

LYME-OLD LYME PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Small Schools, Big Ideas



*Challenging * Achieving * Excelling*

REGION #18

Regular Board of Education Meeting

June 6, 2018

Board Present: Diane Linderman, Vice Chair; Jean Wilczynski, Treasurer; Erick Cushman; Stacey Leonardo; Martha Shoemaker; Stacy Winchell

Absent by Previous Arrangement: Michelle Roche, Rick Goulding; Mary Powell St. Louis

Administration Present: Ian Neviaser, Superintendent of Schools; Mark Ambruso, Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School; James Cavalieri, Principal of Lyme Consolidated School; Michelle Dean, Director of Curriculum; Melissa Dougherty, Director of Special Services; Patricia Downes, Principal of Mile Creek School; Holly McCalla, Business Manager; Jeanne Manfredi, Assistant Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme High School; John Rhodes, Director of Facilities & Technology; Noah Ventola, Assistant Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School; James Wygonik, Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme High School

Others Present: Mary Roth and Olivia Hersant, RETA Co-Presidents; Phil Fazzino, AFT Representative; Brynn McGlinchey and Madeline Zrenda, High School Student Representatives; 55 Community Members from LOL

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Vice Chair Diane Linderman. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

II. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Mrs. Winchell made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Wilczynski, to approve the minutes of Regular Meeting of May 2, 2018; Executive Session of May 2, 2018; and District Budget Meeting of May 7, 2018 as presented.

VOTE: the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

49 Lyme Street, Old Lyme, Connecticut 06371

T: 860-434-7238 F: 860-434-9959 E: neviaseri@region18.org www.region18.org

III. Visitors

1. Memorial Day Essay Contest

The following 5th grade students were the finalists in the American Legion's Memorial Day Essay Contest:

1st Place – Max Novak (Lyme Consolidated School)

2nd Place – Justin Bonatti (Mile Creek School)

3rd Place – Hannah Johnston (Lyme Consolidated School)

The students were present at the meeting and read their winning essays.

2. Recognition of Students from Invention Convention

Nila Kaczor and Bill Eydman, Gifted and Talented Teachers, and Dennis Powers of the Mentoring Corp for Community Development recognized the following students for their entries in the Invention Convention.

Students Reaching Regional Competition:

Mile Creek School- Natalie Barndt, Shane Eastman-Grossel, Anna Eichholz, Abby O'Brien

Lyme School- Thomas Danford, Eli Goldberg, Ella Kiem, Peter Kuhn, Simon Karpinski

Middle School- Bridget Allan, Grace Colwell, Jacob Rand, Arber Hoxha

Students Reaching State Competition:

Peter Kuhn, Bridget Allan, Thomas Danford, Anna Eichholz, Simon Karpinski, Jacob Rand, Natalie Barndt, Eli Goldberg

Students Reaching National Competition:

Thomas Danford, Anna Eichholz, Simon Karpinski, Natalie Barndt; Eli Goldberg

3. Presentation of Scholarships and Peace Poster Contest by Lion's Club

Phil Parcak, representing the Lyme-Old Lyme Lion's Club, recognized four LOLHS students for their academic prowess, athleticism and community service accomplishments. The following students were presented with \$1,500 scholarships: Lauren King, Amanda Marsh, Emma Sked and Hannah Wisner.

Mr. Parcak also named Middle School student Nyla Goulis as the winner of the Lion's Club Peace Poster Contest.

4. CAS Scholar Leader Award

Mark Ambruso, Principal of Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School, recognized Aidan Ward and Ellie Wells for receiving the Connecticut Association of Schools' Scholar Leader Award. Mr. Ambruso spoke to the accomplishments of these two middle school students.

5. CABA Student Leadership Awards

Each year, CABA invites its member Boards to recognize outstanding student leaders at the middle and high school levels. The principals of each school are asked to facilitate the selection of the students based on a given set of criteria. Mr. Wygonik and Mr. Ambruso recognized the award winners and detailed their many accomplishments.

From Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School: Felse-Alexandra Kyle and Nihad Bicic

From Lyme-Old Lyme High School: Emily O'Brien and Gary Bocian

The Board and Superintendent presented the students with certificates in recognition of this honor.

6. CABA Communications Award

A representative from the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education was not present at the meeting so this agenda item was postponed to a future meeting.

7. Recognition of Retirees

The following teachers, who are retiring in June, were recognized by the Board for their years of service to the district:

Grace Bartlett, Elementary Teacher at Mile Creek School, 31 years of service

Mary Bradford, Elementary Teacher at Mile Creek School, 30 years of service

Myra Gipstein, School Psychologist at Center School, 18 years of service

Pam LaMesa, Social Studies Teacher at Lyme-Old Lyme Middle School, 20 years of service

Margaret Lupone, Elementary Teacher at Lyme Consolidated School, 22 years of service

Mary Bradford and Margaret Lupone who were in attendance were presented with a gift from the Board.

8. Public Comment

Mrs. Linderman reviewed the ground rules for public comment.

Various members of the public spoke on behalf of Kirk Kaczor, the LOLHS boys basketball coach, whose contract for the upcoming 2018-2019 season was not renewed by the administration. The following community members voiced their support for Mr. Kaczor by reading a statement or submitting a statement to the Board clerk for inclusion in the minutes: Cyndi Aird; Graham Aird; Jack Bocian; Jack Collins; Sean Collins; Raymond Doll; Olin Fredericks; Jeff Hartmann; Kim Pittsinger Hogan; Jocelyn Jenik; Quinn Romeo; Brady Sheffield; Richard Shriver; Andrew Tyrol; Aedan Using; Carina Using. These statements are attached to these minutes for informational purposes.

In addition, the following Region 18 staff members and/or coaches were also present to support Mr. Kaczor: Don Bugbee; Jennifer Burke; Aron D'Aquila; Bill Eydman; Phil Fazzino; Tim Gavin; Emily Macione; John McGannon; Barbara O'Leary; Randy St. Germain; Brian Trost; Lucy Trost; and Sarah Walsh.

Two students, Anna Catlett and Sam Fuchs, spoke to the success of the LOLHS Robotics Team with special thanks extended to the various mentors that volunteer their time and effort to the program.

Christine Wysocki, a retired educator and community member, asked that the Board rely on important personal characteristics such as trustworthiness in their decision-making on important issues that are brought before them.

9. Report from Student Representative

Mrs. Linderman thanked Madeline Zrenda for volunteering as a student rep to the Board for the last two year. Madeline will be attending Villanova University in the fall. The Board wished her the best.

Brynn McGlinchey and Madeline Zrenda reported on the following activities taking place at the schools:
At LOLHS: Last Friday was eighth grade orientation day; the eighth graders joined the high school students for most of the day. They were partnered up with a 9th or 10th grader, went to a class, participated in a teacher/student panel where they were able to ask questions, went to an activity fair and learned from high school students about all the opportunities they have to “get involved.” Finally, they held their first Class of 2022 meeting. Field Day was a huge success: the entire high school shared a barbeque together and then proceeded to enjoy some wholesome fun (dunk tank, ultimate Frisbee, flag football, yard games, tug a war, ping pong and karaoke). Elections were held for all classes and class officers were nominated. LOLHS hosted Old Saybrook, Ledyard and Waterford High Schools to learn about Holocaust survivors’ stories. This program included a presentation by Ben Cooper who served as a WWII combat medic and participated in the April 1945 liberation of the Dachau Concentration Camp. Morgan Greenho and George Dane won the Class S Tennis Doubles Championship. There are only four more class days left for the seniors. The seniors have had a great few weeks. The senior banquet was held last Thursday at Great Neck Country Club. On Friday, they traveled to Six Flags and tomorrow night is the Senior Awards Ceremony.

At LOLMS: May began with the first annual 8th grade lock-in with about 90% participation. The lock-in was sponsored by the PTO and was universally well-received by the students. The 2018 Smarter Balanced Assessment was administered with over 99% of the students participating in the assessment. In addition, the Upstanders Club sponsored a tree planting ceremony to emphasize solidarity of peace and safety in all schools. Also, a cohort of the 7th grade went on a trip to the Mystic Seaport, which focused on the Vikings and enriched the 7th grade ELA curriculum. The fourth school dance of the year was held, which was attended by over 100 students. The LOLMS Band, led by Carrie Wind, marched in the Memorial Day parade. On June 1, the 8th grade participated in EGO day during which the students spent the day at the high school in preparation for their transition to 9th grade. The 7th & 8th grade French students attended a field trip to the Florence Griswold Museum which served to enrich the world language curriculum. Tomorrow evening is the final choral concert of the year followed by the final band concert next Wednesday.

At Lyme Consolidated School: At last Friday's Town Meeting, the students and staff honored retiring kindergarten teacher Margaret Lupone. Two fifth graders, Max Novak and Hannah Johnston, were also recognized for winning the Memorial Day Essay Contest. The 3rd and 4th graders held a chorus concert yesterday and today the incoming new kindergarten students and their parents visited Lyme School and had their first bus ride. On June 7, the culminating event for the "Kids Marathon" will be held at LOLHS track. Lyme School had 75 students participate in the program with all completing 26.2 miles. A very special thanks to Bonnie Ambruso was extended for organizing and running this program for the students. On June 12, the "Acting Up Troupe" will be performing for the students. The topics that will be covered will be the dangers of spreading rumors, being kind and nice to new students, making good decisions when it comes to peer pressure and Internet safety. The 5th graders will be visiting the middle school on June 14. Field Day is scheduled for June 19. The 5th grade "Celebration" will be held on June 21.

At Mile Creek School: This week, Mile Creek students and staff are engaged in a fun-filled week of school spirit including: Crazy Hair Day, Pajama Day and Literary Character Day.

There are many field trips scheduled for the end of the school year, including:

- 2nd grade to Hammonasset Beach State Park with Bushy Hill Nature Center guides
- 5th grade to Lyme Consolidated with the Audubon Society docents for a nature walk
- kindergarten to White Sands Beach
- 4th grade to the Connecticut Science Center
- 5th grade to Sturbridge Village
- 5th grade to LOLMS for 6th grade orientation

Additionally

- June 6: Mile Creek School welcomed the Class of 2031 to their kindergarten orientation and bus ride.
- June 7: The second grade will hold its medieval concert.
- June 12: Mile Creek will hold a reading pep rally in partnership with the town library to kick off summer reading.
- June 13: Field day will be held.
- June 15: Mile Creek School end of school party beach party will be held.
- June 18: LYSB's "Acting Up" players will perform for the 4th and 5th grades.
- June 21: Mile Creek will hold its 5th grade promotion at 9:30 a.m.

In the Preschool Program: This month the preschool will be celebrating all of their accomplishments. The classes enjoyed an alphabet picnic with many foods representing the 26 letters of the alphabet. Miss Connecticut visited recently and read stories to the students. It was a grand occasion with tiaras and fancy clothes. The preschool will be hosting a second picnic this month. Middle school volunteers are invited to the teddy bear themed picnic when the students will create stuffed teddy bears. The preschool will celebrate the end of the year and the students transitioning to kindergarten on June 15.

IV. Administrative Reports

1. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Neviaser reviewed the June Personnel Report which reflected several vacancies to be filled for the 2018-2019 school year.

Mr. Neviaser reviewed the June Enrollment Report which reflected a total of 1285 students enrolled.

2. Business Manager's Report

Mrs. McCalla reviewed the Executive Budget Summary as of May 31, 2018. Fluctuations of note:
Employee benefits due to timing of invoices and increased costs of medical insurance and FICA.
Special Education due to increased tuition and transportation costs.

Mrs. McCalla reviewed the Contingency Maintenance Report which reflected a balance of \$8,447 as of May 31, 2018 with \$35,980 in new contingency spending since last month, mainly due to the water main break.

V. Educational Presentation

There was no educational presentation scheduled.

VI. Chairman & Board Report

There was no chairman's report due to Mrs. Roche being unable to attend the meeting.

VII. New Business

1. Tuition Student Request

Mr. Neviaser presented and reviewed two separate tuition requests for attendance at the Lyme-Old Lyme Schools for the 2018-2019 school year. One family was requesting the entry of a 9th grader to the high school and another family was requesting attendance for a 9th grader and a 4th grader.

MOTION: Mrs. Winchell made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Shoemaker, to approve the tuition student requests as presented by the Superintendent.

VOTE: The Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

2. Superintendent Appointment of Designee Per Policy 7250

Each year the Board is asked to appoint a designee(s) to act in the absence of the Superintendent as necessary. Mr. Neviaser explained that it is useful to have the Board designate two individuals for the rare occasions when both the Superintendent and Director of Curriculum are unavailable. Mr. Neviaser recommended the Board approve Michelle Dean, Director of Curriculum, and Melissa Dougherty, Director of Special Services, as designees for this purpose.

MOTION: Mrs. Wilczynski made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Shoemaker, to designate Michelle Dean, Director of Curriculum, and Melissa Dougherty, Director of Special Services, as the designees to act in the absence of the Superintendent per Policy 7250.

VOTE: the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

3. Participation in State and Federal Grants

Mr. Neviasser explained that each year the Board is asked to approve application for all state and federal grants. These include those for special education as well as remedial, staff development and other entitlement grants. A single motion authorizes the administration to apply for all that the District is eligible as well as any additional grants deemed appropriate by the Superintendent.

MOTION: Mr. Cushman made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Winchell, to authorize the Superintendent of Schools to apply for, receive and otherwise act as the legal representative of Regional School District No. 18 in connection with the following State and Federal Grants along with any other grants he deems appropriate:

Adult Education

Handicapped Preschool Incentive – Section 619 Education of the Handicapped Act

National School Lunch Program

Open Choice Attendance

Title I Improving Basic Programs

Title II Teacher and Principal Training and Recruiting

Title VI Part B of the Education of the Handicapped Act PL 94-142

Carl D. Perkins

School Transportation

Science and Technology

Investing and Personal Finance

VOTE: the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

4. Food Service Management Contract

Mrs. McCalla explained that each year the USDA and State of Connecticut require school districts to renew their food service management contracts. The district is under agreement with Chartwells until June 30, 2021; however, the district must renew the terms each year after receiving state approval.

MOTION: Mr. Cushman made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Shoemaker, to approve the food service management contract between Region 18 and Chartwells for the 2018-2019 school year.

VOTE: the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

5. Eastern Connecticut Health and Medical Cooperative

Mr. Neviasser reviewed the District's recommendation to join the Eastern Connecticut Health and Medical Cooperative in order to purchase health benefits for the Region 18 eligible employees because of the significant cost savings to be made vs. renewing the contract with Anthem Blue Cross and Blue Shield. Anthem's proposal increased health benefits significantly in the upcoming contract. With coverage through the cooperative and CIGNA, the percent increase is approximately 15.9 percent. It was also noted that this should also lead to more stability in rates moving forward.

Follow-up discussion included the advantages of this cooperative; the administration of benefits; solvency; the reliability of rates; length of existence of cooperative; and CIGNA plan design being in-line with what was offered by Anthem.

MOTION: Mr. Cushman made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Leonardo, to approve the following Resolution:

Whereas, Regional School District No. 18 ("the District") provides and makes available health, dental and prescription drug benefits to certain eligible employees, in accordance with applicable collective bargaining agreements, contracts and other agreements.

Whereas, the District wishes to join the Eastern Connecticut Health and Medical Cooperative ("the Cooperative") in order to purchase and provide such benefits;

Whereas, the District has reviewed the agreement forming and governing the Cooperative, along with its applicable bylaws, and seeks to adopt (and execute, if necessary) such agreement in order to become a member of and participate in the Cooperative; and

Whereas, the Board of Education for Regional School District No. 18 has determined that it is in its best interests to join the Cooperative in order to obtain cost control and efficiencies in its provision of benefits to eligible employees.

Now therefore, it is resolved:

- 1. That the Board of Education hereby adopts the above-referenced agreement, as presented;*
- 2. That as a result, the District hereby joins and shall become a full member of the Cooperative effective July 1, 2018, subject to all of the requirements, obligations and privileges of said membership; and*
- 3. That the Board of Education hereby authorizes the Superintendent of Schools to take any and all necessary action to join the Cooperative, to make any and all necessary contributions to the Cooperative, and to execute any and all agreements necessary to join the Cooperative*

VOTE: the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

6. Enhanced Security Lockdown System

The following background information was supplied by John Rhodes, Director of Facilities and Technology: As part of the district's continued efforts to increase the safety and security at the schools, the administration is proposing to enhance the existing lockdown communication system. This enhancement will provide the capability to activate a lockdown from any phone in the school district. Currently, a lockdown is initiated from the administrative office of each school. The current system activates a building lockdown alarm as well as notifying the police. The enhanced system will add text messages and voice messages to all responders and administrators along with the location of the lockdown initiation. This enhancement was not bid since it is integral to the existing phone system design and programming. It will be engineered, installed and programmed by the phone system service provider, Telspan.

MOTION: Mrs. Winchell made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Wilczynski, to Award Telspan the contract to install an enhanced lockdown communication system at all five schools for \$21,755.35.

VOTE: the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

7. Middle School Cafeteria Sound Dampening

John Rhodes provided the following background information on this agenda item: as part of the Middle School cafeteria upgrade project, sound absorbing materials will be installed to improve the room's environment. This part of the project will replace all ceiling tiles with high performance sound absorbing tiles and install 32 sound absorbing panels on the walls. Installation will be performed by the facilities staff.

Based on recommendations, Armstrong products will be used. These specialty sound absorbing panels are available through Armstrong distributors. In lieu of publicly bidding, quotes were obtained directly from the Armstrong distributors. Results of the quotes are listed below:

Central CT Acoustics	\$22,380.83
Kamco Supply Corp. of New England	\$18,687.47
Marjam Supply Company	\$17,807.36

MOTION: Mrs. Shoemaker made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Winchell, to award Marjam Supply Company the supply of sound dampening ceiling tiles and wall panels for \$17,807.36.

VOTE: the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

8. Policy Review

Mr. Neviaser and Mrs. Linderman reviewed five policies that were outdated and recommended for removal from the Region 18 Board of Education policies. Mr. Neviaser explained why each of these policies were outdated.

Mr. Neviaser and Mrs. Linderman also reviewed the Summer School policy. It was noted that the policy states "Lyme and Old Lyme residents are not required to pay fees for summer school courses" but that currently the District does charge a fee of \$265 for make-up credit and \$300 for enrichment credit. Mr. Neviaser recommended that the Board also remove this policy until such time as a new policy can be drafted.

Follow-up discussion centered on budgeting for summer school in the event fees collected do not cover the summer school program costs.

MOTION: Mrs. Shoemaker made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Leonardo, to approve the removal of the following policies:

Policy 3020 Provisions of Negotiated Agreement-Teachers

Policy 3030 Provisions of Negotiated Agreement-Administrators

Policy 3050 School Accountability and School Choice Under NCLB Legislation

Policy 3060 Adequate Yearly Progress; Parental Notification

Policy 3300 High School Graduation Requirements

Policy 3560 Summer School

VOTE: the Board voted unanimously in favor of the motion.

VIII. Old Business

1. Closing of LOLHS Project

The district is still waiting for the final change order from the State so there is no action required on this agenda item.

2. Report of Committees

- a. *Facilities*. Mr. Neviaser reported on the finalization of the solar purchase power agreement with Greenskies; Greenskies believes they will be able to start this project this summer.

Mr. Rhodes reported on an upcoming biological pesticide application to the athletic fields at the Lyme Street Campus called *Grub Gone*. Mr. Rhodes also reviewed relative State law on pesticide application at schools. The product, *Grub Gone*, is an organic biologic and not a prohibited lawn pesticide. This product is based on a naturally occurring microbe specific to dealing with the grub population. Conversations with DEEP representatives at the State level have taken place, and they have confirmed the application of this product is acceptable as it is not a lawn pesticide due to its biologic nature. Notification will be made to parents, students and staff with additional information placed on the district website. The Board discussed the importance of transparency even though there are no health issues associated with the use of this product. There was a suggestion to communicate this matter with the town leaders and have them post a notice on the town website with a link to the organic company that manufactures this product.

- b. *Finance*. No report.
- c. *Communications*. No report.
- d. *Policy*. No report.
- e. *LEARN*. Mrs. Leonardo reported that she attended the last meeting of the LEARN Board, which took place at the Marine Science Magnet School. The main area of discussion was budgeting.
- f. *CASFY*. No report.

IX. Correspondence

Citing several past meetings where there was much input from the community and students, the Board discussed various ways to improve the public comment section of their meetings so that the public feels their input is being heard.

Mrs. Leonardo presented a document from Joshua Grenier, a Lyme PTO member, which documented his thoughts on a new gym floor for Lyme Consolidated School and how to fund it.

X. Executive Session

MOTION: Mrs. Winchell made a motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Shoemaker, to move into executive session for the purpose of discussing contractual issues. The Superintendent was invited to attend the executive session.

XI. Adjournment

The regular meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m. upon a motion by Mrs. Winchell and a second by Mrs. Shoemaker.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Wilczynski, Secretary Pro Tem

Dear Mr. Neviaser,

I am writing to you about Coach Kaczor.

My son, Graham Aird is currently a freshman at Boston College but he graduated last year from LOLHS. Graham played on the LOLHS basketball team for 4 years and absolutely loved having Coach Kaczor as a basketball coach.. My husband and I totally disagree with the decision being made about not renewing his contract.

Graham never once had a negative thing to say about Coach Kaczor's coaching style. He felt he was always a super coach....he had strong knowledge of the game, he was positive and fair and that he always recognized players that worked hard and tried their best. He was a mentor to my son throughout his high school career. I know Graham was not alone....Coach Kaczor had such a positive impact on so many boys lives both on and off the court.

I wanted to let you know that we sat in the stands for 4 years at every single basketball game both home and away and never heard anything but positive comments from the parents of players about him as a coach. The only complaints that we heard were about playing time from certain parents but that happens on every team where there are limited players that are able to participate.

On a personal level Coach Kaczor set a beautiful example of a solid family structure with his wife and sons attending every game.

I want you to know that so many members of the basketball team. ...both current players and alumni are devastated by this decision. Many of the boys feel that one or two parental complaints are at the root of this decision. I truly feel that this sets a dangerous precedent for a school district. How can the integrity of a coach who has made such wonderful contribution to a sports program be challenged by the bitterness of a few people?

Warm regards,

Cyndi
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Hello, my name is graham aird and I am here to show my support for coach kaczor.

Mr. Kaczor has been my basketball and golf coach for my 4 years at LOLHS. During my countless hours on the court and on the course I have gotten to know mr. kaczor very well and his mentorship has molded me into the man who stands in front of you today. You see, mr. kaczor is much more than a basketball coach, he is a role model for us players. He values hard work, determination, selflessness, and grit... skills that are not only valuable on the basketball court, but also in real life.

Mr. Kaczor cares for each and every one of his players. He has been someone that I know many players, including myself, have trusted and talked to about issues going beyond basketball. When my grandfather passed away two years ago in February, Mr. Kaczor was there to support me and I always knew I could talk to him and that he truly cared about my well-being. He went as far as rallying the basketball team at the time to attend my grandfather's funeral. Mr Kaczor supported and reassured me during a very difficult time in my life, and I have no doubt that Mr Kazcor has reached out and supported numerous of his players in similar ways. This example is a testament to Mr Kazcor's "above and

beyond" attitude and his unwavering devotion to his players day in and day out.

I do not believe that I could have had a better role model throughout my years at LOLHS. Mr Kazcor has taught me the significance and payoffs of discipline, hard work, and dedication through his years of coaching me both on and off the court. Much of LOLHS basketball program's success is owed to the hardwork and determination of Coach Kazcor. I strongly believe the school board would be making a monstrous mistake if Mr Kazcor is displaced from his position as head coach of the LOLHS boys basketball team.

June 5th, 2018

Letter to the Lyme Old Lyme Board of Education

My name is Jack Bocian, I'm currently a junior at Lyme Old Lyme High School and a three-year member of the Lyme Old Lyme High School basketball team. Sadly, last week I was told that the Lyme Old Lyme Board of Education had decided to not renew Lyme Old Lyme High School Basketball Coach Kirk Kaczor's contract. I just wanted to make it aware to the Board of Education that throughout my high school basketball career, Coach Kaczor has shown complete respect to all his players and treated them or talked to them no different than he would to his own children and family. Coach Kaczor has always treated opposing team's players, coaches, and referees with the utmost respect. Coach Kaczor was also respected throughout the Shoreline Conference so much, that he was elected Shoreline Coach of the Year by coaches throughout the Shoreline Conference. Take away all the lessons I've learned from Coach Kaczor on the court, off the court is where Coach Kaczor has taught me to be a respectful and kind person to everyone in this world. Every single game Coach Kaczor has taught us to dress with class by having us wear a button-down shirt and tie, so we could represent Lyme Old Lyme High School with class. Throughout my last three years of high school whenever I needed to talk to anyone about something, I would talk to Coach Kaczor about it because he was easy to talk to, always listened to me, and truly cared about all his students and players at Lyme Old Lyme High School. Coach Kaczor was the key reason why our basketball team has always been like a second family to me. Throughout the season we laughed, had fun, and had good times together as a team. Coach Kaczor has always been my favorite coach and I always have looked forward to playing for him every upcoming winter. Coach Kaczor is a class act, and a great person. He loved his players just as much as his own family.

Thank you for taking time out of your day to read this letter and I hope you take it into consideration.

-Jack Ryan Bocian

BOE COMMENTS

Jack Collins:

- Town atty/personal comments
- Not lawyer for Kaczor/has own

I have had the opportunity to watch almost 100% of Coach Kaczor's games while 2 sons played basketball over 7 years. My boys had vastly different levels of playing time. He is a good coach. He is the 2018 Shoreline coach of the year. He is a good man. On occasion he's deservedly been issued technical fouls; he did not deserve this one.

I know some of you. For those I do not know, by way of background, I have resided with my family in Old Lyme for 34 years. In 1999 I, and many others, formed a PAC and devoted hundreds of hours to address consistently failing school budgets and badly deteriorating schools. We had 3 objectives: we replaced BOE members at the ballot box, set up mechanisms to ensure successful budget referendums, and helped passed school renovation projects ...and then faded away to let you do your job

Tonight, I offer 2 historical points + 3 comments...all in 3 minutes

1. Sen Robert Kennedy was assassinated 50 yrs. ago today.
2. Bobby Kennedy, one of my heroes, stood for all that right in America: human decency, fairness, and compassion.
3. Despite the current turmoil in Washington, in reflecting on Bobby's legacy I realized that these qualities we so admired are still found in selectman and finance and BOE meetings, here and across this country. It is these qualities which do make America great.
4. My 2nd historical marker concerns Milan Keser. Years ago he was non-renewed as the girls' soccer coach in East Lyme. His crime: he yelled a lot and chose to play sophomores and juniors who were better than seniors. Thus, this legendary coach whose name graces the soccer field in East Lyme, was unceremoniously booted from the job he loved because of some politically well-connected parents.

And here we are today.

Comment 1: In 2004 the General Assembly passed a law that gives protection to coaches. Experienced Coaches, such as Kirk Kaczor, who are non-renewed can appeal that decision in a manner prescribed by the Board. Sadly, unless your Board Policy Book is outdated online, District 18 has never adopted such a policy as mandated by law 14 years ago. To do so now, given Coach Kaczor's stated intention to appeal his non-renewal, constitutes creating rules and procedures after the fact, something lawyers refer to as ex post facto, and something the Connecticut Constitution, Article 1, Section 9 specifically prohibits. Why is it prohibited? ... because it's unfair. You can't change the rules afterwards. It's not fair; it's not decent; it's not who we and you are.

Comment 2: You are the conscience of our communities. It is you who represent the fairness, the compassion, the decency that has abandoned Washington, DC.

To that end, if any board member played any role via conversation, text or email in the decision to non-renew coach Kaczor, you have not been fair to our superintendent and frankly put him in an awkward position by your advocacy given your status as his employer, you have also likely placed the board in legal jeopardy by infringing on Coach Kaczor's

property rights, and you absolutely must recuse yourself from any further proceedings. Please note that it is your own Code of Ethics (policy 1400, paragraphs 10 and 17) which notes that you will refrain from taking action which will compromise the Board, and that you'll refer complaints through the proper chain of command

Comment 3: This brings me to my final and most important point. Board Policy 3600 is the main athletic policy. At the invitation of then-AD Rob Roach I worked with others on redrafting it many years ago. That policy recognizes and references the LOL Athletic Handbook. It is your policy. That handbook clearly establishes a chain of command for player complaints.

Why do we have such a policy? We do so so that players and coaches can directly resolve their differences ...differences which arise in every sport on every team across the country.

I submit that the educational value of the policy is so that, in this case, young boys can learn how to better resolve issues themselves, free of parental interference, on the way to becoming young men, to becoming the leaders and adults we all want them to become. This process was ignored. Those who did

not follow this well-stated process, whether on this board or at multiple levels within the school system itself, have failed these young men and certainly Coach Kaczor.

Thank you for your time and your service.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

My name is Raymond Doll. I am a student at Region 18's Lyme-Old Lyme High School, Class of 2020.

I have had Mr. Kirk Kaczor as my basketball coach for the past two seasons, and I sincerely oppose the decision to not extend his coaching contract. As a member of the varsity team both my freshman and sophomore year, I was able to see not only the change in team success, but also the positive growth in the sense of team morale and relationship development; none of which would be possible without the leadership of coach Kaczor.

During my first year under Coach Kaczor (the 2016-17 season), our team, although skilled, did not have the mentality needed to be successful. Our style of play showed that we lacked trust in each other, wanted success more for ourselves than our team, and lacked cohesion off the court. We had scuffles between teammates, players butting heads with coaches, and a severe lack of effort from some players in practices. We did not have the assets needed to become a successful team.

Coach Kaczor, like many players did, considered it a failed season. Being the stellar coach that he is, Mr. Kaczor made sure to address these problems going into the next season (2017-18). He first did so by asking for criticism at the end of said failed season. Upon being granted suggestions, he was quick to up the communication between coaches, players, and parents. In a meeting held for potential players weeks prior to tryouts, Coach Kaczor stated clearly the goals he had for the season, and how he would accomplish them. He highlighted the criteria by which play time would be determined as well as how players would be chosen for the team; choosing those who demonstrated characteristics beneficial to a basketball team such as a mixture of hustle, skill, coachability, work ethic, and team dynamic.

With these criteria in place and known to all who tried out, Coach Kaczor put together the team he thought would work best together, to a positive result. This required leaving off some players who had played in previous years. These decisions, *supported by the team as a whole*, ultimately benefitted the product put on the court last year. Not only were the effects felt on the court, but also in the hallways of school, at tough practices, or whenever one player or another needed help up. Not only was this team more successful in game due to the changes implemented by Coach Kaczor, but I speak for the team in saying ***we felt more like a family than a team because of them***. Coach Kaczor brought us together and focused us, doing something many coaches would be unable to do based on the toxic environment previously faced. Coach Kaczor, treating players with respect, honesty, and fairness, has built what once was a mix of self-oriented basketball players into a collective force willing to give their fullest effort for the betterment of the team. The success of 2017-18 was rooted in the team dynamic that we all shared, and the environment and atmosphere surrounding our team has come single-handedly from our coaching staff-led by Coach Kirk Kaczor. Please consider

the above when finalizing and/or reviewing the decision involving the renewal of Mr. Kirk Kaczor's basketball coaching contract.

Sincerely,

Raymond Doll
Old Lyme, CT
LOLHS Class of 2020

Throughout my high school basketball career, I've always had to fight for my spot. Mr. Kaczor taught me that nothing is just handed to you in life. You need to be willing to give everything you got to get something in return. This lesson is part of every aspect of my life, not just basketball. Mr. Kaczor I want to say thank you for teaching me what it takes to be successful in every part of my life. You are a great mentor and teacher but most importantly My Coach. This is exactly why I want Kaczor back. He continues to teach and mentor the young old Lyme community on lessons bigger than basketball. He is the coach this town needs and deserves.

-Olin Fredericks

June 6, 2018

Michelle Roche

Chair – Region 18 Board of Education

Old Lyme, CT 06371

Dear Chair:

I was disappointed and surprised to hear the news that Varsity Basketball Coach, Kirk Kaczor would not be offered a contract to coach the team during the 2018/ 2019 basketball season. As a parent of a 4-year player in the basketball program, I appreciated Coach Kaczor's leadership of the varsity basketball team. The last season was especially satisfying for me as Coach Kaczor did an exceptional job integrating the entire squad in the playing rotation, creating a good team atmosphere and allowing the players to develop strong friendships and memories which will last a lifetime. At the end of the year the team had matured into a hardworking, focused, caring group of young men. Coach Kaczor's peers also recognized the progress and awarded him the Shoreline Conference Coach of the Year.

Coach Kaczor taught my son that hard work, leadership and attitude matter. They matter for playing time in high school and they really matter in working on a collaborative team in a post college environment. Of course, there were a few times over Quinn's last three years that I did not understand why he was pulled from the game or sat on the bench. But, the Coach has the responsibility to select the team, set the line-ups and manage the in-game match ups. Managing disappointment is part of the maturation process for our young adults, they must work through disappointment and we as parents should only ask that our children are treated with respect and dignity. Coach Kaczor is not the most dynamic speaker, but I believe he treated the team with respect and dignity during the 2017/ 2018 season.

From a representation of the Region 18 student athlete, there is no showboating or over-the-top behavior on the Lyme Old Lyme basketball team under Coach's leadership which is admirable in today's over the top celebration driven sports culture. The admirable sportsmanship of the basketball team reflected Coach Kaczor's impact on the team.

In trying to understand the non-renewal for Coach Kaczor, I look to the Administration's evaluation process. I would like the Board of Education members to ask the Athletic Director why the parents of the 2017/2018 team members were not sent a questionnaire seeking feedback and input from the parents? In years past, we received a questionnaire from the Athletic Director and provided feedback on the season and the coaching staff. I would have assumed feedback from the 2017/2018 parents would have been a part of the decision to not renew the Coach? Why was the parent feedback from the 2017/ 2018 team not requested? The fall 2017 coaches were evaluated by the parents, why not the winter coaches? Also, does the Athletic Director issue written improvement plan for Coaches; was Coach Kaczor under a formal development program this year?

I ask that the Board of Education examine the Athletic Directors' coaching review process and publicly communicate and post the evaluation criteria within the next 30 days.

In conclusion, I support Coach Kaczor and request the district reconsider renewing his contract for the 2018/ 2019 varsity basketball season.

Thank you

Jeff Hartmann

5 Cord Grass Lane

Old Lyme Ct 06371

From: **Kim Hogan** kcphogan@sbcglobal.net
Subject: **LOLHS Basketball Coach**
Date: **Jun 6, 2018 at 5:33:23 PM**
To: **Me** kcphogan@sbcglobal.net

Members of Region 18 Board of Education, Ian Nevaizer, James Wygonik, Hildie Heck,

I am writing this with a serious concern about the decision we just heard about today. Apparently Coach Kirk Kaczur's coaching contract has not been renewed.

Speaking as a parent of a sophomore player, I am quite stunned by the news. The past season was a very promising one, with a young team, meaning few Seniors and Juniors. Two or three of the starters on the varsity team last season were sophomores.

Coach Kaczur ,Reigning Shoreline Coach of the Year, takes time with our boys. He engages and talks to them and tells them what they need to work on and what they're doing well. That is coaching.

Coach is not a yeller, but the players know what needs to happen. I believe that this budding team of boys, many of whom have been playing together on Park & Rec and club teams would surely benefit from the consistency of their coach. I challenge the decision and urge any parents or players to voice their opposition as well.

Respectfully,

Kim Pittsinger Hogan

Sent from my iPad

Text of email sent to Hildie Heck, Athletic Director, Region 18, on May 30, 2018:

Hi, Hildie!

I wanted to add my voice to those in support of renewing Coach Kirk Kaczor's contract to coach Varsity Boys Basketball at LOLHS.

Our family's experience with Coach Kaczor began in 2014, when we moved here from Philadelphia. Our son, George Doll, was inexperienced at the organized high school level, and we were pleased with the attention and guidance he received from Coach to get him in shape for the season, as well as to provide appropriate discipline and structure to be able to make a real contribution. As a Junior, George played primarily JV, with some Varsity time, and over the course of the season, those proportions switched as he was more able to integrate into that very strong team.

The 2014-15 Wildcats team was full of natural leaders and sportsmen, boys who had been playing well together in the Lyme-Old Lyme system since 4th grade. I believe Coach brought out the best in this group, and communication among the coaching staff, athletes and parents seemed excellent.

Over the subsequent two years (when George was a senior, and then our younger son, Raymond, was a freshman), we watched a cultural swing occur, where there seemed to be more infighting, more individually-centered play, even (according to our sons) bullying and interpersonal drama among players, and markedly less communication from Coach. Although the 2015-16 Wildcats again went as far as the Shoreline Championship game, 2016-17 was particularly frustrating, from a parent/spectator perspective. Even the handful of hard-fought wins were tinged with lackluster, individually-focused play. We were surrounded by grumbling parents as befuddled as we were about what was happening on the court as well as on the bench. The players were talented, but just not "gelling" as teams had in years past.

Thanks to the parent survey at the end of the 2016-17 season, we had an outlet for our concerns, and I was not hesitant to go over all of the above with Coach, in detail, on that instrument, as well as in person at various other end-of-season opportunities.

I was therefore very pleased at Winter Sports Info Night for 2017-18, on November 16 (which was NOT attended by all parents), when Coach addressed every one of these concerns and apologized to the parents for the previous season's individual versus TEAM play, and laid out his plans for how the upcoming season would be different. He acknowledged that "last year was a disappointment," and that he had allowed "selfish, not team-oriented," behavior, and that this would not be repeated. He took responsibility for his part in the lack of communication, and assured us that he would work to improve it this year, but that the process also involved the players themselves taking responsibility for communicating what was going on at practice and being accountable for their own actions. Effort and benefit to the team would determine play time.

What I feel we saw in 2017-18 was a complete turnaround. We got regular emails from Coach, practice and game schedules were sent home in a timely fashion, and the emphasis on teamwork showed on the court immediately. The fellowship and camaraderie were evident and playtime, in general, seemed to be more sensibly managed -- players were given time to acclimate and not removed from the court immediately upon committing an error, or missing a shot. Ray was excited to practice, excited to play, and thrived from the attention and opportunity he was given. From a spectator/parent perspective, watching games was enjoyable, and even the losses were more fun to see played than some of the wins from the previous season. The players were clearly encouraged to trust one another and work together, and were used in accordance with their strengths and given opportunity to develop.

Basketball is such a tough sport to coach -- the fact that there are only 5 players on the court, and only 32 minutes of game time, with so many more aching to get in & contribute.

And as parents, we are often not privy to the real actions of our children when they're out of our sight. They are often not reliable reporters of their own behavior. (This is not news to you!)

I'm no expert, and I know that Coach Kaczor is perhaps not the Coach everyone would want for their kids' only opportunity to play high school basketball. But unless we're home-schooling, we don't get to choose or influence everything in our worlds to perfectly benefit ourselves and our children. What Rich and I saw this year, and what pleased us so much, was Coach Kaczor's RESPONSIVENESS to constructive criticism, and real effort toward improvement and effecting actual change in what was becoming a toxic culture. He and Coach Fazzino really put their hearts into the game this year, and they made some tough decisions (which were supported by the team), and I think he deserves the opportunity to continue.

I plan to attend the BOE meeting on June 6 to advocate for Coach Kaczor's retention, and of course I am happy to speak with you at any opportunity should you need clarification or further information on anything I've mentioned here.

Thank you for your attention, and, as always, your commitment to our children's education and enjoyment through high school athletics.

Sincerely, and with gratitude,

Jocelyn Jenik
mom of Raymond Doll (LOLHS Class of 2020)
Ph: 215-681-4374
email: JJENIK63@gmail.com

To whom it may concern,

For every athlete who has played for coach Kazcor, basketball is more than just a game: it is a family. He has created a culture of brothers that would do anything for each other. Whether you are reigning Player of the Year, or the last one off the bench, a freshman or a senior, everyone on our team shares a connection. I have played under Kazcor when we have made it to a shoreline final and when we have failed to make it to the playoffs all together, but through thick and thin, he has cultivated a group that have an unbreakable bond with each other.

He has taught me the values of a good character, on and off the court; he has taught me perseverance through adversity; and he has taught me how to be an all-around good person. Then there is his on court coaching ability, which speaks for itself: reigning coach of the year, multiple shoreline finals appearance, perennial shoreline contenders, and a slew of all shoreline and all state players. A coach of his abilities only comes around once in a generation, and a person of his character, even less so.

It would be a crime to let someone who has helped shape so many kids to be better basketball players and better people go. The way he has cultivated, not only, winning basketball but also the futures of every student and a second family for every member of the team is irreplaceable. Our team, our school, and our community would not be the same if it was not for the impact he has had on each individual athlete. None of it will be the same if he ceases to coach.

-Quinn Romeo

To Whom It May Concern;

I have recently become aware of the decision not to renew Coach Kaczor for the 2018-2019 basketball season. This came as a surprise to me after the success that we had this season. After winning fifteen of our twenty regular season games this season, it is obvious that the future of our program is bright, as we only graduated one starter. It has become apparent that the problem with Coach Kaczor definitely does not arrive in the basketball area of the spectrum. I also believe it is a bit ridiculous that after nearly three weeks of trying to figure out why my coach is being let go, that I never heard any legitimate reason. Since no one has made it clear what the issue with coach is, I do not see why he is being let go. He is one of the most respectful men I have ever met in my life. I have played under more than 20 coaches in my athletic career, and I have never felt more valued, appreciated, and respected, than under coach Kaczor. After speaking with my current teammates, 17 of the current 18 said they were disappointed with the decision to let coach Kaczor go. After a very long discussion, we came to the conclusion that he has been nothing but great for us not only as players, but as individuals. Coach Kaczor tells us every year that we are his family, and he does a tremendous job of making it feel like a family environment every single day at practice. Not only am I speaking from my two years as part of the program, but I am also speaking on the behalf of my brothers, who both played all four of their years under coach Kaczor. After communicating this issue to both of them, they expressed to me how fun coach Kaczor made their experience, as well as how professional he is. My family has a combined ten seasons under coach Kaczor, and we have nothing but positive things to say about him. Ten years and not one complaint. If this does not show how great of a coach and person coach Kaczor is, then I don't know what will. I urge you to rethink your decision, as the next two years of our program will be two of the best in Old Lyme history as long as we keep our core together. By letting go of coach Kaczor, the basketball program is taking a huge hit. If you choose to follow through with this decision, it will do nothing but upset our players, maybe so much that some leave the program, while others will not want to be there as much every day. No coach will be able to replace all of the fun that I have had under coach Kaczor, in only two years. If the goal of our basketball program is to win as many games as possible, (which I believe it should be) then you are putting that goal in serious jeopardy by cutting ties with coach Kaczor. I hope that our school administration and board of education is one that respects majority. I say this because 17 of our 18 current players, including 14 of our returning 15 would like to have coach Kaczor as our head coach next year. There is no value that you can put on family, fun, and memories, and I have had and created all three of these under coach Kaczor in only two years, and plan on doing it for the next two as well.

Thank You,

Brady Sheffield

June 5, 2018

To whom it may concern:

I wanted to write this letter in hopes that the Athletic Director, Superintendent and Board of Education correct a horrible mistake that has been made and make the offer to coach Kirk Kaczor to continue in his important role for the boys' basketball program at Lyme Old Lyme High School.

I know of the coach's actions, values and affect on the character of our children through the eyes of my children, their friends and other adults in the community. I fully support him in his role as a Varsity boys' basketball coach and request that the apparent decision not to renew his contract be reconsidered. I fear there was not sufficient information obtained in this most recent decision process and know first-hand that players on recent teams have never been consulted about their thoughts and considerations of their coach outside of the coaches themselves.

With two sons in the program, my observations of coach Kaczor and his impact on the boys he is charged with span four seasons.

In the first season, I give Kirk an A. Perhaps this was the easiest of them all with four strong senior players on the team, all with impeccable work ethic and high standards of mutual respect and great skills.

In the second season, I give coach Kaczor a B. There were signs of a faltering culture within the team which I attribute to unmet potential, wavering respect for team mates and extracurricular activities that were contrary to team rules. I also saw some signs of consequences for off-court actions, but these were subtle and perhaps difficult for anyone other than a parent to see and the coach's approach appeared to be directed at the team in general and therefore ineffective at the individual level.

By the third season and the start of my second son entering the program, the culture of the team slid into a toxic environment where there was clear lack of mutual respect among the players. There were some bright spots but for the most part, the lack of collective team character resulted in them falling apart on the court and a miserable season for those of us watching from the stands. I give coach Kaczor a C for this season. Something had to be done, and with a focus on collecting feedback at the close of the season, my expectations were then that we may see some changes.

Much to my delight, there was a change. My fourth season with a son in the program was a complete turn-around and I give coach Kaczor a B+. The culture of the team was different. Players had mutual respect and they built on each other to play well and win games, together. I believe he took the feedback from parents and solicited feedback from his players to formulate his plans. He clearly set expectations in advance and openly, and he was consistent throughout the season in administering consequences for actions for all involved regardless of their status on the team.

I say B+ and not an A because there is some question of his return and thus there must be some reason it was decided not to renew his contract. I can not fathom what this may be and thus am left with the rumors and stories floating around in the community which simply make very little sense.

Nonetheless, I pray that you will do the right thing, investigate further, consider the voices of the players past and present, and see for yourselves what a positive affect this coach has had in developing the character of our young athletes. What other role in high school sports is more important than the development of strong character in our children?

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Richard E Shriver

Dear Board of Education Members,

My name is Andrew Tyrol. I was one of the two captains for my class, and I'm here to represent the class of 2013. Kirk Kaczor is nothing short of an exceptional coach. His accolades speak for themselves. In his first year as a head coach for Old Lyme, he won a state championship. He has not missed the playoffs in his 15 years as a head coach. In my 4 years, he made it to the conference finals twice, including a win against Valley whose 2011 team could be considered the best team the shoreline conference has seen—going undefeated including a state championship win.

Put the numbers and the resume aside, Coach K is a genuine, competitive guy—often times jumping in to run 16 and 60's with the team, playing 1 on 1 with players he wanted to see develop, and accepting nothing but your best effort. Think about what the purpose of high school is—To prepare you for college or your vocational career. Kaczor pushes for student success both in the classroom, outside the classroom, and on the court. He makes every player on his team build character. If you aren't going to put in the effort then you don't earn playing time, you don't earn your spot on varsity, or you don't earn your spot on the team. As this issue was presented to me—I made a connection to, yet again, the real world. Every year, regardless of where you work, you are evaluated based upon your performance of the prior year. If your numbers don't stack up, you're not showing improvement nor a desire to be where you are, then the company will find someone who is willing to work their tail off in that position. In other words, you get cut.

Every year, Kaczor expresses that it's the single most difficult thing that he needs to do. The reason being, is that Mr. K wants to help everyone. He wishes he could keep everyone and offer more than the 4 days of tryouts to grow and improve. The problem with this wish is that it

will never come true. It's inevitable that you must make cuts—even at this small class S school. For those of you that have played high school basketball; you have to understand how much space is on the court, how much time is given for practice, how many baskets you can shoot at. The unfortunate truth is that you really can't have more than 20 kids on the team. At some point, there are too many players. You can't maximize any players potential with that many players standing on the sideline.

As for my personal relationship with Mr. Kaczor, I credit him with pushing me and giving me experience with teaching and coaching. I am an elementary teacher. I taught 4th grade up in Boston this past year. I aspire to be a high school coach within my next 5 years. I realized I could be a good coach and educator one spring when Kaczor gave me the opportunity to coach with him. He took me, essentially as an intern, twice a week over to an elementary school in Essex and we coached kids ranging from 2nd grade to 5th grade. I learned how to gain command of a crowd, how to voice my opinion, and how to scaffold information. I fell in love with teaching because of this opportunity that I was given.

This job is not easy. Coach K is able to scaffold drills and skills to lower level players who need more time to develop, while still able to provide ample opportunity for the growth of his best players. This ability to diversify his "Coaching plans" is impressive to say the least. This job is not easy, but Coach Kaczor makes it look easy. He breeds success from his student athletes. He breeds competent, hardworking, and determined young men, who graduate high school having the necessary tools to excel in the real world: Not from taking AP English, not from taking intro to psych, but from learning how to fail honorably, lose with dignity, and win humbly.

Kirk Kaczor embodies the characteristics of an outstanding high school basketball coach. He has nothing but respect from past and present players, which is why you see such high attendance and support here tonight, and support from those past players who no longer live here but sent letters and emails in support. He has EARNED his spot as Lyme-Old Lyme's High School Basketball coach and it would be disheartening to hear otherwise.

Sincerely,

Andrew Tyrol

Dear Board of Education, Mr. Nevaiser, and Ms. Heck,

My name is Aedan Using and I am a student in the class of 2020. I have also been a member of the Varsity Basketball Team for the past two years. It has recently come to my attention that Mr. Kaczor's coaching contract has not been renewed. This news has come as a huge surprise to many of the players Mr. Kaczor has coached, myself included. There are countless things you look for in a coach; leadership, comprehensive knowledge of the sport, a good communicator, the ability to motivate and bring individual talent and personalities together as a team along with many other things. For the people who have had the privilege of playing basketball under Mr. Kaczor, he has shown all of these qualities. This past season, Mr. Kaczor coached our team to unbelievable success. Coming off a 6 win/14 loss 2016-2017 season featuring practices that lacked player motivation as well as lack of chemistry between players, Mr. Kaczor took it upon himself to make sure that the previous season's woes would not carry on into the 2017-18 season. By asking for constructive criticism from every player and parent, and acting upon what was said to him, Mr. Kaczor led our team to a winning season, and more importantly sky-high team chemistry and focused practices as well as communication as a whole. Because of this, Mr. Kaczor rightfully won the honor of Coach of the Year for the Shoreline Conference.

I cannot close without stating that, though basketball is a sport where team is far more valuable than any individual, Coach Kaczor has also impacted me individually in a powerful way. He constantly reminds all of us that we are family to him and as the son of a single mother, Mr. Kaczor has stepped in as a father-figure/mentor in my life. He has taught me how to be the best I can be and I will carry the lessons he has taught me both on and off the court for the rest of my life. He has been someone I can talk to about anything, basketball related or not. On top of being one of the biggest role models in my life these past two years, Coach Kaczor has helped me grow exponentially as a player whether it is staying after school with me to watch game film, having the tough talks with me when I need to accept responsibility for my lack of performance on the court and giving me a pat on the back when I needed it as a young player starting Varsity as a freshman. One of the best lessons he taught all of us this year was that sometimes tough decisions need to be made for the good of a team and we got to see the benefit of our coach's courage in not taking the easy road. These are the lessons that are arguably the MOST important.

When it comes down to it, I have some opportunities when it comes to schooling and I can't say it any clearer than that it is my relationship with Coach Kaczor and the team that he has created, my second family, that made

me stay until now. I hope that you realize the tremendous value that Coach brings to the school, the athletic program, and to his team that you must not have known about until now and come to see that continuing his contract is the only responsible thing to do at this point and certainly would show that this Board represents the majority and not the minority. Thank you for your anticipated time and consideration.

Aedan S. Using

Good afternoon Hildie and Principal Wygonik,
You may or may not know that in the 6 years since we have moved to Old Lyme, I have sent countless emails to teachers and the schools for the sole purpose of commending the amazing environment that we are lucky enough to be a part of. I have never had a reason to write anything else. That being said we received the news that Coach Kaczor's contract as the varsity basketball head coach will not be renewed.

I have spent the weekend consoling my son who is in nothing short of shock. I cannot possibly comprehend what could have conspired to allow for something like this to happen and this email is my first attempt at exploring what needs to be done. This team loves their coach and he has taken a group of boys and created a cohesive team that could and should dominate the shoreline for the next two years, not to mention what he has done historically for many young men who I have spoken with over the last several days. I realize that some complaints have been made and unfortunately, those complaints seem to have taken on more weight than they should have in comparison to the tremendous positivity of this team, their coach, and the vast majority of the parents. There were concerns that had been brought forth last year were addressed by Coach K and his efforts to take responsibility and make changes were noted by all.

I will keep this relatively short, but I will say that my son has been encouraged and recruited by Ivey League Preps in CT and MA with scholarships to further his talent in basketball and possibly prepare him for the next level. I was present for these meetings and when I put the ball in Aedan's court, so to speak, he said "Mom, I am not willing to give up what Coach Kaczor gives me. He is teaching me to be a leader, to have confidence in my ability, and to be a good kid, on and off the court. I want to stay in Old Lyme because of him." I personally am sure it is these very traits that allowed Aedan become the 1st Team All-Shoreline and 2nd Team All-State player that he became this year as a sophomore. Having attended a CT Ivy prep in the Founders League for sports myself, I know what those schools have to offer both academically as well as athletically in comparison. I also believe Region 18 provides Aedan with a strong educational environment so I left this important decision up to him. Along with the academics, the community and prospective families want a school that is competitive athletically. My son will obviously not play in the NBA, and who even knows about college but don't we want to keep the athletes that so often have the opportunity to leave our community for private

competitive athletic and academic schools. Coach Kaczor did just that for my son. I know there is a big PR push to get students to come to LOL, and families to move to the area. Unfortunately, occurrences like this put a black mark on otherwise positive environment. It is important that we look at a strong athletic program that promotes positivity, leadership, team-play, and a competitive spirit, as the battle to please all parents is a losing one and this is exactly why many great coaches choose to no longer coach for districts where these are the circumstances.

We will gain so much by keeping this team and their "Shoreline Coach of the Year" as their leader. 100% approval is not realistic, nor is it even possible for any leader. Great coaches often need to make decisions that are unpopular, but they make them for the good of their team. Thank goodness Coach thinks enough of his responsibility to these boys to do what may be seen as unpopular by those on the outside looking in. I am sure he expected to be supported by his leaders and did not think he would loose his job over it. We look forward to expressing our concerns and to having our voices heard at the upcoming Board of Education Meeting.

Please contact me with any questions.

Thank you,
Cariña A Using
(Aedan Using's mother)