

King County Democrats 2025 Endorsement Questionnaire

Candidate name

Landon Labosky

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Landon for Schools

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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?

I believe the expansion of charter schools and voucher systems harm the public school model and take much needed public dollars away from an institution the mass majority of the community, from working class younger families to wise, retired community members, relies on. Our schools are the heart of the community and a place thousands of families rely on. They are a place people come to not just learn but to be fed, to be in community, to learn values of teamwork and empathy, to thrive. Public schools are a place where access to high quality education should be guaranteed no matter what background you come from. We need to be investing more money into our schools and not allowing public tax dollars to be diverted to charter schools or a voucher program. We are absolutely capable of creating a

world class, public education system here in Seattle and that's where I want to see investment.

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

Allocating more money into mental health services for our youth. Listening to groups like the Seattle ASB or the NAACP Youth Council, they have been asking for this to be increased, and the adults in the room have not been listening. Professionals in this area will be able to guide a student to find pathways to solve their mental health needs and we cannot rely on teachers to carry this burden.

Prioritize teachers and their classrooms when allocating money. If this means the teacher needs an extra paraeducator, more school supplies, library time, etc, we as a board must be in conversation with District to make that happen. The real work and policy implementation happens in the classroom. The effort given back from teachers is already extraordinary – we should make that same effort as a district and board.

Invest in students who are furthest away from educational justice and prioritize dollars to schools who have populations that are struggling in the current model of the school district. Shifting processes and establishing better systems takes time – time a large portion of our students do not have. We must focus our spending on programs that lift up communities right now.

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

The major barrier to effective learning in the classroom in Seattle, as well as the entire state, is that Washington State has not met its constitutionally mandated duty to fully fund basic education. We have an antiquated funding mechanism (the prototypical model) that only funds schools based on the needs of an “average school.” This does not take into account the diverse and complex needs we have in our schools and leaves schools struggling to make ends meet in the classroom. Fully funding public education needs to be aggressively advocated for, especially by school board directors.

Another barrier to effective learning in the classroom is a lack of mental health access at schools for all students. We need to be focusing on the needs of students and listening to them when they ask adults for resources. Students in Seattle Public Schools have been calling for a greater presence of mental health resources in their schools and the current adults in charge are not meeting the needs.

What is the role of religion in public schools?

Teaching what religion is has a place in education, but the actual teaching of beliefs, of faith, of practices of religion needs to remain separate. The history of our country was based on the belief of an idea that multiple communities could coexist together and that the establishment of an official religion in the United States would exclude people in our democracy. Public education spaces need to remain free of religion and the practice of faith needs to be left up to individual families, in their private lives. I do, however, believe that our public school institutions can be a positive catalyst of change in our community through culture building. By recognizing and learning from all the different communities, their faiths, customs and cultures, we can weave the fabric of our communities into a beautiful tapestry. Cultural events and holidays should be recognized and treated as an opportunity to learn about your classmate, neighbor, and community.

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

Enrollment in the Seattle School District is going down by all metrics and through conversations with community members, largely because the academic rigor and diversity in Seattle Schools is dwindling. We have large waitlists at school sites where students could be getting rigorous education, access to better specialized learning for their needs and for programs that benefit a school environment (like the Japanese Dual Language program at Lincoln High School, free meal programs and access to after school extracurriculars). The school board is in a position to elevate these issues and question the district as to why they hold waitlists for students for no apparent reason, instruct the district to adequately spend

the money we already have in our budget (we underspend year after year) and to make connections with community programs to open access of school buildings for these programs.

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?

My current role oversees a large staff for a smaller city in King County. This year, Pride events are more important than ever and recognition of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community is vital. Being a government employee, we have restrictions on how much we can influence policy creation/direction to our City Council and this year that created a pinch point amongst my staff. We wanted to elevate the importance of the queer community in our city through the creation of a Pride event, but the executive level would not allow us to bring the issue up with the elected officials at the city. Frustrated, my staff came to me to seek out advice on how to advance the initiative, but through the “correct process.” This moment was impactful because although I am not a resident of this city, some of my employees are, and have a right to speak up to their elected officials to affect change. Ultimately, we were able to find a solution through a local commission and an, albeit small, Pride event will now be happening this summer.

Certification

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

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