

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, October 17, 2022 10:04 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Letter



[REDACTED]

In an ideal world we would prefer Dana not know who wrote the email, however if that is not possible do what needs to be done. We are obviously comfortable with school board members knowing who we are. Feel free to use the letter below :)

I would like to preface this letter by stating that I am not here to disrespect any person or the Waunakee basketball program, rather I was asked to talk about my experience in my 2 years as a varsity basketball player. These experiences are 100% my own and absolutely on no behalf are represented by any friends, family members, or teammates. My experience in the Waunakee boys basketball program began in Little Warriors as a 6 year old like many other young kids. I had been to multiple camps, and training sessions throughout my youth career and was first coached by Dana playing club basketball for Wisconsin Swing as a 5th grader. Needless to say, I have been around as much as anyone. At this point I did not have a great relationship with Coach McKenzie and it did not worry me too much as varsity basketball was far enough away. As I got to the middle school age and was around Dana more as high school was approaching, it was the lack of proactiveness by Dana to build a meaningful relationship that was disappointing. Again, coming from a kid who was around and involved in the program as much as anyone, a relationship was non-existent. My first two years playing basketball in high school there was no change in Dana and I's relationship. I had known 2 coaches playing on freshman and JV teams whom I connected easily, and more deeply with in our short time together. Both of these coaches I had maintained steady relationships with the rest of my high school career. Personally, while it is a coaches responsibility to win games, it is a bigger responsibility to teach your players valuable life lessons we will take with us the rest of our lives. Simply put, there is no way to do this without connecting with your players. Now it is natural to think that in my 2 years on varsity the relationship would advance our relationship and I wish I could say it would. I was in the gym with Dana everyday during basketball season for 2 years and unfortunately to this day, I can say there is no change dating back over 10 years in the program. To put this into perspective I can definitively say that I have a better relationship with at least 4 football coaches (Pat Rice, Aaron McDonough, Steve Erato, Justin Acker) than I do with Dana. Mind you I never played a single snap of tackle football. I had spent countless more hours around Dana than the coaches and am 10 out of 10 times more comfortable going to talk to any one of these coaches first to talk about anything in life, sports, or more. I honestly can't say I have had a meaningful conversation outside of basketball with Coach McKenzie throughout my entire career. There have been many examples just on the court of his ability to not only lack in connections, but in leadership as well. A great example is the fact that Dana spends more time yelling at the refs in a game then coaching his own team. I talked about development of the players as people, and the immature message this sends speaks for itself. This visibly affected the players as well, there were significantly more players talking back to the coaches and refs lacking sportsmanship as a result of the example our "leader" set. When the team voiced our concern in a meeting for this exact thing in the '21-'22 season we were told that these actions would change. The change was minuscule. Trust was quickly lost and our ability as a team to communicate, and not get results was deadening. The whole experience was impersonal and came across as though my value as a person was not acknowledged. I feel as though I was given an opportunity to

express a voice of some who may not have the chance on my experience so I wanted to be as transparent as possible. Simply put Waunakee, as a community deserves better, for developing the youth in the coming years. If there is one thing that I have always felt misrepresents the high standards our community holds each other accountable for, it is the lack of proactivity in developing relationships in the basketball program.

Best



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