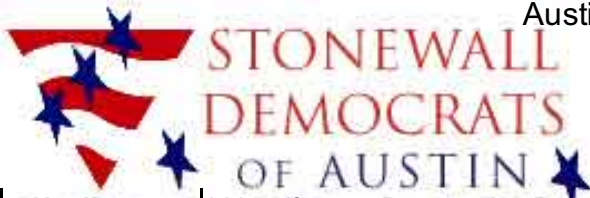


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<p><b>Question 1</b></p>	<p><b>Please tell us why you are seeking the endorsement of SDA. Do you consider yourself to be a Democrat? Do you have a history of involvement in Democratic politics and/or LGBTQIA+ issues? If so please briefly describe this history.</b></p>
<p><b>Jared Breckenridge</b></p>	<p>I am seeking the endorsement of SDA, because I without a doubt believe in SDA's mission of creating and uplifting strong and effective voices for the LGBTQIA+ community both in local and state policy decisions. I know how crucial it is for us to have a very strong advocate and fighter on the school board that will do just that, always fight to protect the rights and inclusion of every student, staff, family and community member that identifies as a member of the LGBTQIA+ community. As far as Democratic politics, I have consistently volunteered my time, energy and support for Democratic candidates, organizations, and issues. As far as LGBTQIA+ issues, I have always stood on the side of advocating for and protecting marginalized groups of people. During AISD's the updated sex education curriculum debate, I boldly stood with our community and advocated for a comprehensive sex education curriculum. I've have attended and supported our Austin and Austin ISD Pride events.</p>
<p><b>Leticia Moreno Caballero</b></p>	<p>I am seeking your endorsement because support and advocacy for LGBTQIA+ students is so important in our public schools. I am a lifelong Democrat, I have worked for democratic legislators, and advocate for the ideal that the democratic party champions; equality, healthcare, public education. In my current profession, I advocate for Medicaid funding for frail and elderly Texans. In my career working with the Texas Legislature, I have seen first-hand how political issues are introduced only to cause division and polarization. A specific example is the 2017 debate on the controversial "bathroom bill" by the legislature that only caused hateful debate hurled at the LGBTQIA+ community.</p>
<p><b>Mike Herschenfeld</b></p>	<p>I have been a consistent progressive democrat since my first time voting in 2008. I actively volunteered on the 2016 and 2020 Bernie Sanders campaign and most recently supported the Jose Garza campaign. While I don't have a ton of direct involvement in LGBTQIA+ issues, I have joined numerous marches/protests where this was a central cause and I have consistently voted for politicians who seek to dismantle the barriers that prevent individuals from accessing all of the freedoms afforded to them under the U.S. Constitution on the basis on their sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.</p>



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**Noelita Lugo** I identify as a Progressive Democrat and have donated to and volunteered for democratic campaigns. I support LGBTQIA+ issues and have supported groups fighting for social justice and equal rights for LGBTQIA+, including Equality Texas, Out Youth and Informed Parents of Austin. As a cis-hetero female and Latina, I see how cis-heteronormative pressure holds all of us back from actualizing our full individuality. I am proud to support the work of LGBTQIA+ trailblazers and am continuing to learn more about how my own upbringing has left me with many blind spots when it comes to LGBTQIA+ issues.

Question 2	Do you believe LGBTQIA+ individuals should be protected against discrimination in employment on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression?
<b>Jared Breckenridge</b>	Absolutely, I believe that LGBTQIA+ individuals should be protected against discrimination in their places of employment. I am so saddened that this question even has to be asked of any potential board members but glad that is. As an employee of the district, I have worked alongside of several openly self-identifying LGBTQIA+ individuals and I want for nothing more than for those individuals to be respected and to be treated with dignity and courtesy for who they are as it relates to their profession and not for what their sexual orientation or gender identity happens to be. So, in summary I absolutely will not tolerate any employment discriminations especially those that are based off of sexual orientation or gender identity/expression.
<b>Leticia Moreno Caballero</b>	Yes, absolutely.
<b>Mike Herschenfeld</b>	Absolutely!
<b>Noelita Lugo</b>	Absolutely and there is so much more progress we must make, obviously in states and localities where there is an entrenched bias towards cis-heteronormative “values” and rigid views of and social pressure to enforce gender roles.

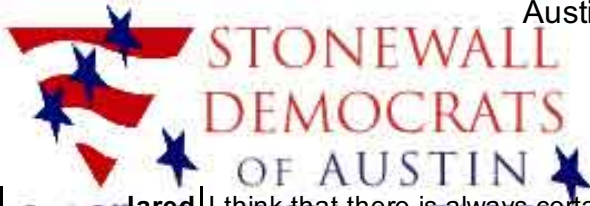
Question 3	Do you believe that public schools should institute rules and policies to prohibit harassment and discrimination against LGBTQIA+ students?



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<p><b>Jared Breckenridge</b></p>	<p>Indeed, I believe that all schools should be required to institute rules and policies to protect the safety of every LGBTQIA+ student. In fact, I believe that all schools in America that receive federal tax dollars from the government should be required by law to do such. There has been far too many instances where students of the LGBTQIA+ community have committed dangerous and highly preventable acts of violence against themselves or others due to the fact that they were harassed, bullied or discriminated against because of their identity. We need rules and policies put in place that will undoubtably hold all individuals that commit these types of inexcusable acts accountable for their actions.</p>
<p><b>Leticia Moreno Caballero</b></p>	<p>Yes, I was happy to see the approval of the sex education curriculum adopted last year by our Board of Trustees. There is more we can do as a district, including: • Create a process to advise/guide/support campuses on issues related to protecting student privacy, including student requests not to share information with parents or guardians, particularly when parents or guardians do not support a student's gender transition.</p>
<p><b>Mike Herschenfeld</b></p>	<p>Absolutely!</p>
<p><b>Noelita Lugo</b></p>	<p>100%. Not only must our schools and all public systems have clear policies and rules prohibiting hate-based bullying, intimidation, harassment and discrimination, but we must also continue to unlearn the biases that feed this type of bullying. Christianity is often used as an excuse to carry out harassment, cruelty towards and discrimination against LGBTQIA+ individuals and communities. I find that incredibly disturbing and quite frankly antithetical to the spiritual teachings of Judeo-Christianity. We must continue to teach, not "tolerance", but acceptance and celebration of the beautifully varied expression of gender and sexuality.</p>

<p><b>Question 4</b></p>	<p><b>Do you think the school district is doing enough to ensure equality for its LGBTQIA+ employees? For example, how would you address organizational issues such as transgender employees transitioning on the job?</b></p>
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<p><b>Jared Breckenridge</b>  <small>Post Office Box 40898 Austin, TX 78704</small></p>	<p>I think that there is always certainly more that the district could be doing to improve the quality of life and work environment conditions for its LGBTQIA+ employees. I would address issues such as making sure that we have bathrooms that are non-gender specific and allow our employees to personally choose the bathroom that they prefer. There should also be a quick non invasive way for transitioning employees and students to change their names and information in our district. In addition to that, we need to have district wide specific policies to better support our LGBTQIA+ employees and students. Often times, decisions are made on a case by case or campus by campus basis and that allows for so many mistakes to be made. Lastly, we should ALWAYS make sure that we are including LGBTQIA+ individuals in policy decisions that involve them.</p>
<p><b>Leticia Moreno Caballero</b></p>	<p>I'm certain the district is not doing enough. I would lean on groups like Stonewall Democrats to share with me solutions to make to support transitioning employees. AISD should do all it can to make sure our environment is an inclusive to all.</p>
<p><b>Mike Herschenfeld</b></p>	<p>I don't know enough about the behind the scenes organizational issues related to this but would greatly welcome hearing general and individual experiences within the district to best understand where the district is lacking so we can change policy in every place that it is necessary. For the specific example given, I am not aware of what might be considered "best practice" in terms of equality but would assume that it should be treated as a medical leave and we likely need to improve how that type of leave operates overall.</p>
<p><b>Noelita Lugo</b></p>	<p>I'm not familiar with any specific policies that AISD has in place with respect to transgender transitioning, but when I worked for a state agency, we had an employee who transitioned. Management set the tone, and everyone respected the employee's right to privacy and right to feel like a "whole person" as he transitioned (born 'female', identified as a man). So, for me, it's not just about policies, it's about how do we practice and reinforce respect of all individuals in the workplace and in our daily interactions. I'm grateful to have known that particular co-worker. I felt happy for him once he fully transitioned because you could tell that he felt 'whole'.</p>

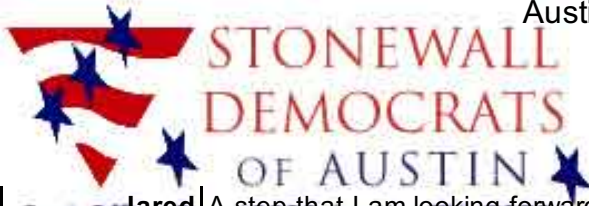
<p><b>Question 5</b></p>	<p><b>Are you familiar with the organization Out Youth? If elected, what would you do to help this organization and others that provide services to LGBTQIA+ youth?</b></p>
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<p><b>Jared Breckenridge</b></p>	<p>Yes, I am totally familiar and impressed with the work and services that Out Youth provides to youth individuals. I believe that we should definitely be partnering more with organizations such as Out Youth and I believe that all of our district's counselors should have flyers with these resources posted visibility within their office spaces. I believe that AISD Pride Week should be about including and connecting these youth specific organizations to our students and allowing for them to be aware of these organizations. I will ensure to raise these priorities and work with our LGBTQIA+ community and organizations to ensure that we are meeting the needs of our LGBTQIA+ students.</p>
<p><b>Leticia Moreno Caballero</b></p>	<p>Yes, I am familiar with Out Youth and support their work. The first step is to make sure others know about Out Youth, the services offered and make sure those connections are trusted and supported.</p>
<p><b>Mike Herschenfeld</b></p>	<p>I had not been familiar with Out Youth until researching it for this questions. This clearly seems like one of many organizations that the district needs to continue building informal and formal relationships with to ensure all of our students have access to a safe and supportive school environment that is inclusive, respectful, and aware. As a board member, I would like to form a partnership committee to explore all of the ways the district could partner with community organizations that focus on some aspect of safe and supportive schools.</p>
<p><b>Noelita Lugo</b></p>	<p>Yes! I love the work that Out Youth has been doing for LGBTQIA+ youth in Austin. I would like to see AISD continue to work with Out Youth and Communities in Schools (CIS) to ensure that more of our AISD students access the Be You curriculum, school and family support services. Being a parent is hard. None of us know what we're doing (quite frankly). We often envision and impose our own dreams unto our children –this comes from a place of hope and dreams, I believe, but it can turn unhealthy when a parent's vision for the child is incongruent with the child's vision of themselves. Every person deserves to be loved and accepted for who they are, not who we want them to be.</p>

<p><b>Question 6</b></p>	<p><b>Describe a step you would take, or have taken, or a proposal you would make, or have made as a member of the Board of Trustees that would specifically benefit LGBTQIA+ students.</b></p>
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<b>Jared Breckenridge</b>	<p>A step that I am looking forward to taking is making sure that all of our staff members that work directly with our students (teachers, coaches, classified employees, etc.) receive culture, race, gender, sexuality and bias professional development regularly. Prior to that, I will also begin to have those tough conversations within or with our policy committee and our community to make sure that our policies are clear and are equally implemented district wide to reflect that AISD is a school district for EVERY student, staff member, family and community member regardless of their gender identity, sexuality or any other identifying factor. Lastly, I will prioritize making sure that any organizations that we are partnering with or receiving funding from represents our values of an AISD for ALL.</p>
<b>Leticia Moreno Caballero</b>	<p>I would like the AISD Board of Trustees to establish an AISD LGBTQIA+ Quality of Life Committee/Advisory Board to address and advise the district. This committee could connect leverage expertise from the City of Austin LGBTQ Quality of Life Commission as well as other local experts such as those from organizations that support, educate and advocate on behalf of LGBTQIA+ issues.</p>
<b>Mike Herschenfeld</b>	<p>I would ensure that the expected equity audit includes sexual orientation and gender identity/expression. I would hold the administration accountable to ensuring that the district's equity office is empowered to continuously improve how we serve LGBTQI+ students, staff, and other stakeholders.</p>
<b>Noelita Lugo</b>	<p>One step I would take is to identify how we can work with Out Youth to expand its reach to more families in Austin, especially working with Black and Brown communities. I would want to see our independent equity audit move forward and assess how AISD is doing with LGBTQIA+ equity issues across campuses and within our AISD HQ. When Naomi Wilson was arrested, I was one of the thousands of individuals who demanded redress. It was an absolute travesty and trampling of first amendment rights. I still cannot believe that our school district hasn't publicly addressed the incident.</p>