

King County Democrats 2023 Endorsement Questionnaire

Name

Lisa Rivera Smith

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Phone number

(206) 992-8912

Candidate name

Lisa Rivera Smith

Candidate pronouns

She/Her

Candidate name pronunciation

Leesa Riv-air-a Smith

Campaign Filer_Name

Lisa Rivera Smith

Campaign email

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Campaign phone

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Campaign website

<https://lisariverasmith.com>

Campaign Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/LisaRiveraSmithSPS>

Link to candidate headshot

<https://img1.wsimg.com/isteam/ip/df64955f-94a7-475c-811d-adf543b0126d/blob.png/:cr=t:0%25,l:0%25,w:100%25,h:100%25/rs=w:1500,h:2000,cg:true>

Consultant name

Jason Bennett

Consultant email

jason@argo.us

What type of position are you running for?

School

What position are you running for?

Seattle School District No. 1

Are you a Democrat?

Yes

Have you ever been a member of another political party?

No

Have you ever been found in violation of a Public Disclosure Commission, Federal Election Commission, or Seattle Ethics and Elections Commission regulation?

No

Do you have a code of conduct for campaign staff and volunteers?

Yes

If you have campaign staff, do you support them joining a labor union?

Yes

Do you support employees of your jurisdiction (e.g. your city's employees, the Port's employees, etc.) exercising their collective bargaining rights without fear of retaliation, including the right to bargain and strike for better working conditions and pay?

Yes

Are you willing to have yourself, your staff, and your peers undergo training to understand and combat institutional racism, implicit bias, and sexual harassment?

Yes

Will your campaign accept contributions from corporate fossil fuel PACs?

No

Will your campaign accept contributions from corporate pharmaceutical PACs or corporate health insurance PACs?

No

Will your campaign accept contributions from corporate building industry PACs, including the Building Industry Association of Washington (BIAW) and the National Association of Home Builders?

No

Will your campaign accept contributions from law enforcement or sheriffs' organizations?

No

Will you return contributions from companies or PACs who are aligned with the organizations listed above and others that conflict with Democratic Party values?

Yes

Have you made any donations to Republican candidates or Republican Party organizations in the last 5 years?

No

Have you previously participated, or will you be participating, in a candidate training program like Institute for a Democratic Future or Emerge?

Yes

Please describe your background (education, employment, community and civic activity, union affiliation, and political activity).

A product of public schools, I was the first in my family to graduate from college, with a degree in Journalism (News-Editorial) and a minor in Ethics, from California State University, Chico. From there, I came to Seattle to serve as the Seattle Times' inaugural 3-year Editorial Intern, and while there, I joined fellow Pacific Northwest Newspaper Guild union members from the Seattle Times and the Seattle Post-Intelligencer in a 49-day strike against both papers. I continue to be a strong supporter of unions and workers, and I proudly sing with the Seattle Labor Chorus' Flying Squad. Since coming to Seattle in 2000, I have been involved with the King County Young Democrats, the 43rd District Democrats and currently, the 46th District Democrats, where I serve as both a Vice Chair and as a Precinct Committee Officer. I am also the Western Vice Chair of the Washington State Democrats Latino Caucus, and a member of the Environment and Climate Caucus (ECC) of the Washington State Democrats.

What motivated you to run for this position and how would you evaluate your success?

I am running for Seattle School District No. 1 Position 2, because I want to continue the good work I have done during my first (and current) term on the board. When I was first elected in 2019, I joked to many that it would be "a sleepy four years." It most definitely has not been! Just four months in, we were facing a global pandemic, and a year after that, we were searching for a new superintendent. That, along with the criminal under-funding of our public schools, a sobering teachers' strike, and the ongoing student mental health crisis, and my fellow directors and I have been tested like no other. But for me, success is measured in the success of our students. They are what make all the work worth it and the reason I keep working to do better and be better. I was reminded of this, earlier this month, when I had the honor of watching 51 SPS Seniors receive over \$255,000 in scholarships. These students were selected based on their contributions to their schools and communities, their academic performance and their perverseness in the face of challenges. Hearing their stories, and seeing their smiles, I believe they embody everything good, and everything resilient, about our district.

What are the top three issues of urgency that you will address if elected?

Hard to pick just three, but I'll say our budget deficit; equity and anti-racism; and sustainability (both environmental and programmatic).

How will you involve all residents and engage all communities in the decision-making process?

I believe all students, families, partners and interested community members should have equitable opportunity and access to being part of the decision-making processes at SPS. This begins with outreach in the home languages of our various communities, and going to the places and events where our furthest from education justice students and families already are. Too often, we put the onus on these families, and then we write them off as just not being "active," when really it's because we have not removed the walls and hurdles we've put in their way.

How have you promoted an enduring environment of inclusivity, diversity, and equity?

During my time on the Seattle School Board, I have advocated for and supported our efforts to center EQUITY, in our differentiating of resource allocation; INCLUSIVITY, in our recent updates to Board Policy 0010: Instruction Philosophy, which calls for the inclusion of all students in meaningful ways; and DIVERSITY, through the creation and offering of new class offerings each year, that reflect the diverse cultures, interests, and lived experiences of our students.

If elected, how will you address inequalities experienced among BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, or other marginalized communities and advance an agenda of equality?

When I came onto the board almost four years ago, much work had already been done towards the creation of a new SPS Board Policy 0040, which was to be an Anti-Racism policy that would explicitly center the dismantling of racist educational systems and structures, and center the rebuilding of an anti-racist educational institution. This work stalled due to many competing factors, but I believe this work must continue, and if re-elected, I would continue the conversations I have started with the superintendent and board president on picking this work back up and utilizing the trove of interviews, research and drafting that already exists. We owe it to our students to not let this good work go undone.

Do you support charter schools and/or vouchers for private/religious school education?

No

Do you support supplemental funding for International Baccalaureate & Advanced Placement testing for low-income students?

Yes

Do you support salary increases for teachers and paraprofessionals?

Yes

Do you support continuing and expanding art, music, physical education, and library classes?

Yes

Do you support enhancing awareness of the option for parents to 'opt out' their students from military recruitment activities?

Yes

What policies or changes will you seek to ensure that all students receive an education that enables them to reach their fullest potential?

Too often, students are excluded from engagement on issues and decisions that have direct impact on their educational experience, and thus on their ability to reach their fullest potential. I believe that students should have a voice in these aspects of their education, and I have spent much of my first term envisioning and laying the foundation for work on a Student Voice policy for SPS. Starting with initial meetings with the NAACP-Youth Council, and interviews with directors and students doing similar work across the state, I brought the nascent work I had done to our three inaugural Seattle School Board Student Members, and this work continues.

How will you address equity in discipline, particularly regarding school resource officers?

I am proud to have voted unanimously with my fellow board members, on a moratorium on the utilization of the Seattle Police Department's School Emphasis Officers and School Resources Officers programs at SPS, back in June of 2020.

What will you do to advocate for ample and equitable funding for K-12 education including special education, school nurses, counselors, mental health professionals, and paraeducators?

Advocating for ample and equitable K-12 funding is the job of all board directors, and I take that job very seriously. I have spoken on many occasions with our state representative and senators; given testimony in Olympia, both in person and virtually; and have worked to educate parents and families on our funding issues, so they can add to the chorus of voices, calling on our state to meet its paramount duty to fully fund public education.

Nation-wide, we have seen examples of parents objecting to books in school libraries with subjects that include racial injustice, the experience of BIPOC communities, and LGBTQIA+ perspectives. How will you address the concerns of these parents and uphold your district's policies?

SPS has luckily not seen the vitriol that many other cities and states have, in regards to people objecting to books in school libraries with subjects that include racial injustice, the experience of BIPOC communities, and LGBTQIA+ perspectives. And when we have received the very rare email on this issue, it's very apparent that these are emails and campaigns from other areas (likely other states), and are not the majority perspective of our own Seattle communities. Still, if and when we do see any such local efforts, I will stand with my fellow BIPOC, and with our LGBTQIA+ community members, to denounce such efforts. I would also work to promote education on and acceptance of our students' needs for books that reflect and celebrate their cultures and identities.

Environmental concerns impact students differently depending on the location of their homes and the maintenance of their school buildings. Provide examples of your climate justice actions to date and your specific plans for school-related environmental equity for all enrolled students.

Just weeks into my tenure on the Seattle School Board, I met with our then-board president to discuss potential work on environmental justice and sustainability issues at SPS. With a copy of the Climate Parents 100% Clean Energy School Districts toolkit in my hand, I shared my desire to launch the campaign here at SPS, which would transition our district off of fossil fuels, and towards being carbon-free by 2040. From that initial conversation, we worked for over a year to create a truly community-based resolution – the Clean Energy Resolution – which was unanimously approved by the board in February 2021. I'm proud to have played this vital role in getting SPS to acknowledge the urgency of addressing climate change and reducing our greenhouse gas emissions.

CERTIFICATION: I hereby certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the provided information is true and accurate.

Yes

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