

# Kitsap Sun

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## SKSD shying away from the public

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South Kitsap School District board directors John Berg and Liz Sebren recently decided to "tighten up" public participation at board meetings. The board no longer reads online anonymously submitted comments; they want to hear only from stakeholders (whoever they are) and only from district residents. What about parents and caregivers living outside the district but their students attend the SKSD? Are they not stakeholders in their kids' education?

These changes have effectively silenced all but those with consenting views. The board majority voted for these changes. Only Director Jeff Daily voted no. Shouldn't board meetings include the entire public? Why is this board continuing to exclude those with differing views and opinions? Meeting attendees who choose to remain anonymous may have very good reasons. Perhaps they fear retribution from the district.

Why did Berg and Sebren push these changes? Berg stated he was afraid that busloads of activists would come to board meetings to disrupt board proceedings. "It would infringe upon the rights of those who have "a real stake" in the decisions of the Board". He said, "I know this because in a previous job many years ago my task was to rent the buses and order lunches for the groups traveling to attend public board meetings". So how many busloads have we seen attend SKSD board meetings?

Sebren stated, "Things have worked fine for 22 years." Then why does she think these changes are necessary? Our school board continues demonstrating disinterest in public opinion while they exclude members of the public from participating.

*Dave Kimble, Manchester*