

[REDACTED]

Mr. Pat Niekamp, Superintendent  
Mr. Ed Snyder, Principal  
Ft. Recovery High School  
400 East Butler St.  
Ft. Recovery, OH 45846


Dear Pat & Ed,

I had an opportunity to read the letter submitted to the two of you from parents regarding the boy's basketball program and felt compelled to respond. I will not deny that throughout the year there were times that inappropriate language was used during times of heated competition and frustrations but Joe and I are human and we all make some mistakes. Both of you know from being former coaches that sometimes it is hard not to get caught up in the heat of the moment and say things that you should not have.

I am very upset about the comments that the coaching staff has no coaching knowledge and that we are not trying to make the program any better. I have worked under several coaches during my time at Ft. Recovery and Joe has been the best and most knowledgeable coach for quite some time. I believe you have to know a little bit about coaching to get a team to the State finals and if you look at the records of all the coaching staff they are not bad. The staff has dedicated a large part of our life's and time into the program and are dedicated to put the best basketball team on the floor that is possible.

I realize that [REDACTED] has been a large target of the scrutiny and I agree that his actions are not always appropriate. [REDACTED] is like a roller coaster, one day up the next down and that is a result of his environment and that is something that is very hard to manage. We could have probably suspended him or dismissed him from the team and created a bigger problem for the community to deal with.

I do not agree with the comments that there was no discipline, that older players were allowed to pick on the younger players, and the coaches encouraged this through drills. I would like both of you to look back at your coaching days and think about if you were able to be there all the time to make sure the younger players were not picked on. I know for a fact that that the younger players have been picked on for years and witnessed numerous acts as a player that would be considered sexual abuse and physical abuse. I know if a coach witnessed any younger player being picked it was stopped. During the season, it was discussed with the varsity players about not using foul language and several times was addressed with them about spitting on the floor. I know I did not witness any players spitting on the floor during a game but not to say it did not happen. The comments about players drinking before games and peeing in a trash can was not



witnessed or even crossed any of our minds so I am not sure where that came from or who was involved. The drill "Michigan Break" was mentioned in a couple of the letters and the coaches did not encourage players to cheap shot each other but it is used as a toughness drill and playing in the MAC you need to be physical and tough. Marion Local is a prime example of that with their style.

As in the matter of Coach Long, he does a fine job. I would encourage the parents take a look at the past records of the class he had this year because this was the best record they have ever had in their career. I believe the parents need to take a hard look at the amount of time their child put in to their game on the off season before criticizing Coach Long.

I could probably go on and on forever but it would be wasting your time and mine. In closing I just want to say it is unfortunate that we live in a society today where parents run to defend their children and blame others when things are not going their way. I feel it is unjust to listen to strictly the opinion of handful of parents. I would hope before the administration makes a decision that they talk to some of the past players (like [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED]) and parents of players that are not complaining and get their opinion.

As far as the letters that were not sign I feel they mean nothing if they have enough gall to write them and criticize the staff they should have enough nerve to sign them. If the Administration feel I should not coach it is not going to devastate me if I never coach again at Ft. Recovery.

I coach for the kids and for my passion for the game; it is not for me or for the parents. I can tell you that it seems to me you will be fighting a losing battle because no matter what coach you have you are always going to have parents complaining and they have the power.

Sincerely,

Jeff Vaughn