

# King County Democrats 2023 Endorsement Questionnaire

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**What type of position are you running for?**

School

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Seattle School District No. 1

**Are you a Democrat?**

Yes

**Have you ever been a member of another political party?**

Qualified

**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

**For any Yes/No questions you answered "qualified", please explain:**

When I was 18 and registering to vote for the first time in Pennsylvania in 1996, I registered as a Republican because that was the party affiliation of my parents. While I am a registered Democrat and have been since 2000, I identify as a Socialist today.

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

I am a 20+ year resident of Seattle and the mother of three SPS students, ages 7, 12 and 14. My husband, children and I live in the NE Seattle neighborhood of View Ridge. I hold an M.F.A. in Documentary Film and Video from Stanford University and a B.A. in Literature from Duke University. Professionally, I am a documentary filmmaker whose short films have premiered in film festivals all over the country. My first feature length film, The Growing Season, about a preschool housed within a nursing home, received press coverage from numerous national and international media outlets, and inspired the Care Across Generations Act which was introduced on the Senate floor in May 2019. Previously I served as in house videographer for Seattle Children's Hospital for nearly 10 years. I have also taught filmmaking and work as a freelance director.

My community and civic action includes having served as chair of the PTO at my children's elementary school, an experience that profoundly deepened my understanding of the systemic inequities within our school system and largely compelled me to run for school board. Currently I serve as the Sand Point Elementary PTA representative on the Magnuson Park Advisory Committee. I have also supported a variety of local candidates including King County Council member Girmay Zahilay, former mayoral candidate Nikkita Oliver, State Representative Darya Farivar, and school board directors Chandra Hampson and Brandon Hersey.

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

My decision to run for school board stems from a deep commitment to ensuring that every student in Seattle receives an equitable and high-quality education. Education can be a powerful tool for social change, and I whole-heartedly believe that each parent can most effectively advocate for their own child when they advocate for ALL children in our community.

My primary goal as a school board member is to advocate for policies and initiatives that promote educational equity, inclusivity, and academic excellence for each and every student. I am passionate about addressing the opportunity gaps that exist within our schools and ensuring that every student is seen as a whole person and has access to resources, support, and opportunities necessary for their success.

To evaluate my success, I would employ a multifaceted approach that includes both quantitative and qualitative measures. Firstly, I would assess academic outcomes, particularly among historically marginalized groups, as indicators of progress. By monitoring these data points, we can gauge if our policies and interventions are effectively closing the achievement gap and improving educational outcomes for all students.

Additionally, I would evaluate success based on the level of community engagement and collaboration achieved during my tenure. By fostering authentic partnerships with community organizations, involving parents and students in decision making processes, and actively seeking diverse perspectives, we can create a school system that reflects the values and aspirations of our community.

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

The top three issues that I plan to address as a member of the school board are mental health, fiscal accountability and community engagement.

Children nationwide are experiencing an unprecedented mental health crisis. We must increase the number of trained mental health professionals in buildings, promote mental health awareness and destigmatization, and use our schools as hubs to connect students and their families to wrap around services. This will require strengthening existing partnerships with the city, county and local organizations, as well as initiating new ones. We must treat our students as whole people, and recognize that their mental health is key to their ability to learn and thrive. Children who grow up with unaddressed mental health needs become adults living with unaddressed mental health needs.

Fiscal accountability is crucial for the efficient and effective use of resources in our school system. As a school board member, I am committed to ensuring transparency and responsible financial management. Additionally, I will work to increase community engagement in the budgeting process, seeking input from parents, educators, and community members to ensure that our financial decisions align with the needs and priorities of our diverse community.

Any effective movement is built on relationships. Community engagement and clear, transparent communication is vital for building strong relationships between schools, families, and the broader community. As a school board member, I will prioritize authentic and inclusive community engagement strategies, including clear communication around what the job of a school board director is and is not. In order for systems to function effectively, everyone needs to understand who is responsible for what.

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

As a candidate for the Seattle school board, I am deeply committed to ensuring that all residents and communities have a meaningful voice in shaping our shared commitments and purpose.

To involve all residents and communities, we must prioritize accessibility and create multiple avenues for engagement. This involves building authentic partnerships with community-based organizations, faith groups, parent-teacher associations, and cultural centers. These partnerships will allow us to better understand the specific concerns and needs of different communities, ensuring their representation in decision-making processes.

Most importantly, we must actively seek out and include traditionally marginalized voices. This includes engaging communities of color, LGBTQ+ communities, individuals with disabilities, low-income communities, and other historically underrepresented groups by establishing advisory committees that include representatives from these communities, providing them with a platform to voice their concerns, suggestions, and ideas.

Lastly, we need to ensure that the decision-making process is accountable and responsive. This includes providing regular updates on the progress of decisions, sharing outcomes and rationales, and actively seeking feedback on the implementation and impact of policies. By keeping the lines of communication open, we can foster trust and collaboration between the school board and the community.

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

Creating and sustaining an environment of inclusivity, diversity and equity is not only a priority but also a responsibility for anyone serving on the Seattle school board.

Throughout my time volunteering in Seattle schools, I have consistently championed inclusivity, diversity, and equity in various ways. Data shows that a diverse teaching staff plays a crucial role in creating an equitable and enriching learning environment. To that end, I have advocated for hiring practices that prioritize diversity and inclusion. Additionally, I have actively participated in and supported initiatives that address implicit biases and promote cultural competency among school staff.

I have also been a vocal advocate for restorative justice practices in our schools. Traditional disciplinary approaches disproportionately impact students from marginalized communities. By promoting restorative justice, we can address disciplinary issues in a manner that promotes healing, growth, and learning, rather than perpetuating a cycle of punishment.

Furthermore, I believe that authentic community engagement is essential to fostering an enduring environment of inclusivity, diversity, and equity. I have actively sought to engage community members, parents, students, and educators in decision-making processes. By listening to their perspectives, concerns, and experiences, we can make informed decisions that reflect the needs and aspirations of our diverse community.

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

To address these inequalities, I will advocate for the implementation of inclusive policies and practices that recognize and celebrate the diversity of our student body. This includes advocating for a culturally responsive curriculum, as well as prioritizing the recruitment and retention of diverse educators who can serve as role models and mentors for students from marginalized communities.

I also recognize the need for targeted support services for BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, and other marginalized students. I will advocate for the expansion of counseling, mentorship, and leadership programs that specifically address the unique challenges and experiences faced by these communities. It is essential to provide safe spaces where students can express their identities, explore their interests, and receive the support they need to thrive academically and personally.

Furthermore, community engagement and partnerships are vital in advancing an agenda of equality. I will actively seek input and collaboration from community organizations, advocacy groups, and local leaders who work directly with marginalized communities. By involving these stakeholders, we can identify and address the specific needs and concerns of these communities, ensuring that our policies and initiatives are responsive and impactful.

Lastly, I will champion restorative justice practices that address the disproportionate rate at which BIPOC children are disciplined. I will work towards creating a disciplinary system that emphasizes understanding, growth, and support, rather than punitive measures that perpetuate inequities.

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

Qualified

**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

**For any Yes/No questions you answered "qualified", please explain:**

In theory I believe in a public school system that serves the needs of all students. However, in our city we have communities that have been historically and persistently underserved in our public school system. I believe that until we have effectively addressed this issue, underserved communities deserve to have the option of a charter school if they believe it will better serve their child. That said, I am running for school board in order to do my part to ensure that each and every child in this city is provided an exceptional education within our public school system.

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

We need a school system that works equally well for all students, and we must prioritize supporting those students furthest from educational justice. As a member of the Seattle school board, my number one priority will be to address the persistent opportunity gap that exists in our district by advocating for policies that drive systemic change.

Education is a collective effort that requires the active involvement of parents, families, and community partnerships. In order for our students to succeed, we must greatly strengthen family and community engagement by improving communication and outreach practices between the district, the board and the community. As trust is established through

radical transparency, I will advocate for policies that mandate clear, proactive, accessible communication between all entities.

Students' mental health and well-being are fundamental to their overall success. And as recent studies have revealed, our children are experiencing a nationwide mental health crisis. I will prioritize the implementation of partnerships between the district, the county and local organization to provide comprehensive mental health programs that provide access to counseling services, social-emotional learning, and support systems. Every student should have the resources and support necessary to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally. I will advocate for increased funding and training for special education programs, as well as the development of individualized education plans (IEPs) that truly meet the unique needs of each student.

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

As a Seattle School Board candidate committed to progressive values, I recognize the importance of addressing equity in discipline. My approach to this issue centers around creating a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students.

Research has shown that the presence of law enforcement in schools disproportionately affects students of color and can contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline. I will advocate for alternative models that prioritize de-escalation techniques, restorative justice practices, and mental health support instead of relying on law enforcement. Restorative justice is an effective alternative to punitive disciplinary measures. It focuses on repairing harm, restoring relationships, and addressing the root causes of behavior. I will advocate for increased investment in restorative justice programs, which provide students with opportunities for growth, learning, accountability and reconciliation.

Recognizing that implicit biases can impact disciplinary decisions, I will advocate for mandatory and ongoing training for all school staff. This training will focus on understanding and addressing implicit biases, cultural competency, and trauma informed practices.

I will prioritize creating avenues for meaningful community engagement to ensure diverse perspectives are represented. Additionally, I will actively seek student input to incorporate their experiences and ideas into decision-making processes. Closing the opportunity gap requires us to continuously evaluate and improve our practices to ensure equity in discipline and eliminate the disparate impact on marginalized students.

**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?**

Budget decisions must be student-centered and data-driven. When it comes to funding, and the budget crisis our school district is currently facing, transparency is essential. We must first understand how the funds we do have are being spent. I will advocate for transparent budgeting processes that involve community input and prioritize the allocation of funds to areas that directly benefit students. This includes increased investment in special education programs, ensuring sufficient staffing levels for school nurses, counselors, mental health professionals, and paraeducators. By aligning the budget with the needs of our students, we can provide the necessary resources to support their academic, social, and emotional well being.

We also must address the fact that parent-raised funds at the individual school level contribute to inequities district-wide. Developing mechanisms to redistribute funds across schools based on need can help ensure that resources are allocated equitably. This could involve pooling funds at the district level and distributing them based on factors such as student population, socioeconomic status, and academic needs.

Ultimately we must advocate for adequate funding at the state level, an ongoing process that requires perseverance and collective action. By building strong coalitions, engaging with policymakers, mobilizing the community, and advocating for policy change, we can effectively influence state-level decisions to ensure adequate funding for public education in Seattle.

**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?**

As a progressive Seattle School Board candidate, I firmly believe in the importance of diverse and inclusive education that embraces the experiences of all students, including those from BIPOC communities and LGBTQIA+ backgrounds. Research shows that a culturally responsive curriculum that reflects the identities and histories of students from historically marginalized backgrounds is essential to academic success.

Addressing the concerns of these parents requires open and respectful dialogue. Through active and empathetic communication, I would strive to address their concerns while emphasizing the importance of exposing students to diverse perspectives and fostering inclusivity.

I would also ensure that parents are informed about the district's policies regarding book selection, censorship, and intellectual freedom. To address parents' concerns, I would provide educational resources and information about the positive impact of diverse literature in fostering empathy, understanding, and critical thinking skills. Sharing research and

evidence-based arguments can help counter misconceptions and highlight the educational value of books that address racial injustice or LGBTQIA+ perspectives.

Ultimately it is the job of a school board member to uphold the district's commitment to creating a safe, inclusive, and affirming learning environment for all students.

**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.**

Environmental justice in education requires raising awareness about the disproportionate impact of environmental hazards on marginalized communities. My husband is an environmental scientist who has been advocating for climate justice for many years. As a result, this is a value that is deeply embedded in our family.

We must begin by exploring cost effective ways to improve the environmental sustainability of school buildings. This includes advocating for energy-efficient upgrades, such as installing solar panels or passive solar design, implementing green building practices, and improving indoor air quality through proper ventilation systems. These upgrades not only reduce environmental impact but also provide healthier and more conducive learning environments for all students.

With rising temperatures and increasingly predictable bouts of extremely low air quality due to wildfires, we must designate buildings throughout the city as climate safe zones, where students and families can seek refuge from heat and poor outdoor air quality in their neighborhood year round.

Also essential is integration of environmental education into the curriculum to ensure all students receive a comprehensive understanding of environmental issues and their implications. By incorporating topics such as climate change, sustainability, and environmental justice across various subjects, we can empower students to become informed and engaged advocates for environmental equity.

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

Yes

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