



## Poll: Most Democrats support curtailing free speech

*In a recent [You.Gov poll](#), 51 percent of Democrats are in favor of reining in First Amendment free speech freedoms ... if the speech is “hate speech.” That shouldn’t come as much of a surprise as (progressive) college administrators are those who typically favor the establishment, and enforcement of, campus speech codes. And these speech codes too often count as “hate speech” legitimate criticisms of topics such as affirmative action, gender issues, and immigration.*

Find the article here: <https://www.thecollegefix.com/poll-most-democrats-support-curtailing-free-speech/>

### **In real time - a practical example of what this means.**

Recently a dispute arose during one of our own South Kitsap School District Board of Directors meetings which pivoted on 1st Amendment rights. An attempt to make a case was made by the newest board director appointed to fill former board director Gattenby seat. Incredible as it may seem, this newly appointed director stated that board directors should not be writing letters to the editors of our local newspapers. To many this may sound like an extreme view that would be dictated by some banana republic dictatorship. This was not the first salvo from the current school board against one of their own board directors during the public meeting held on February 16, 2022.

Here is a video snip of the exchange provided by this board director at the board meeting which challenges our 1st Amendment right of free speech, which in this case is any board director's right to send letters to newspaper editors: <https://youtu.be/bPuAn5Wts18> Incredible as it may seem, this director that was appointed by the majority of the school board doesn't yet quite grasp this practical application of our First Amendment Rights.

### **School Board policy problems.**

The premise is sound that one director should not speak for the entire school board if the full board has not previously voted and agreed. In fact this is a standing school board policy. Whereas writing letters to the editors as a private citizen is everyone's right, including any private person to include any elected official. To sign otherwise as a board member would certainly give the public the perception that the letter writer is speaking for the entire school district board of directors. And this indeed discussed in board policies. This was the issue that the board chair raised. Problem is the board chair jumped to conclusion, apparently acting out in a retaliatory manner by his efforts to try to 'dress down' a fellow board member. Here is the link to the board chair's retaliatory statements against his fellow board director: <https://youtu.be/mItLq5RkFVQ>

What we clearly witnessed (if you watched the board meeting) was lesson hypocrisy. At issue before this 'dressing down' effort by the board chair was how the board chair signed for the board on a joint letter published just two days after the board's Town Hall community zoom meeting. Not all of the school board members saw this letter until after its hasty publication on the SKSD Website and Face Book pages two days after the Town Hall that was held on January 26, 2022. Here is a link to that statement: <https://www.skschools.org/about-us/news/default-board-post-page/~board/all-school-news/post/joint-statement-of-civility-and-respect>

The title of the statement is South Kitsap schools Joint Statement of Civility and Respect dated January 28, 2022. It is a good letter, a fine letter in fact but some felt it was a letter written to shame the community due to some behaviors during the Town Hall held on Zoom a few days before. The relevant problem here is also the fact that a school board director addressing himself as school board chair signed on with the rest listed on this letter. Fact is that the school board never reviewed or agreed much less voted to have the board chair sign for the board on this apparently co-sponsored letter. School board policy was clearly violated. The same thing that the board's chair accused a fellow board director of who actually submitted his letter to the editor as a private person/citizen and not speaking for the board.

## **Joint Statement of Civility and Respect**



Jan 28 2022

January 28, 2022

### **Joint Statement of Civility and Respect**

The South Kitsap School District is the heart of the South Kitsap community. Staff, students, families, and community members collectively determine what we stand for – that is the SK Way.

Each of us holds tremendous power in our daily interactions. The words we choose and the way we treat each other matter. We want our students to treat others with respect, kindness, and dignity and that same expectation should apply to the adults in our community as well. In the district, we believe in focusing on student success by embracing diversity and ensuring mutual respect. These beliefs must stretch beyond the classroom into our homes and into our community.

When we witness or take part in a hurtful exchange, it is easy to brush it off and think that the actions or beliefs of a few do not represent our community as a whole. Instead, we must acknowledge our differences. Our unique backgrounds, viewpoints, and stories are what make us who we are as individuals. They are also what make us who we are as a community. Let us strive to listen, seek to understand, and identify what we have in common.

Regardless of our differences, it is the responsibility of us all to show civility, respect and kindness to each other. Finding common ground may be difficult, but it is essential in order to grow and work together effectively. Only then, can we hope to move forward in a positive way.

Together we are South Kitsap!

Tim Winter, Superintendent

**Jeffrey Wilson, Board President** *\*Note the name of the school board president who signed on with others on this letter\**

John Richardson, SKEA President

Jacque Meddles, PSE President

Troy Grub, SEIU President

Barbara Pixton, SKAP

LaRae Madison, Coaches Association

As far as the claim made by the current board chair that the letter writing board director has extreme views, this is entirely different attack and insult by the board chair. During the board meeting the board chair did not seem to listen, nor did he seem to care for what he was told by the other board director. The chair was told that our local newspaper(s) editors often add words and also change the titles of letters submitted to the editor. Both papers that the board director's letter was published had added words and had changed titles of the letter. To me it is very clear that the board chair was grasping to draw a false equivalencies between his unlawful act of signing for the board on the civility letter vs the board director who submitted a letter to the editor addressing the civility letter signing with just his name and where he resided.

And then there was a surprising twist during the time. A fellow board director came to the aid of the director being attacked. The previous board chair succinctly explained to the current board chair that this very same thing had happened to him. When he had submitted letter to the editors, while on the school board, the editors or our local papers also added words to his own and they also changed titles of the letters he had submitted. Here is the video snip of the assist being given by the prior board chair: <https://youtu.be/ZFPG5lR4nF4>

The Chair obviously had a bone to pick with his fellow board director, but they were bones of his own making. It was hypocritical for the board chair to call out his fellow director with claims that he was representing the board in his letter to the papers. Obviously he did this to retaliate for being called out for signing for the board on the recently published: "Joint Statement of Civility and Respect" statement. He did in fact inappropriately and against board policy sign for the board on that statement. That the board chair signed on behalf of the board without the entire board having full knowledge or even voting to approve signing the letter a matter of record.

It is a good policy that one director cannot speak for the entire board. That particularly applies when a director is signing or speaking for the board of directors when there has been no vote, no unanimous consent by a majority of the board. However, what is done (or said) on their own time when identifying, as a private citizen is their business and 1st Amendment Right.

Here is the link to letter brought into controversy by the board chair as it appeared in both newspapers that was written by their fellow board director. Notice how the editor added words identifying the writer as a board member published in the Kitsap Sun. The words added were: "of which I am one," added by the newspapers editor. Here is the link and pasted text of the letter published in the Kitsap Sun:

<https://www.kitsapsun.com/story/opinion/readers/2022/01/31/south-kitsap-schools-should-listen-parents/9290683002/>

## South Kitsap schools should listen to parents

Jeff Daily, Port Orchard

Posted 1:09 P.M. PT January 31, 2021

### LETTERS

I am somewhat perplexed by the “civility letter” from the South Kitsap School District and the need for them to tell the public how to act when dealing with the school district and board. While civility is always correct in any personal interaction, I question the district’s place to tell people how to act. You can’t legislate common sense. Folks seem to have forgotten the danger of getting between any parent and their children.

I am also surprised by who signed the joint statement on civility. Mr. Wilson, board president, was apparently speaking only for himself as no emergency board meeting was held to allow the other board members, of which I

**am one**, to have an input on the letter as required by law. The union leaders who signed, all routinely bargain in secrecy so they can avoid the public eye. The superintendent says transparency is their hallmark but several comments reveal that parents don't know or understand why or what the district is doing regarding their children's education.

I thought the reason for the forum was to address parent and community issues and concerns without judgment. Educating parents is the job of the board and district; not defending policies as if parent concerns don't matter. From what I have heard and read, the perceived civility issue lies with many involved; not just a few. Afterwards, some parent comments questioned voting for district levy's and bonds when the district, school board, and union leader's perceived arrogance tells the community how to interact with those who educate their children.

*Jeff Daily, Port Orchard*

Fine below another link to the same letter that was changed, and then published by the only other local paper we have in South Kitsap - The Kitsap Daily. The highlighted words that identify Jeff Daily as a school board director were not in Director Daily's letter to the editor:

<https://www.kitsapdailynews.com/letters/sksd-has-no-business-defining-civility/>

## **LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

### **SKSD has no business defining 'civility'**

Monday, January 31, 2022 10:47am

[Letters to the Editor](#)

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**Jeff Daily**

**Port Orchard**

*Jeff Daily is a SKSD board director.*

### **Regarding public participation at school board meetings.**

The majority of this school board also doesn't seem to understand that the laws of our State do not permit this school board to condition who can speak and for the most part what they can say about others including board members, school staff, and school administration. These same State laws also mandate that the school board cannot require those who wish to give public comment supply their names, where they live, what they wish to make public comments on. These prohibitions cannot be imposed nor can they be enforced. This law clearly spelled out in the Revised Code of Washington. Find that revised code here: <https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=42.30.040>

**RCW [42.30.040](https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=42.30.040). Conditions to attendance not to be required.**

A member of the public shall not be required, as a condition to attendance at a meeting of a governing body, to register his or her name and other information, to complete a questionnaire, or otherwise to fulfill any condition precedent to his or her attendance.



Lastly a few more things that were discussed at the school board meeting held on February 16, 2022. Also a link to the first ever SKSD Board Virtual Town Hall held on January 26, 2022.

### **Regarding the Aspen Group.**

The advisements given by a contractor named The Aspen Group who were paid in excess of \$65,000 for their services is still advising the board for one more year. This is the same group and contract that still had a year to go but the new board chair wanted to 'scrap them' and move on since things had been moving to slow on the board's efforts to re-write policies and governance rules. That is until he was told the money on the remaining services for the next year would not be refunded.

Issues brought forth by the Aspen Group that were finally fully acknowledged by new board members were that the school board of directors must not be in charge of any standing committees. (Long Range Facility Planning Committee, Educational Materials Committee, etc.) It is supposed to be the school superintendent that manages long-term standing committees.

Another important take away from Aspen Group advisement is that the school board must add in their policies that the board of directors also be identified as the audit board for the board. To date, for the past two plus years it has only been on board director who has been reviewing warrants (bills being approved to be paid by the board during consent agenda). This means the board continues to be violating their own policies as well as state law. The entire board (Established as the Audit Committee for the board) are required review the details on warrants (bills) the costs that are being paid and approved by the board.

The board is now voting without full review of and approving payments of these bills for services and purchases that are much higher than any of can imagine. The board continues to approve these expenditures through the process of voting to approve them in consent agenda portion of the board meetings. Clearly they have no clue as to what they are approving and they can be individually held legally accountable for these failings.

The Aspen Group also advised that the entire board take part in determining the agendas for meetings, not just one or two board members and the superintendent as has been the practice of many past boards.

Here is the video snip of the exchanges between board members discussion the and other issues during the meeting of February 16, 2022: <https://youtu.be/SDvhV8Fmweg>



And finally, since the board meeting held on February 16, 2022 where the Open Public Meetings Act was briefly discussed. Here is the link to the document that Director Berg was kind enough to share with us all, especially for the three new board members who seem to have some difficulty in grasping the mechanics of these laws. <https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=42.30> Thank you Mr. Berg for your continued efforts to educate the new board members on the OPMA and other very important and relevant school board issues. A pity that the other board members don't create private websites of their own to help in educating their constituents.

Lastly, here is the link to the past South Kitsap School Board Virtual Town Hall held on January 26, 2022. SKSD Board 1st Virtual Town Hall: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nnph3EHQRVA>

There is a profanity warning. It is hoped that the board has not been discouraged from hosting future Town Halls. And very soon the board will be required to hold board meetings in person when the mask mandates are fully concluded. The public has also requested that when in person meetings begin again that the board continue to broadcast meetings on Zoom and to continue to let Zoom participants be a part of these meeting during the public comment portions of board meetings. After all, not all members in our community can get home in time to attend live in person meetings at 5:00.

What better way to show us that the board and the district can walk the talk about inclusion and wanting to hear from their constituents. Gaining much more trust by our community will of course be the key if they possibility hope to pass any future levies or bonds.

