



LETTERS | **Opinion** *This piece expresses the views of its author(s), separate from those of this publication.*

Schools candidate will meet with any interested groups in community

Rhonda Edwards, Port Orchard Kitsap Sun

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I am writing to respond to accusation in a letter by Jan Fuller, published in the Kitsap Sun, which misquoted questions and the answers given to fit her narrative.

All school board candidates were invited to participate in a forum held at Maynard's sponsored by Mom's for Liberty Kitsap chapter. I am running for a non-partisan position as a school board director to represent all citizens in South Kitsap, and I accepted the invitation. I believe civil discourse is the best way to unite for the good of our kids. The entire panel was asked, "Are you willing to regularly meet with leadership from Mom's for Liberty Kitsap to discuss community concerns and current education challenges from parents?" Every candidate responded with "Yes." To expand, I am willing to meet with this group and any other group that requests a meeting. I have an open-door policy and can be contacted easily at www.Edwards4SKSchools.com.

Secondly, Ms. Fuller stated that I oppose the OSPI. The truth is the panel was asked "Are you willing to take a hard stand against OSPI, following the law governing your job as a school board director?" Each person answered "Yes." I do not oppose OSPI unless this entity were to conflict with my duties per RCW 28A.150.230. OSPI was created to help ensure that a higher level of leaning is attained and guides teachers.

Finally, candidates Espy, Higgins and Villars refused the invitation by MFL. They also refused the invitation to a meet the candidates event hosted by Josephine's. Why?

Rhonda Edwards, candidate for South Kitsap School District Board Director Position 5

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School bond decisions can't just accommodate some communities

John Gray, Port Orchard
Kitsap Sun

It appears that the current South Kitsap school board has given little consideration to the idea of school consolidation. At the South Kitsap Chamber of Commerce Forum, I pointed out to the bond advocates that Olalla Elementary only had approximately 280 students, and if the new school at Mullenix Ridge was expanded to add about 10 extra classrooms it would easily accommodate the Olalla students. After all, the two schools are less than 5 miles apart – not an inconvenient distance. An addition would likely cost far less than the \$48 million budgeted for a new Olalla Elementary School. Consolidation would save on administration and property maintenance; the Olalla property could be excessed. The response was that the school board outreach to Olalla voters indicated that they would prefer to keep their own dedicated school. Well, of course they would; however, the school board is responsible for making the best financial decisions for all of the voters of South Kitsap – not just the desires of Olalla. The bond is being sold to the voters as costing \$271 million, but let's be honest – with interest and the inevitable cost overruns it will likely cost taxpayers more. You can be certain that if this bond is passed, then the South Kitsap School board will immediately resort back to asking for a levy for a new high school. As one of them stated – one election we lost approval by only 38 votes. I prefer to look at it as we won by only 38 votes.

John Gray, Port Orchard



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Vote for South Kitsap candidates who won't be a voting block

Thomas Juvik, Port Orchard
Kitsap Sun
10-27-23

Many Port Orchard voters are scratching their heads over the plethora of signs promoting South Kitsap School Board candidates Sehmel, Cross and Edwards. Seems that most of these signs are grouped together, some in quite large and elaborate displays.

What's the deal? Should we think of these folks as the Three Amigos? Musketeers? Stooges? Three of a kind? And if so, what kind?

I don't think the message is "We are a bunch of pals who belong to the same Fantasy Football League." It seems more like, "We Be Coalition." And I worry that it might be one that is beholden to a specific political movement or special interest group; one that has bankrolled their abundant signage. Scary Halloween thought - the last thing our school district needs is a triumvirate that could wield majority power to advance some ulterior motive ahead of the needs of students and taxpayers.

No thank you, Three Amigos. I will be supporting those who run independent of one another for these non-partisan positions. Kate Espy has an extensive history of community service and served well during her brief tenure on the school board. Jay Villars brings unique and varied experience in public education. As a young parent, Megan Higgins offers a fresh and conscientious voice on behalf of our families.

The community is best served by those who represent a broad spectrum of the population and have no other axe to grind. That's why these three candidates have my vote. Consider them, please.

Thomas Juvik, Port Orchard



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Pay it forward for the South Kitsap School District

Scott Diener, Port Orchard Kitsap Sun

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Who paid for your schools and upgrades? I am sure it was folks like us who felt it was important to care for students by giving them the best competitive advantage for careers and additional schooling. South Kitsap needs votes to ensure our students can benefit from safe, modern, and welcoming facilities for years to come. It's been 35 years since the last bond passed, supporting 3 elementary schools (Sidney Glen, Hidden Creek, and Mullenix Ridge). Now, other schools (Cedar Heights, Olalla, South Colby, Explorer Academy, and Discovery) are in critical need of replacement and safety improvements. The high school will also see long-overdue modernization of instructional space and safety improvements. This bond eliminates 43 portable classrooms that were bought (used at the time) from the Seattle School District in the 1990s to alleviate overcrowding. Most portables do not have bathrooms or running water. More importantly, now more than ever, security is paramount. Parents, faculty, and staff will tell you portables may be accessed from around their respective campuses and do not have the same focal security as the main building's school space. For those of us who attended public schools, we need to remember they were paid for by the generations before us. Now is the time to do the same for our children and our neighbors' children. Please pay it forward for the generations ahead of us. They deserve it.

Scott Diener, Port Orchard