - Trustee Area 3



Questions and answers

Do you support providing school staff with training on supporting LGBTQ+ students and complying with California law?	Yes
Would you continue to support LGBTQ+ inclusive policies even if they faced organized community opposition?	Yes
Do you support strong policies and procedures to address bullying and harassment based on a student's sexual orientation or gender identity?	Yes
Do you support including LGBTQ+ topics in school curriculum in accordance with California law?	Yes
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Do you support students using their affirmed name and pronouns at school?	Yes
Do you support allowing students to use their affirmed name and pronouns at school, even if they have not disclosed their gender identity to their parents?	Yes
Do you support gender-inclusive policies for school facilities, consistent with California law?	Yes
If an LGBTQ+ supportive policy failed to pass, would you continue advocating for it?	Yes
Do you support retaining books and curriculum that include LGBTQ+ people and experiences, provided they meet district educational standards?	Yes
Do you support student-led organizations such as Gender & Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) and their equal access to school resources?	Yes

Written responses

LGBTQ+ students often hold other identities as well. For example, being disabled, an English language learner, or a student of color. How does your approach to LGBTQ+ inclusion account for students who may face overlapping barriers? Every student deserves to feel safe, respected, and able to learn and LGBTQ+ students are not a monolith. A student's experience may also be shaped by disability, race, culture, language, family circumstances, or economic hardship. Our schools must support the whole student rather than asking them to fit into a one-size-fits-all program. That means providing accessible and culturally responsive services, meaningful language access for students and families, appropriate disability accommodations, strong mental-health resources, and consistent protection from bullying and harassment. Staff should be trained to recognize how barriers can overlap and to connect students with support without stereotyping them, compromising their privacy, or requiring them to repeatedly explain or defend who they are. I would also expect the district to listen directly to students and families, partner with trusted community organizations, and examine school-climate and student-outcome data responsibly to identify where support is falling short. No student should have to choose which part of their identity will be understood or supported. LGBTQ+ inclusion is strongest when it advances dignity, belonging, and genuine access to opportunity for every student. My own identity as a Queer person has taught me the importance of being seen, respected, and able to live authentically, while recognizing that no two LGBTQ+ students share the same experience. I will bring both that personal understanding and a willingness to listen to students whose identities and challenges differ from my own. Protecting LGBTQ+ students—and especially those facing multiple barriers—will not be an abstract policy issue for me, but a responsibility I will carry into every district decision.
How would you know whether your district's LGBTQ+ student policies are actually working? What information or data, if any, would you want the district to track? A policy is only successful if students experience its protections in their daily lives. I would look beyond whether a policy exists on paper and ask whether LGBTQ+ students report feeling safe, respected, and connected to their schools. The district should use anonymous school-climate surveys, student listening sessions, and feedback from families, staff, and trusted community partners. It should also monitor bullying and harassment reports, how quickly and consistently schools respond, chronic absenteeism, disciplinary outcomes, and access to counseling and support services. This work must be done carefully. The district should never collect information that could unnecessarily identify or out a student. Data should be voluntary, confidential, reported in ways that protect small groups, and paired with students' own accounts of their experiences. Ultimately, I would measure success through both outcomes and trust: Are harmful incidents decreasing? Are concerns addressed consistently? Do students know where to seek help? Most importantly, do LGBTQ+ students feel that the adults in their schools will listen, protect their dignity, and follow through?
What does "equity" mean to you in the context of LGBTQ+ students, and how would you try to put that into practice through district policy? To me, equity means that every student has the opportunity to learn, participate, and thrive even when some students face barriers that others do not. For LGBTQ+ students, that means removing obstacles to safety, belonging, privacy, and educational access. I am closely following the Mirabelli litigation and related challenges to California's student-privacy protections. These developments could significantly affect how schools respond when a student expresses gender incongruence. I will not pretend that a school board can ignore binding law, so our challenge becomes how we craft legal compliance in ways that never abandon vulnerable students or unnecessarily expose private information. I would work with district counsel, student-support professionals, LGBTQ+ advocates, and affected students to preserve every protection available. That includes limiting disclosures, avoiding unnecessary collection of sensitive information, providing staff with clear and current guidance, and establishing safety protocols for students who may face abuse, rejection, homelessness, or other harm. We must also maintain strong nondiscrimination and anti-bullying protections, access to trusted counselors and community resources, and an effective process for reporting and resolving concerns. As this litigation continues, I will insist that district policies be reviewed promptly rather than waiting for a crisis. I will advocate publicly—and through appropriate policy and legal channels—for students' dignity, safety, and right to an education free from discrimination. Equity is tested most when protections are under pressure. My priority will be to fight for every lawful safeguard available, advocate for stronger protections where they have been weakened, and ensure that no LGBTQ+ student is left to navigate these challenges alone.

Candidate: Michael Perez

Nonpartisan School Board Candidate Questionnaire

RUNNING FOR: Chula Vista Elementary Seat5



Questions and answers

Do you support providing school staff with training on supporting LGBTQ+ students and complying with California law?	Yes
Would you continue to support LGBTQ+ inclusive policies even if they faced organized community opposition?	Yes
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Do you support student-led organizations such as Gender & Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) and their equal access to school resources?	Yes

Written responses

LGBTQ+ students often hold other identities as well. For example, being disabled, an English language learner, or a student of color. How does your approach to LGBTQ+ inclusion account for students who may face overlapping barriers?

I believe in treating everyone equally and respectfully regardless of background or sexual orientation.

How would you know whether your district's LGBTQ+ student policies are actually working? What information or data, if any, would you want the district to track?

All reported data should be included in the school's data and a report of actions taken should be included and made available to the administrators and board members.

What does "equity" mean to you in the context of LGBTQ+ students, and how would you try to put that into practice through district policy?

Equity means that everyone is entitled to equal access and opportunity in the educational experience. Being a person of color and experiencing differential treatment makes me an advocate for diversity and inclusion. I will fight for everyone.

Candidate: Jillian Cocayne

Nonpartisan School Board Candidate Questionnaire

RUNNING FOR: Encinitas Union School Board



EXPANDED PERSONAL SUBMISSION

The candidate submitted a personal document so they could provide expanded responses beyond the questionnaire's yes/no format.

Do you support providing school staff with training on supporting LGBTQ+ students and complying with California law?

Yes, and I would add that training has to be current. Staff are being asked to navigate a legal environment that changed in March 2026 and they should not be left to improvise. We also should be speaking to the LGBTQ+ community to ensure we keep pace with best practices .

Would you continue to support LGBTQ+ inclusive policies even if they faced organized community opposition?

Yes, and my district has already done it and is taking criticism on social media for it. My position is that we stay the course. A board that reverses an inclusion policy under organised pressure has not bought peace. It has demonstrated that pressure works, and it has told the children exactly where policy ranks them. Much of this pressure is imported rather than local, and I will not let outside culture-war campaigns set what we teach or who we protect. I do draw a distinction between defending the policy and litigating a child in public. I have been very close to a child going through a gender transition, and what I took from it is that the most protective response is not always the loudest one. When a specific student becomes the public illustration in a fight, that student is less safe afterwards, not more. The adults draw attention to their argument through social media clicks and the child gets the negative attention. So we must defend the policy forcefully and in general terms, and protect the individual child by refusing to make them the example.

Do you support strong policies and procedures to address bullying and harassment based on a student's sexual orientation or gender identity?

Yes, I support strong policies that address bullying.

Do you support including LGBTQ+ topics in school curriculum in accordance with California law?

Yes, I believe that all children should see a wide variety of human experiences portrayed in their materials .

Do you support policies that allow transgender students to participate in school sports consistent with their affirmed gender identity and protect them from discrimination and harassment?

Yes. In California this is settled law, not a preference: Education Code 221.5(f) has permitted students to participate in sex-segregated activities consistent with their gender identity since 2014. That said, I would go further than the law requires in a K-6th district like ours. The only school sponsored sport I am aware of is intramural basketball played between our own schools. There is no competitive reason to sort those teams by gender at all, and I would like to find ways to stop doing it. At this age, gender sorting is something we impose on children rather than something the activity requires. They will arrive at their own identities in their own time; the schools' job is to give all children the space to flourish.

Do you support students using their affirmed name and pronouns at school?

Yes, it is deeply confusing for a child not to be called by the name and pronouns they chose for themselves.

Do you support allowing students to use their affirmed name and pronouns at school, even if they have not disclosed their gender identity to their parents?

Yes. A student should be able to be called by their name and pronouns at school without that being conditioned on a disclosure at home, and staff should never be put in the position of outing a child. However, I want to recognize the difficult position teachers and staff are in because this is contested legal ground due to the Supreme Court's March 2026 order in Mirabelli v. Bonta that reinstated an injunction that constrains how California districts handle parental access, and the case is still being litigated. A trustee's job is to follow the law as it stands, insist that our staff get accurate and current guidance rather than being left exposed, and make sure no child learns that the rules changed by being surprised by it. I will also give you my practical read, from having been very close to a child in transition. For elementary age children maintaining a separate school identity and home identity is close to impossible to sustain. Imagine a seven-year-old coordinating their friends, teacher and the school office to use a different name and pronoun depending if their parent is with them or not. So in practice the question in an elementary district is usually not whether teachers and staff can keep a secret. It is whether the adults around that child, at school and at home, are being helped toward the same page. That is where I would put the district's effort — counselling support, family resources, and staff who are trained rather than improvising.

Do you support gender-inclusive policies for school facilities, consistent with California law?

Yes. California law is clear that a student may use facilities consistent with their gender identity, and I support that. Separately, I think every campus should have private, single-user options available to any student who wants privacy, for any reason. Some kids want a door that locks and that has nothing to do with gender.

If an LGBTQ+ supportive policy failed to pass, would you continue advocating for it?

Yes, if the policy made sense and failed due to anti-LGBTQ+ bias. However, there can be many reasons a policy doesn't pass, lack of funding is a big one, or maybe poor drafting. If I needed to oppose a policy for one of those reasons I would be committed to bring it back in a stronger form.

Do you support retaining books and curriculum that include LGBTQ+ people and experiences, provided they meet district educational standards?

Yes, I believe all students should encounter people, families, stories and history in books that are both similar and different to their own experience. This includes LGBTQ+ people.

Do you support student-led organizations such as Gender & Sexuality Alliances (GSAs) and their equal access to school resources?

Yes. Where students form a club, the district's obligation is equal access to facilities, resources and recognition, and it is not the board's business to decide which student-led clubs are legitimate. However, we are a K-6th district and our student-led clubs are usually hobby and service oriented (e.g. crochet circles, chess, environmental green teams). I am not aware of a GSA existing or being requested at any of our nine schools. If our students asked for one I would expect the district to treat it exactly as it treats the chess club. What I would not do is get ahead of our students and manufacture a program they haven't asked for, or block one they have.

LGBTQ+ students often hold other identities as well. For example, being disabled, an English language learner, or a student of color. How does your approach to LGBTQ+ inclusion account for students who may face overlapping barriers?

Our district strives very hard to make sure that we have the same curriculum in both the Spanish immersion and English language classes to bring the schools together. There are regular cultural celebrations throughout the year and 2 weeks of “ Inclusion in Action” which focuses on the inclusion of children with disabilities. To the specific question: a student who is both an English learner and gender-expansive may have no adult anywhere in their life who can have that conversation in their home language. A disabled student who is LGBTQ+ may have every adult around them focused on the IEP and none on their emerging identity. So my test is a practical one — do our staff training, our counselling capacity and our library materials exist in Spanish as well as English, and does a child have at least one adult at school they could actually talk to? If the answer is only in English, or only for some kids, we have only built inclusion for the students who were easiest to reach. We need to proactively find ways to reach the students who exist at the harder intersections.

How would you know whether your district's LGBTQ+ student policies are actually working? What information or data, if any, would you want the district to track?

Given the ages of our students I am not sure how many would self-identify as LGBTQ+. However, I do believe we should vigorously track the use of LGBTQ+ slurs and proactively educate kids why they shouldn't say them. I would ask for numbers of bullying incidents that include the use of LGBTQ+ slurs and look for trends at different schools and grade levels. I strongly believe elementary schools need to take a stronger stand on educating kids about the use of slurs and hate speech. Students often begin to say harmful things before they really understand the full meaning and impact. When this goes uncorrected it becomes normalised which leads to continued anti-LGBTQ+ bias in society. I would know our policies are effective when we see a reduction in incidents of anti-LGBTQ+ bullying and speech in our schools.

What does "equity" mean to you in the context of LGBTQ+ students, and how would you try to put that into practice through district policy?

Equitable access starts with recognizing that we do not all start from the same place, and then acting to ensure opportunities for everyone to succeed together. For LGBTQ+ students this might mean that they don't have the same familial support or are being given messaging that something is wrong/ bad about them or their LGBTQ+ parents. Those kids need a bit of extra support and care in school to make up that deficit. In practice that is simple things like a check-in with a favorite staff member, book recommendations from the librarian that affirms them or their loved ones.