

CHANGES TO SKSD PUBLIC MEETING PARTICIPATION

South Kitsap School District Board of Directors have changed their policies on just who exactly can 'speak' to school board members, or who can submit comments or questions during board meetings recently.

South Kitsap School Board polices for the past twenty years or more did not restrict nor specifically state that residents only or stakeholders only were the only members of the public to be allowed to orally address the school board directors during board meetings.

When the board was challenged openly during an online public meeting about clarifying and putting in writing the changes, they (John Berg and Liz Sebren) wanted to CHANGE AND ADOPT a new policy. He then inserted the "residents only" clause. When that was challenged through a letter sent to the board from the attorney for Citizens Supporting South Kitsap Schools group, John Berg said he would compromise. The "compromise" was to then insert the stake holders only clause for those now permitted to speak to board members during board meetings. The wording "generally be allowed" is more of a placeholder, a back up argument that the district has not really restricted the public from speaking to SKSD Board Directors during board meetings.

You will find Attorney Nicolas Power's letter to the school board following the below copy of the changes made to SKSD public meeting participation policies.

SKSD SCHOOL BOARD
PUBLIC MEETINGS POLICY CHANGES
(as of August 5, 2020)

Policy Type: Governance Process

GP-2-E5 MEETINGS

Meeting Conduct, Order of Business and Quorum (WSSDA 1400 - Essential)

Board meetings will be scheduled in compliance with the law and as deemed by the board to be in the best interests of the district and community. The Board will function through (1) regular meetings, (2) special meetings, and (3) emergency meetings.

Regular Meetings.

Public Comment

The board recognizes the value of public comment on educational issues and the importance of involving members of the public in its meetings. In order to permit fair and orderly expression of such comment, the board will provide a period at the beginning and/or the end of the meeting during which visitors may present to the board. Unless the entire board meeting is conducted electronically, oral public comment will be received only in person.

The board will also allow individuals to express an opinion prior to board action on agenda items that the board determines require or will benefit from public comment. Individuals wishing to be heard by the board will first be recognized by the chair/president.

Individuals, after identifying themselves, will proceed to make comments within the time limits established by the board. An individual will be allowed three minutes and a representative of a group five minutes. **Only district stakeholders will generally be allowed to address the board.** The chair/president may interrupt or

terminate any statement when it is too lengthy, personally directed, abusive, obscene, or irrelevant. The board as a whole has the final decision in determining the appropriateness of all such rulings.

Public comment is an opportunity to direct comments to the board and is not intended to permit interrogation of the board or its members or to engage in a dialogue. Any specific questions raised in the public comment will be addressed to the chair/president, who will typically refer the question to the superintendent for a detailed response to the individual at a later time. The superintendent will then also report the response to the board at a subsequent public meeting.

GP-2-E5 Page 3 - Revised 06.04.14; 06.16.15; 10.18.17 (WSSDA Language adopted); 03.07.18; 09.19.18; 06.03.20; 08.05.20

Public Meeting Participation Polices Changes as of August 5, 2020