



Administrator, District_ <district_administrator@waunakee.k12.wi.us>

Public comments for tonight's meeting

1 message

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To: district_administrator@waunakee.k12.wi.us

Mon, Oct 24, 2022 at 3:39 PM

Waunakee School Board,

I am writing this letter in support of Head Men's Basketball Coach Dana MacKenzie! I am probably a little bit biased in this situation being that I am Dana's oldest brother, but I feel I have gone through many of these same experiences throughout my career. So I could not remain silent as I have seen my brother struggle with this for over 2 months!

I have extensive experiences in coaching and athletic administration throughout my career having been a high school basketball coach for 15 years, on the men's basketball staff at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee for 9 years and having coached AAU basketball for 5 years. I have also been a High School Athletic Director for 4 years. So this is not the first time I have seen a disgruntled parent/s.

You can do a search on the internet and find many articles of why Coaches, Athletic Directors, Administrators, Teachers and even School Board members are resigning or retiring today because of the influence parents are having in our schools. These parents even are labeled "helicopter parents"

Going back to when I played basketball in high school if I ever came home and complained about a Coach my Dad would always say "Well if you do not want to listen to the coach then I can find you a job to work at instead of playing basketball." That kind of put an end to those discussions in a hurry! What was never ever discussed was my Dad saying let me call some other parents and see how many of them MIGHT have issues with the Coach and then try to dig up as much dirt as possible to get him fired! We do have an election in a couple weeks but I find it very unfair to Dana and his staff (more so a blatant witch hunt at Dana) by a helicopter parent in Waunakee who has reached out to current and past parents (which I have confirmed with those parents) trying to convince them of the stories that have been proven false and try to dig up information against Dana. I am going to call this parent a 747 airliner instead of a helicopter parent, he has taken it to an entire different level of parent involvement!! And what I find most difficult to understand is that his child has NEVER played for Dana! And why is this happening now 3 weeks before practice starts?

Some of the allegations were downright despicable and were all proven false. One specific item that this 747 parent brought up last week was the a certain basketball player was not going to play this season because he didn't like Dana, The previous week when my brother and I were visiting my Dad in the hospital, Dana told us he got a text from this player saying he was not playing basketball this year. Dana went on to read the remaining portion of the text, Dana responded "Let's talk about this again after football season. Go win State Book! I love you! The player texted back "I love you to Coach!"

I'm no attorney but from what I have been told a defamation of character suit and other options are available and should be pursued. It is also my understanding that Dana has nothing in his Administration file going back 18 years of ANY complaints or issues!!!

I am not sure any of you were around 19 years ago to see what the Waunakee Basketball Program looked like. To refresh memories they were not very good and had a very poor youth program. It was also always stated you can't win at Waunakee in basketball because it is a football school.

Let's move forward 19 years and see what has transpired. Yes, Waunakee is still a powerhouse in football and I hope they win State this year! But the basketball program is now one of the elite programs in the state! The youth program and the 9-12 grade basketball teams are run first class, they win, they develop their players, prepare them for their next phase in their lives and to become great citizens in the community. I won't even go into the number of conference championships, regional championships, sectional championships, and WIAA State Tournament appearances Dana and his staff have accomplished.

I can't tell you how many people I have talked to throughout the area and state who tell me they envy the Waunakee Basketball program and wish they had what Waunakee has. Dana would never take credit for this, but he as the LEADER of probably the best high school basketball staff in the state has built this program from the ground up. As the sign states in the section of the Waunakee Fieldhouse where the youth sit at games "The Tradition Starts Here" I would hope this Board of Education and the Administration would not listen to a 747 parent and some helicopter parents trying to fire not

only a great coach but a great person who cares a tremendous amount about this program, his staff, youth coaches, the community and most importantly the past and current players that have made this program what it is. Dana is the LEADER of the Waunakee Basketball Program and there should be no question that he remains in that position!!!

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