

## King County Democrats 2025 Endorsement Questionnaire

<b>Candidate name</b>
Vivian Song
<b>Candidate pronouns</b>
she/her
<b>Campaign Filer_Name</b>
Vote Vivian Song
<b>Campaign email (updated)</b>
<a href="mailto:vivian@songforseattleschools.com">vivian@songforseattleschools.com</a>
<b>Campaign phone (updated)</b>

<b>Number we can text or call if we have questions about this form</b>

<b>Campaign manager name</b>
Vivian Song
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<b>Consultant name</b>
Christian Sinderman
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<a href="mailto:christian@nwpconsulting.com">christian@nwpconsulting.com</a>
<b>What type of position are you running for?</b>
School District
<b>Which position are you running for?</b>
Seattle SD Director District No. 5
<b>Are you a Democrat?</b>
Yes
<b>Have you ever been a member of another political party?</b>
No
<b>Campaign website (updated)</b>
<a href="http://www.songforseattleschools.com">www.songforseattleschools.com</a>
<b>Will you share a link to your code of conduct?</b>
<a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fsQ7CBnLfakghwfdmdYzHQ5snp498fsnbumSqYsVM2g/edit?usp=sharing">https://docs.google.com/document/d/1fsQ7CBnLfakghwfdmdYzHQ5snp498fsnbumSqYsVM2g/edit?usp=sharing</a>

## **What are your views on charter schools and voucher systems?**

I firmly believe public education dollars should remain in public schools that are accountable to democratically elected school boards and legally required to serve all students. This accountability structure ensures transparency and equity in a way charter and private schools simply cannot match. As someone whose own hearing disability was identified by a public school teacher, and as a parent of a child with a hearing disability, I've witnessed firsthand how inclusive public schools transform lives. This personal experience informs my commitment to defending public education.

Innovation is driven by teachers, principals, and communities; it can happen anywhere and is not dependent on a funding model. Charter schools and voucher systems tend to deplete resources from public education systems that are already resource constrained.

Additionally, I steadfastly support our constitutional separation of church and state. Voucher systems that channel public funds to religious institutions undermine this essential principle.

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

1. Student Outcomes Through Evidence-Based Practices: Aligning investments directly with Seattle Public Schools' academic goals through proven practices such as implementing a comprehensive Science of Reading curriculum across all elementary schools, supported by robust teacher professional development. In districts that have made this shift, reading proficiency rates have improved dramatically.

2. Equity Through Strategic Resource Allocation. Educational equity requires intentional resource distribution based on student needs. I will champion:

- Targeted investments in historically marginalized communities
- Expanded language access for multilingual families
- Culturally responsive curriculum development with implementation support
- Equity audits with resources to close identified gaps

3. Long-Term Fiscal Stability: We can end crisis management that undermines educational quality and stability.

- Five-year financial forecast aligning staffing, enrollment, and facilities
- Rebuilding 3-5% operating reserve to prevent mid-year cuts
- Transparent budget process with meaningful community input
- State-level advocacy for full education funding

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

Overcrowded Classrooms: Washington ranks 42nd nationally in class size due to insufficient funding. Secondary classrooms regularly exceed 32 students—far above the 24-student recommendation. I will refine staffing formulas, and prioritize smaller classes in early grades and high-need schools and advocate with legislators to fulfill their constitutional funding obligation.

Inadequate Support Services: With 15% of students qualifying for special education and 12% being multilingual learners, support systems remain fragmented and under-resourced. Special education faces evaluation backlogs, while decentralized multilingual services lack adequate staffing and training. I will invest in evidence-based inclusion models and comprehensive professional development on differentiation.

Student Mental Health and Engagement: Post-pandemic chronic absenteeism reflects declining student belonging and purpose. I will:

- Establish attendance intervention teams addressing root causes
- Expand school-based mental health services through partnerships
- Implement evidence-based social-emotional learning curricula
- Create a student advisory council for student health and well-being

## What is the role of religion in public schools?

The Constitution requires public schools to remain neutral on religion while protecting individual religious expression. As a school board director, I would uphold these principles through balanced policies respecting separation of church and state while ensuring inclusive environments for students of all faiths and no faith. In practice, this means:

- Curriculum should teach about world religions as part of comprehensive social studies education without promoting or denigrating any tradition. We should regularly review materials to ensure accurate, respectful presentation of diverse religious perspectives.
- School calendars should acknowledge major religious observances across traditions, following OSPI's Common Religious and Public Holidays Bulletin. Schools must avoid scheduling major events and assessments during religious observances.
- Student-initiated religious expression must be protected as free speech when it doesn't disrupt education, while staff-led religious activities or official endorsement remain inappropriate.
- When controversies arise—as they inevitably do—I would establish inclusive dialogue processes that bring diverse perspectives together.

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

Since 2020, enrollment fell by 4,000 students, with some schools operating with less than 250 students. The district has also added capacity with its building renovations. Three solutions would address these challenges more effectively than the failed 2024 closure proposals. When communities trust the process and see their input reflected in outcomes, they become partners rather than opponents.

1. Data-Driven Boundary Adjustments. Rather than abrupt closures, implement regular comprehensive boundary reviews based on current/projected neighborhood enrollment data, transportation accessibility, and building capacity and condition. This requires transparent timeline with data collection, community education, scenario development with engagement, and transition planning.
2. Strategic Program Placement. – Ensure equitable access to specialized services for students with disabilities and multilingual learners and high-demand options (language immersion, STEM, advanced learning) – Develop enrollment attraction strategies for under-enrolled schools
3. Schools are community anchors and SPS and the City of Seattle should collaborate in broader urban planning.

## 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?

In Spring 2022, SPS proposed shifting start times, as early as 7:30 AM for elementary, due to a bus driver shortage. District leadership presented this as an operational necessity that saves \$7 million. Several board colleagues argued this was outside board purview. Yet, after school care providers warned of disruptions, high-poverty school principals feared worsened attendance, and working parents expressed childcare concerns.

To me, this decision's sweeping impact on all 49,000 students, their families, and staff required board oversight to ensure equitable outcomes and proper implementation planning. I consulted stakeholders including labor partners, educators, families, and community organizations. I also researched how other districts like Indianapolis Public Schools addressed similar transportation challenges.

I determined the proposal lacked sufficient planning and risked disproportionate negative impacts on vulnerable students. Rather than simply opposing it, I collaborated with district leadership on alternatives and delayed implementation for proper planning, transforming a potentially divisive issue into an opportunity for improved decision-making.

## Certification

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

Created on: May 4th, 2025