



# HALDANE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OFFICE

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Diana Bowers, Ed.D.  
*Superintendent of Schools*

Linda B. Dearborn  
*Secretary*

February 5, 2018

Dear Parents & Community Members:

Recently, the Haldane School District has been dealing with an issue with the Putnam Valley School District that relates to situations that have occurred over the past few years. A series of instances surfaced that included both our Boys' and Girls' Basketball teams, as well as Haldane community members that had to deal with the problematic behaviors that infiltrated our sporting events.

Over the past few years, there have been circumstances where spectators at the games did not show the appropriate level of sportsmanship and inflamed tempers that shifted positive sporting events to negative ones. Once a pattern of problematic events emerged, we chose to intervene and make it a teachable moment. Our High School Principal, our Athletic Director and I met with the Putnam Valley leadership and brainstormed solutions. At the culmination of the meeting, we decided to invite the teams to practice together and share a meal as a way to build friendships and promote a positive relationship. Regrettably, at this event, three Putnam Valley students went into the girls' locker room and found a phone which they used to take pictures – one of which was very inappropriate. The pictures were then sent to a number of our female students using the same phone.

When dealing with these unfortunate circumstances, we were uncomfortable with the response from the Putnam Valley School District. In response, we sent letters of trespass to all Putnam Valley students who were involved in the locker room situation and barred them from the Haldane campus.

This year, we were asked if two of the boys, who Putnam Valley considered less culpable, could play on the Haldane campus. Our answer was no.

Due to the opposing interchange that followed, we needed to decide how to deal with the state of affairs in a way that would be fair to our students, would not inflame the situation for our

*The Haldane School District will prepare all students to succeed in an ever-changing global society*

students' sake, and, most importantly, would not victimize our female students once again. We considered every possible outcome including cancelling all games with Putnam Valley.

Our Haldane administrators and coach met for a number of hours to consider solutions that would give us the best possible outcome to a no win situation. If we cancelled the games, our students would be punished for the behaviors of others. We considered the greater good of taking a stance, but that would have given very little solace for our senior players that would miss two of their last few High School games. We met with the parents from our Boys' Basketball team and the students within our Girls' team. Our Coach and Athletic Director met with the Boys' team. For better or worse, we made a decision that we felt was in the best interest of our District. We knew there were negatives with all of the potential solutions and agreed on the "best" of the "worst" choices.

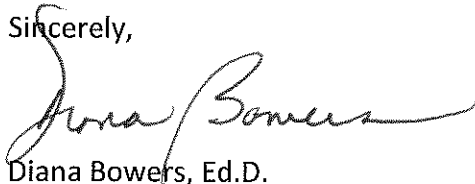
For the girls' games, we barred the boys in question from attending and asked Putnam Valley to do the same. For the boys' games, we played both our home game and Putnam Valley's home game at a neutral site and limited the spectators allowed at the game.

We are sharing the information with you because a local reporter is about to share intimate details about the situation that was provided by an individual not affiliated with our District. I wanted you to hear the information from us. We know that some of you will not agree with our response, however, you should know that we believe that we made the best decision we could in this untenable circumstance.

Please know that everything we do at the Haldane School District is with the best interest of our children in mind. Our Board of Education left the decision-making to the administrative team, as is the appropriate protocol in student-based scenarios.

We truly wish that these occurrences had not happened and there was no need to send this letter. We thank you in advance for your understanding.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Diana Bowers". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Diana Bowers, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools