

King County Democrats 2025 Endorsement Questionnaire

Candidate name
Jen LaVallee
Candidate name pronunciation
Jen La-Valley
Candidate pronouns
She/Her
Campaign Filer_Name
Jen LaVallee
Campaign email

Campaign phone

Number we can text or call if we have questions about this form

Campaign website
https://www.votelavallee.com/
Facebook page
https://www.facebook.com/share/1YyQ1mGceE/?mibextid=wwXlfr
Instagram
https://instagram.com/VoteLaVallee
X/Twitter/BlueSky/Threads/etc.
https://bsky.app/profile/votelavallee.bsky.social
Link to candidate headshot
https://photos.app.goo.gl/sf1Ej4wXDiMxTdLz7
Campaign manager name
Jen Lavallee
Campaign manager email

Campaign manager phone

Consultant name
Stephen Paolini
Consultant email
stephen@bottledlightningcollective.com
What type of position are you running for?

School District

Which position are you running for?

Seattle SD Director District No. 7

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?

I do not support charter schools. They divert funding from the public school system and are not held to the same standards, such as accepting all students or guaranteeing a consistent level of education and teacher training. To reduce further expansion of charter schools, Seattle Public Schools must become more accessible and offer programs that are both adaptable to individual student needs and clear enough to inspire parent confidence in enrolling their children.

In South Seattle, conversations around charter schools highlight a real and unmet need. Many parents feel they have little autonomy within Seattle Public Schools. They are looking for diverse and flexible educational programs that better suit their children's needs. District 7 has more charter schools than most areas in Washington State. In addition to the regular courses, these schools have offered free, full-day preschool and have engaged with communities to promote their programs at community events. They attract diverse student populations. Parents are seeking stability and better educational outcomes.

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

When allocating limited funding, Seattle Public Schools must prioritize equity, impact, and sustainability.

The board has made progress centering equity over the past decade, but that focus must continue—especially during Washington's education funding crisis. We must stay committed to and work to do better supporting students furthest from educational justice.

It's critical to understand the impact of both budget decisions and programs affecting students. Seattle's weighted staffing model has helped historically under-resourced schools, and maintaining this must remain a priority, even as budgets tighten. Equitable funding is essential.

To truly improve student outcomes, we must reduce class sizes.

Sustainable schools also require accurate enrollment projections to ensure proper staffing. Currently, SPS is significantly off the mark, leading to staffing gaps that affect student learning. Better planning and targeted investment are key to long-term success.

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

Large class sizes, diverse learning needs, and lack of support are harming student outcomes.

Lower student-to-teacher ratios are key to success, but based on district data, SPS is understaffing schools by at least 0.5 teachers on average—worse in high schools. Some classes are so large there aren't enough desks. With limited backup and substitute shortages, schools often reassign students to other grades with iPads when teachers are out. This disruption impacts learning.

Differentiated programs are disappearing. Support for refugee and immigrant students has been cut, and advanced learners can't access HCC due to distance. Teachers face the impossible task of supporting students at vastly different levels in one classroom. Many students fall behind, become disruptive, and develop lasting negative self-perceptions. The lack of enrichment—sports, music, arts, tech, and hands-on learning—especially in

upper grades, makes school feel less meaningful, contributing further to disengagement and underachievement.

What is the role of religion in public schools?

Religion should not be enforced in public schools and no classroom should require participation in religious practices. At the same time, we must recognize the significant role religion plays in the lives of many students and their families.

Seattle Public Schools has too often overlooked important religious observances when setting the academic calendar. For example, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur have frequently been ignored. At Cleveland High School, students were denied a request to adjust graduation dates to avoid a conflict with Eid al-Adha, despite gathering 284 signatures in support of the change.

Respecting and acknowledging diverse religious traditions enhances education by broadening students' worldviews. The Urban Native Education Alliance has advocated for including Native beliefs in local curricula, underscoring the importance of honoring cultural and spiritual traditions within our schools.

Building respect for the diverse communities we serve must be a priority in our educational system.

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

Seattle Public Schools has struggled with effective facilities planning. While some school closures may be necessary, the current process is being driven by bias and lacks genuine community involvement.

No district receives adequate state funding for building maintenance. Seattle benefits from voter-approved levies for capital projects, allowing full school replacements—but not ongoing repairs. New elementary schools are built for 400–600 students to ensure stable staffing and manageable size.

SPS's 2021 master facilities plan ranks buildings by priority but fails to address how to fill larger buildings or how shifting attendance areas might affect communities.

A transparent planning process could foster real community engagement, helping the district understand what families need to feel confident about school changes.

This would provide a path forward for those who see closures as a way to stabilize budgets and classrooms, while also centering the voices of families who are too often left out of these decisions.

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?

While consulting for a company, I uncovered a pattern of gender-based inequity: female managers were sidelined, removed from projects for challenging male leads, and pressured to approve decisions not in the company's best interest. Some even shared informal lists of male colleagues it was unsafe to meet with alone.

I began gathering stories from affected employees and conducted a financial analysis, finding the project was losing over \$1 million every three months due to these dynamics.

With limited HR support, I leveraged this data to secure a meeting with the CEO and presented both the human and financial costs of the issue.

Following that, I led an initiative to surface these concerns across senior leadership and worked with multiple departments to develop culture-change strategies. By combining advocacy with measurable outcomes, I helped shift the company toward accountability and laid the groundwork for meaningful, systemic change.

Certification

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

Created on: May 15th, 2025