

Unterrified  
Democrat  
Linn, MO  
Circ. 4593  
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Dear Editor, **241 800**  
I have attended several  
Osage County R-II School

Board meetings, but after attending the meeting on March 15, I feel the need to exercise my rights to speak out to a board that makes it impossible for a taxpayer to ask or tell them anything. It appears to me that this School Board has lost sight of the fact that the people of the Osage County R-II School District are the ultimate governors of public education in the district, and that the board is directly accountable to the people through the elective process. Not having an open dialog with these taxpayers has led to rampant rumors and a feeling of distrust for the board and their unknown agenda.

The Sunshine Law Manual from the Missouri Attorney General states: A public governmental body is permitted, **BUT NOT REQUIRED**, to close its meetings, records and votes when they relate to certain issues listed in Section 610.021. When a public body relies on one of these exceptions to close a meeting or record, it should bear in mind that the exceptions, serve no useful purpose, it only makes the level of distrust increase. Board members, you have

been elected to a position of trust in the operation of our school system, and the educational development of our children. It is time to try to reestablish that trust.

On March 15th, when you entered the library to a standing room crowd, you knew that these constituents were there to get information on what had been done to our school system and the reasons for the changes. Reading the Sunday Jefferson City Tribune, that most people had already read, about how other schools were dealing with budget problems was a waste of time. The people there did not care about another school's problems, especially when the board completely ignored the interests of the people in attendance.

I would hope that the Board Members would take a real look at the way that they have been doing business. And then work to reopen a dialog with the district stakeholders. We know that you have to make tough decisions, but would welcome the opportunity to be informed and involved. We share a goal of providing a quality education to our children and future generations. Changes to the current trend will have to start with you.

Dennis Gravedoni, Sr.