



WILL SKSD BOARD ELMINATE ALL ORAL PUBLIC COMMENTS AT BOARD MEETINGS?

As some of you have heard, the new South Kitsap School Board is now planning to make big changes to the school board meetings public comment policies. First, they plan to restrict comments to only those that are nice, complementary of the board and district, and won't allow opinions contrary to theirs. Next and soon, then they will dispense with all public comment period in entirety as they feel some comments are "hurtful", since they are all "experts" in education and what your child needs despite you being the parent. The full video of the discussion can be found at: <https://youtu.be/V0bT8tkvHPQ> for those who would like to hear the full discussion.

For many of you, this should be alarming at best, and very disturbing for a number of reasons. I won't list them but it is suffice to wonder why they want your money to pay for over 200 extra employees, for 8% pay raises and more perks, while lying to you about how your student is doing in school. They lied to you regarding a huge \$271M bond request full of unwanted items as well as performing no due diligence to see if any of it was either wanted by you or would work if approved. The real bond cost would be \$485M over 27 years versus what you were told. Yet they said the community was behind it and it was a "no brainer" for taxpayers to fund a huge tax request that would not raise your taxes that many of you will never see completed. Your kids will inherit this huge bill and pay much more for this and they have no vote. The only "community" that was behind it were school district unions and the employees who seek more job security as unneeded schools are built bigger needing more staff for fewer students. You can check your tax statement for 2024 online now.

Go to: <https://psearch.kitsapgov.com/psearch/> input your parcel number or address then scroll down and select tax and levy assessments. If you check your tax statement, you will see

that the SK Fire Levy did raise you taxes. You may recall they told us that passing their levy would not raise your taxes. Clearly that was a lie, and our school district tells these same lies over and over again.

Would you be happy and trust our district if they decide to totally discontinue public comments periods at all board meetings? With no public comment allowed soon to come to board meetings, why would you even want to consider voting for an O&M levy renewal since the board will tell you what you need and not listen to YOUR desires. If this next levy passes, it will be 85% of it going to pay and perks for all of the employees not paid for by the state. Only the remaining 15% will go for toward 'some' help for the kids. Some of the items that you don't need for your kids are SEL, CRT, free medical care, outdated curriculum, and more inappropriate curriculum.

There are stark inequities of how sports equipment is paid for and that individuals, certain teams, and certain sports are not funded equally or fairly. The District claims that levies pay for 100% of all sports programs. This is not true. The state pays for most sports funding but the money is used elsewhere by the district instead of for your student. You won't see but a few levy dollars going towards helping to catch your student up or help them to excel and move on to a community college, trade school, or college. No summer school, no additional help during the school day, no accelerated learning- no nothing.

So, just who are these arrogant "experts" who are now going to tell you what your kids need since you apparently don't know but they want your money for "their needs", not your children's. And wouldn't you know it, our legislators are currently working on legislation to increase school board directors pay equal to other management job pay levels. Here us the link to Senate Bill 6223: <http://tinyurl.com/4e27pyaj>

The SKSD Board Chair Jeff (Heifer) Wilson for those that know of him. Mr. Wilson thinks he runs the show on everything effecting your students, thus he considers himself to be "the boss.. Which begs the question, is he fit or even suitable to be on the school board, much less be the board chair? Did you know he was fired by Boeing but told you he was "laid off"? Boeing has had no recent layoffs. Did you know he lives in a house on the water on Beach Drive, it was paid for by his wife's parents? Two failed marriages, two failed businesses, but considers himself an expert on everything.

Did you know his wife works at Olalla Elementary School, calls herself a teacher, but is in fact a librarian? Did you know he has a paper mill PhD in psychology supposedly earned from an unregistered school and knows nothing about public education? Wonder who paid for that?

He knows nothing about the district budget but supports the district having over 200 extra people as the unions tell him he needs to. He remains indebted to the Unions for getting elected and certainly will be their go-guy in the future when he runs for his seat again. He was the main driver of the ill-fated bond issue that was never even vetted by any agency or contractor to see if it was even feasible. But he told all of you it was at public meetings (a big lie that is on tape). He was at the Port Orchard Farmers Market “educating” voters but was really just illegally promoting the bond with another district communications employee. Heavily supported by the unions so you know that pay and perks come first, then perhaps your students. But pretty buildings are what makes education work versus teaching them something. Arrogance is his middle name as he know everything. He continued to say the bond planning efforts and work produced the best bond ever; up until the bond flopped that is.

Next is Kate Espy, asked to “retire” nurse who knows as much as Wilson about education having never done anything in public education. But, she knows that every school requires a RN to put Band-Aids on kids at \$110k plus benefits just so you feel your student is being taken care of regardless if you already have a primary care doctor that knows your student much better than a school “nurse”. Espy heavily supports 30 additional personnel for SEL (Social Emotional Learning) so your student feels good about themselves versus learning academic skills to succeed. She knows nothing of finances but was supported heavily by the unions so you know where she stands on pay raises and perks for employees. She doesn’t like people to question her knowledge on anything as she is an expert in everything but, in reality, understands nothing involving public education, financial issues, teaching, etc. She is also, again, spearheading discontinuing all public comments at all school board meetings either in-person or on zoom. She doesn’t like being questioned when she knows nothing but acts as if she originated the thought.

Then there is Brian Pickard. A bit institutionalized given he proudly proclaims "I've been in education for 38 years" spiel. He is a district retired SKSD administrator who is now a millionaire due to the exorbitant pay and pay raises he reaps from his SKSD funded state retirement package. He says and offers nothing of value at meetings. When he does speak it is rarely pertinent and he consistently agrees with the others on everything so as to remain beloved by all. He has several family members who work for the district so he is there to ensure they keep their jobs and get those big pay raises and perks. He continues to heavily support the unions who heavily supported him thus he will do nothing but approve of hiring more people, giving away bigger pay and perk packages for all. He got his retirement so he wants all others to get the same great deal he has. He won't ever take a stand on anything or stand up for anyone as it harms his community image unless a majority of the board agrees first. He just wants everyone to be happy so spending public money for everything is easy as it isn't his.

Newly onboard is Megan Higgins who immediately ran afoul of the Public Disclosure Commission by placing her campaign signs on school property. Because she had not yet been

elected, the Public Disclosure Commission let it slide. She is an unemployed parent with three kids in the district. She is solely on the board to ensure her kids get the best school, best teachers, and are coddled while in the SKSD system. She has zero experience in public education and knows nothing of finances. She was also heavily sponsored by the unions. Make no mistake about her, she is there to protect pay and perks for all employees and adding more employees so everyone is happy.

Finally, there is Jay Villars. Another district retired SKSD administrator who is a millionaire due to the exorbitant pay and pay raises found in the SKSD that funded his state retirement package. He was let go by SKSD on two separate occasions and now hit the jackpot winning a board seat. He has good ole boy friends in the district and is there to protect their pay and perks so that they can get the same huge retirement package he has. He has several family members who work for the district so he is there to ensure that they keep their jobs and those big pay raises and perks. He is another heavily sponsored union tool so he will do nothing but advocate for more pay and perks for all employees.

SKSD has only employee that the school board supervises, Tim Winter. This is because he is their only employee to supervise. Superintendent Tim Winter is the highest paid superintendent in the history of the district (paid approximately \$250M) but came from podunk Clarkson County, a small school district in Lewiston, WA. He came with a "Top 5" program mentality hoping to lift the district but which has failed miserably. Those lofty goals evaporated (as did recent hopes to pass the \$271M bond) and the top five has been replaced with a "top five priority plan" that prioritizes people's jobs first, pay, perks, and adding more jobs versus improving student achievement.

Since Mr. Winter was hired, school enrollment has declined as well as student state test scores. The district is 5th out of the 7 districts on the Kitsap peninsula (will soon fall to 6th according to the latest OSPI test scores). Mr. Winter continues to maintain that SKSD scores are increasing but fails to point out that other districts scores are increasing much more than those of the SKSD. OSPI data on individual school scores also reflect that there is almost no improvement since he was hired, despite the addition of hundreds of extra employees (mainly current employee family members and friends of his) pushing the payroll to the highest in the area.

Superintendent Winter would not disclose his schedule to taxpayers when he went secretly to local businesses to "educate" them on the recently failed \$271,000,000 bond plan which was clearly staged and intended to secretly promote the bond issue (not allowed by law) instead of being "transparent" which he professes he is and continues to boast to the public how open, honest, and transparent SKSD is with the taxpayers. He failed to tell the public what the real cost was and whether it was the best plan for your kids versus the unions pushing for more jobs and newer schools.

Mr. Winter consistently fails to stand up to union demands so all huge pay raises and perk increases just get rubber stamped and have gone through without question. He boasts that he reduced the budget by \$5.4M to solve the deficit but in reality, secretly hired all the people back and cut the science curriculum and also many programs at the schools which were designed to help kids succeed. He tried to leave to get a Superintendent's job at Peninsula but they didn't want him. This was before he told us all he was our forever SKSD Superintendent. He has drawn the district reserves down to the absolute minimums due to adding more jobs and higher than normal pay raises to keep district and unions and union supporters happy. He is as arrogant, if not more, than Mr Wilson so they get along just fine. His decisions are based solely on keeping the unions happy, and will gladly move on without public input as he and they know it all. Has 33 years in education and knows everything about it. What is perplexing is if he and the board are so knowledgeable about public education, then wouldn't they know what the problems are and fix them?

This are the same group of people who want no public input/comments as they don't like criticism and cannot believe anyone could possibly know as much as they do about educations and kids. All they need from you is your vote on the upcoming O&M levy and later on the "new" bond initiative to keep the gravy train flowing of more jobs, more pay, and more perks; all the while saying "it's for the kids". Nothing about the SKSD is for kids. Otherwise, bonds would be easily passing by the "supportive" community they say we have in Port Orchard.

Sadly, the SKSD is the only game in town for our 40% low-income residents who must depend on them to educate their kids. Meanwhile, these working class folks work hard to pay higher taxes to a district that doesn't want their input, only their money to support the perpetual jobs programs for friends and family of current district employees.

Footnote:

For those short on time, pay strict attention to the first six minutes of this video clip. It was all pre-planned and the draft policy has already been written by Board Chair Wilson for consideration at the next board study session meeting is coming on January 31st. The next regular board meeting will be on February 14th starts at 5:30. This may be the last time we are "permitted" to give oral comments in person or Online to this school board. Here again is the link to the School Board Meeting they called "a retreat": <https://youtu.be/V0bT8tkvHPQ>

Oral Public Comments at SKSD Board Meetings Are Being Eliminated



Policy Type: Governance Culture

Counted votes and roll call votes will be recorded in the minutes. The vote of an individual director will be recorded in the minutes at the request of that director or by order of the board. All votes will be approved by majority of those present and voting, unless otherwise required by law. No action will be taken by secret ballot at any meeting required to be open to the public.

An oral roll call vote of all the members of the board is required for the election of board officers, filling a vacancy on the board, or for the selection of the school district superintendent, and a majority vote of all the members of the board is required for any person to be elected or selected for such positions.

Written 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. As such, the board ~~will~~ **has** established and maintains a 24/7 email address (publiccomment@skschools.org) for written public comments that ~~will~~ **are** immediately ~~be~~-forwarded to the entire board upon receipt. This is the primary, fastest, and most effective way for the public to share thoughts with the Board. This enhanced 24/7 Public Comment channel also allows the board time to reflect (and respond) to the public's concerns in a timelier fashion than afforded by traditional Oral Public Comment. Those written public comments that are received up until 3:00 pm on any given meeting day, ~~thus providing the board time to review and reflect upon the public comments prior to each board meeting.~~ **will also be included in the Written Public Comment Topic Summary (prepared by the Board Secretary). Importantly, during regular (or special) meetings, the Board Secretary will read the Public Comments Topic Summary and the Board will have the opportunity to discuss the public's input before taking final action on agenda topics.**

Oral Public Comment

~~At the Board's discretion (and where required by law), an Oral Public Comment section may also be added to regular or special meetings of the board. Furthermore~~ **When Oral Public comment is taken, and** in order to permit fair and orderly expression of ~~verbal in-person~~ **public** comments, the board will provide a (up to 30 minute) period at the beginning of each regular ~~or special~~ **board** meeting during which attendees may present in-person to the board. If more than 10 participants indicate that they wish to make ~~verbal oral~~ **comments at the start of the board meeting** (thereby potentially exceeding the 30-minute cap) names ~~will~~ **may** be randomly selected from the list of potential speakers until the requested speaker list is exhausted or the 30-minute time period expires (whichever comes first). ~~The chair/president may extend the Oral Public Comments section (in 30min blocks) if deemed appropriate by the majority of the board. Rules for each 30min block will follow the protocols for Oral Public Comment outlined above.~~

The board will make reasonable accommodations available for individuals who have difficulty attending an in-person board meeting but would still like to make a verbal public comment. For those individuals whose circumstances make it difficult to attend in person we will provide an option to attend the meeting virtually via **"Zoom" or equivalent technology**. Those requesting the option of remote public comment must send in a request to our public comment email address ~~stating their legal name and~~ **indicating their desire to speak during public comment no later than 3:00 pm on the day of the meeting**. Those remote requesters doing so will be added to the list of potential speakers for public comment at the start of the board meeting.



Policy Type: Governance Culture

Individuals, after identifying themselves by **legal** name, will proceed to make comments within the time limits established by the board. Each individual will be allowed three minutes to speak. The chair/president may interrupt or terminate any statement when it exceeds the time limit, or is vulgar, obscene or grossly disruptive to the board process. Any restriction imposed must be viewpoint neutral. The board as a whole has the final decision in determining the appropriateness of all such rulings.

Oral Public eComment is an opportunity to direct comments to the school board for its consideration.

Any specific operational questions raised during 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 **as needed**.

Minutes

The secretary of the board keeps the minutes of all board meetings. Minutes become official after approval by the board's next regularly scheduled meeting and must be retained as a permanent record of the district. Minutes must be comprehensive and shall show:

1. The date, time, and place of the meeting
2. The presiding officer
3. Members in attendance
4. Items discussed during the meeting and the results of any voting that may have occurred
5. Action to recess for executive session with a general statement of the purpose
6. Time of adjournment, and
7. Signature of presiding officer and date minutes approved.

Unofficial minutes will be provided to board members in advance of the next regularly scheduled meeting of the board and will also be available to other interested citizens. Minutes need not be read publicly, provided that members have had an opportunity to review them before approval.

A file of permanent minutes of all board meetings will be maintained in the office of the board secretary to be made available for inspection upon the request of any interested citizen.

OPMA encourages, but does not require, agencies to make an audio or video recording of the **ir** regular meetings and make those recordings available online for a minimum of six months. As such, **when** regular school board meetings **are** **recordingsed**, they will be made available on the district's website for up to 12 months after their recording date for easy access and viewing by the public.

During the interim between meetings, the office of the superintendent, as board secretary, shall be the office of the board. The district's public records shall be open for inspection in the manner provided by and subject to the limitation of the law.

Meeting Recordings

Effective June 30, 2024, all regular and special meetings of the board at which a final action is taken or formal public testimony is accepted, except executive sessions or emergency meetings, **will be audio recorded**. Such recordings will be maintained for at least one year. The recording will include the **comments of the directors and the comments of members of the public if formal public testimony is accepted at the meeting.**