

East Bay Stonewall Democratic Club Endorsement Questionnaire

Thank you for your interest in obtaining an endorsement from the East Bay Stonewall Democratic Club.

Per the Club's bylaws, to be eligible for endorsement, a candidate must be a registered Democrat. All candidates must also complete this candidate questionnaire to be considered for an endorsement. Endorsements are decided by the general membership, and candidates must receive at least 60% of votes cast to be endorsed.

The deadline for questionnaires is posted on the East Bay Stonewall website (<http://eastbaystonewalldemocrats.org/Elections>). Any candidate submitting a questionnaire that is received after the deadline will not appear on the endorsement ballot. To ensure a fair process, no grace period will be granted.

Please return your completed questionnaire via Google forms by clicking submit at the bottom of this form. All form submissions are final. If you have questions, please contact Joe Greaves, EBSDC PAC chair via email at jsphgreaves@gmail.com.

Email *

alyssecastro@gmail.com

Name (First Last) *

Alysse Castro

Are you a registered Democrat *

Yes

No

Office you are seeking? (e.g. City Council, School Board, Supervisor, etc) *

County Superintendent of Schools

Jurisdiction *

Alameda County

District *

Alameda County

Are you an East Bay Stonewall Democratic Club member in good standing? If you are unsure, email eastbaystonewalldems@gmail.com. *

Yes

No

I self-identify as: (check all boxes that apply; note these identifiers will be used publicly during our endorsement process.) *

- Gay
- Lesbian
- Transgender
- Gender non-conforming
- Bisexual
- Queer
- Straight
- Other:

How have you participated in East Bay Stonewall Democratic Club activities, and/or supported the Club other ways? What other LGBTQ+ organizations are you affiliated with and in what capacity? What other Democratic clubs are you affiliated with? *

I am a life-long Democrat, voter, volunteer, and club member. I am currently a member of the Wellstone Democratic Renewal Club - where I am active on the Education Committee, the City of Alameda Democratic Club, the Oakland East Bay Democratic Club, Our Revolution East Bay, and the East Bay Stonewall Democratic Club. As a graduate of Emerge CA, an organization that trains Democratic women to run for office and win, I volunteer and support other Democratic alumnae around the state and region.

Since age 16 I have been a reproductive health activist, speaking for the ACLU's Reproductive Freedom Project and NARAL Pro-Choice America. Since age 25 I have been a public school educator, working on policy issues and task forces under several Democratic administrations. I am currently endorsed by the Wellstone Democratic Renewal Club and Our Revolution East Bay.

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Using specific examples, please identify the causes you have advocated for and the ways you have helped advance LGBTQ+ rights or otherwise helped foster a community of inclusivity for LGBTQ+ individuals and families. *

As a principal and director of alternative schools, I have taken direct action to support the rights, access, inclusion, and centering of the needs of LGBTQ+ students, staff, and families in curriculum, culture, and systems. LGBTQ+ students seeking a more inclusive setting have been historically over represented in alternative schools where we do everything possible to support their thriving.

At the most basic, we train everyone in the use of gender neutral and inclusive language at every level (in addition to lessons about why pronouns matter, all of our school materials refer to families, partners, etc). All of our educators are trained to make no assumptions about who might be dating who (Are you seeing anyone special? vs. Do you have a boyfriend? Are you taking a. date to the prom vs Are you asking a girl to the prom?) We have created gender neutral bathrooms everywhere.

We actively seek to recruit, retain, and support LGBTQ+ staff including paid opportunities to mentor students, run GSA or Stonewall clubs, and develop and teach Queer Studies classes. All of my schools have school based health centers which are actively positive of - and trained to provide appropriate mental and reproductive health care for - LGBTQ+ youth, and all sex ed is fully inclusive. I have created systems and structures for young people to use whatever name and gender identity they chose on their school records even in a school district that actively disallowed deviating from birth certificate names. I successfully lobbied for the creation of a gender neutral unit inside of juvenile hall where kids have historically be split up by sex, and where a disproportionate number of transgender youth who have been rejected by their families wind up as a placement of last resort.

As an educator, I have often stepped in to participate in conversations with the families of young people who are struggling to fully accept their child. It is an honor and a pleasure to be the adult in the room modeling using the right pronouns, sharing joy about new relationships, and showing confidence and respect for the young persons present and future. I know what it means to the young people to have the principal on their side. Occasionally I also get the gift of a parent coming back weeks or years later to tell me that it helped them...and sometimes bringing me another parent to talk to.

Have you previously supported LGBTQ+ candidates for office? If yes, did that include financial support? *

Yes, I was a major supporter of Elena Condes for Judge 2022, as a donor and volunteer. I also supported Angela Normand for ACOE Trustee, and supported Rebecca Kaplan for City Council in her original run.

Which LGBTQ+ organizations and elected officials have formally endorsed you for this race? *

I am endorsed by James Aguilar (San Leandro School Board President), Victor Aguilar, Jr. (San Leandro City Council Member), Melissa Shuen-Mallory (New Haven School Board President), Brittini Kiick (Livermore City Council)

Please describe a policy/goal that is part of your formal platform that benefits the LGBTQ+ community? *

Breaking the school-to-prison pipeline by embedding systems of care in schools

Learning happens when kids are free from fear: from bullying, from violence, from hunger, from illness, from police. The sad fact is that we are raising a generation of youth with trauma: the majority of our young people are living with epidemic scarcity, anxiety, and uncertainty. They need trauma-informed schools marked by peace, predictability, and positive behavior intervention and support that honors their lived experience and raises up their histories, stories, and heroes.

What makes you uniquely qualified for the office and how are you different or unique from the other candidates in your race? *

I am running to be the next Alameda County Superintendent of Schools because the future of California goes to school every morning. The quality - and equality - of our future depends on the quality - and the equality - of those schools. The County Superintendent holds a powerful lever to tilt public schools towards quality, equality, and justice - and we aren't using it. Our kids - especially those furthest from opportunity - need us to use every tool to break the school-to-prison pipeline, embed systems of care in schools, and guarantee an excellent teacher and an excellent school for every kid in every community.

For 25 years, I have served as a successful teacher, principal, and now the Executive Director of the County Office making schools that change lives for kids furthest from opportunity. In this role I have operated a number of schools that center culturally-responsive and deeply engaging pedagogy to close achievement and opportunity gaps, connect youth and families to a vast array of services, and develop new options for life after high school. These schools feature more of what we want for every student - personalized learning and support, project based learning, integrated arts and career development.

Pandemic schooling has created the opportunity to build back better, with learning systems that meet kids where they are and let every student succeed. During the pandemic most other schools ground to a halt, but we seized the pandemic as a portal to eliminating what doesn't work in schools. As a result, our county alternative schools actually expanded, creating hybrid and flexible schools for unaccompanied minors and for teens who work full time. Alameda County needs this kind of leadership if we intend to interrupt generations of unequal outcomes.

In addition to school leadership, I have taught School Finance and School Supervision to the next generation of leaders at UC Berkeley's Graduate School of Education. I serve on the California Department of Education's Alternative Schools Task Force and am a member of the County Superintendent's Student Programs and Services Steering Committee. I was recently recognized as an Alameda Local Hero for my work as President of Alameda Family Services embedding systems of support in public schools. Alameda Family Services has created and operates the city's CARES crisis response mental health program, dispatching clinicians not cops to 911 calls for people in distress.

Because the county superintendent has enormous discretion in how they perform their work, the values, skills, and experiences they bring to the role determine what they do and how they do it. My own idiosyncratic path includes more than 15 years of building alternative education schools that truly wrap around kids, teaching and mentoring hundreds of school and district leaders to manage their budgets in service of their equity vision, and creating school cultures that differentiate support, development, and opportunities for educators in who stay - and thrive - in classrooms.

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