



King County Democrats 2025 Endorsement Questionnaire

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What type of position are you running for?
School District
Which position are you running for?
Seattle SD Director District No. 5
Are you a Democrat?
Yes
Have you ever been a member of another political party?
No
Does your campaign have a code of conduct for staff and volunteers?

No

What are your views on charter schools and voucher systems?

Charter schools and voucher systems drain funding from public education, lower student outcomes, are less accountable to the public, and increase inequities in our education system. To the extent that we see charter schools that are popular in specific neighborhoods, we should engage with the community to find out what changes are needed in the local neighborhood schools to keep students and families from choosing a charter school over their neighborhood school. When seeing charter schools that are popular because they offer an alternative educational model, there is no reason why the School District could not develop a similar program in one of its public schools and learn from their success.

Vouchers divert funds from public schools, weaken public education and can lead to discrimination. Vouchers encourage families to leave our public schools, undermining the foundation of an equitable, publicly funded education system serving all students. Voucher programs may not protect students with disabilities, English language learners, students of color, LGBTQ+ students, and others. I would oppose any efforts to pass school voucher legislation in the State of Washington.

What are your top three priorities for allocating limited dollars in your district?

First, addressing the student mental health crisis. One in every five students in our K-12 schools suffer from serious mental health challenges including depression and anxiety. Students in Seattle, led by Ingraham High School students, rallied and protested to fight for investments in guidance counselors, therapists and mentors in schools. We must deliver on our promises to them and expand access to programs that support student mental health. Second, retaining and recruiting more high-quality teachers. Working in partnership with the Seattle Education Association to recruit, train and retain world-class teachers, staff, and administrators is essential. We are in the middle of a teacher staffing crisis, with many feeling unsafe, burnt out, and unsupported. We must address this and live up to our commitment on salaries, benefits and support.

Third, increasing equity and access. Prioritizing resources for students with the highest needs ensures that all students have access to a quality education. Accessibility and equity should be the cornerstone of how we make difficult decisions regarding our budget.

What are the major barriers to effective learning in the classroom in your district?

Many students have needs that are not being met. Whether it is kids who do not have nutritious lunch and breakfast, those struggling with mental health issues, or feeling unsafe in school, we must meet the needs of our children so that they can focus on learning. Many people blame student behavioral challenges in the classroom for disrupting other students' education. In Seattle, we continue to use outdated and discredited behaviorist approaches for responding to student behavioral challenges, especially behavioral challenges caused by disability. A handful of schools, led by innovative principals, are using alternative approaches, with success. These efforts need to be expanded.

Improving staffing along with instructional practices is essential. Schools and districts that have succeeded and seen significant improvements in student outcomes have done this work. For example, we need to invest in the full support and training necessary for educators to successfully make the shift in instructional practice to the Science of Reading. Similarly, we need to make sure that our instructional practices in other subjects, including math and science, are evidence based and effective.

What is the role of religion in public schools?

Public schools must not promote any particular religion, require students to participate in religious activities or indoctrinate students about religious beliefs. Students should be allowed to practice their own religious faith, so long as they don't disrupt school activities or violate school rules. Much more intention must be paid to ensuring students from all religious backgrounds are given fair accommodation and support. School calendars should reflect

and respect diverse student needs, especially around testing time when families may be fasting or students may need special accommodation to have a fair experience.

What are the primary issues with school capacity in your district and how would you like to see them addressed?

Because of opposition, the School District withdrew proposals last year to close either 21 schools or 4 schools. The District did not make a strong case for closing schools that the community could understand or accept. Whether the reasons are financial, operational or both, the district must identify impacted communities and engage them early, meaningfully, and often to build consensus and mitigate adverse impacts before it takes action to close a school. It's critical that the community respect the reasoning and be involved in planning for the future. Our north star must always be improving student outcomes, increasing family enrollment, and creating safer, better, and more supportive schools for all students. In addition, I feel strongly that in all our planning we continue to fail to adequately center both equity and accessibility for students of all backgrounds and abilities. Special education programs are not supported enough in our planning around school capacity and critical decisions regarding our budgets, closures, or other significant actions.

Describe a time—professionally or personally—when you've led through conflict or controversy. How did you reach a conclusion and how did it advance the issue being addressed?

One of my three kids is autistic. As an autistic child he could easily become dysregulated and engage in socially unacceptable behavior like hitting, kicking, throwing, and eloping. When his needs at school were not met and he reacted with inappropriate behavior, he was often restrained physically and placed into seclusion or isolation. These practices only made things worse and caused him to lose trust in adults.

I had to educate myself about my son's rights, learn about supports that would more effectively address his disability challenges, evaluate educational options and navigate the complex legal and educational systems for disabled students. After he missed a full year of school, we were able to negotiate a resolution that enabled him to finish his K-12 schooling successfully (he is now in college).

The process was extremely fraught with emotion and fear. I was able to remain calm throughout our negotiations, maintaining my positive relationship with staff despite the challenges we had faced. I'd also like to think that our experience has influenced the way that staff have approached and interacted with other families facing similar issues.

Certification

- The candidate hereby certifies that, to the best of their knowledge, the provided information is true and accurate.