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July 22, 2026

Doug Burge, Superintendent
Zillah School District
213 Fourth Ave.
Zillah, WA 98953

Re: Zillah High School Boys' Basketball Program

Mr. Burge:

As you requested, I investigated allegations of misconduct within the Zillah School District Boys' Basketball Program. This letter summarizes the steps taken in my investigation, the allegations of misconduct, and the facts gathered in the course of my investigation.

A. Summary of Allegations.

- **Allegation 1:** Zillah Boys' Basketball coaches allowed inappropriate activities to take place during team dinners or team functions.
- **Allegation 2:** Zillah Boys' Basketball coaches consumed and allowed volunteers to consume alcohol in front of student athletes at team functions.

B. Documents Reviewed.

- Written Statement from Student Name(s)/PII
- Written Statement from Student Name(s)/PII
- Written Statement from Student Name(s)/PII
- Written Statement from Student Name(s)/PII
- Written Statement from Student Name(s)/PII
- Written Statement from Student Name(s)/PII
- Written Statement from Student Name(s)/PII
- Written Statement from Michael McCullough
- Written Statement from Mario Mengarelli
- Pictures provided by Student Name(s)/PII
- Videos provided by Student Name(s)/PII

Self Insured Administrators/Risk Managers

- Text messages provided by Student Name(s)/PII
- Text messages and media posts provided by Student Name(s)/PII

C. Witnesses Interviewed.

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------|
| • Student Name(s)/PII | Teacher/Parent |
| • Student Name(s)/PII | Student |
| • Michael Gonzales | Teacher |
| • Michael Torres | Middle School Principal |
| • Student Name(s)/PII | Teacher/Parent |
| • Amanda Thomas | Teacher |
| • Jennifer Spicer | Teacher |
| • Jeff Charbonneau | High School Principal |
| • Ryne Phillips | High School Assistant Principal |
| • Justin Irion | Assistant Superintendent |
| • Lance Den Boer | Athletic Director |
| • Student Name(s)/PII | Student |
| • Student Name(s)/PII | Parent |
| • Student Name(s)/PII | Parent |
| • Student Name(s)/PII | Student |
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| • Student Name(s)/PII | Student |
| • Student Name(s)/PII | Parent |
| • Student Name(s)/PII | Parent |
| • Michael McCullough | Assistant Coach |
| • Justin Alcala | Volunteer Coach |
| • Sebastin Godina | Assistant Coach |
| • Student Name(s)/PII | Student |
| • Student Name(s)/PII | Parent |
| • Student Name(s)/PII | Parent |
| • Student Name(s)/PII | Student |
| • Student Name(s)/PII | Parent |
| • Student Name(s)/PII | Student |
| • Mario Mengarelli | Head Coach |

D. Summary of Evidence Gathered.

- **Allegation 1:** Zillah Boys' Basketball Coaches allowed inappropriate activities to take place during team dinners or team functions.

Student Name(s)/PII, Parent/Teacher and Student Name(s)/PII, Student:

Mr. Student Name(s) reported that he became aware of potential hazing activities through communications with his son, Student Name(s)/PII, and conversations with other students. He explained that prior to a team function, Student Name(s) described receiving a Snapchat video depicting students being shocked with a dog collar while shooting basketball free throws. He said Student Name(s) also reported in a follow-up message that the collars were “charged up and ready to go.” He understood this to mean the activity was planned in advance of the team event.

Student Name(s) described attending the team event where the dog collar activity occurred. He said the participants were instructed to hold or wear the collar and they were subjected to shocks administered by Coach Mengarelli during free-throw attempts. He reported that he personally wore the device on his neck and hand and described the sensation as painful. He said, “Kind of just like, you could feel it go down like your toes, just like a tingling feeling and it just kind of like wakes you up a little bit.” When asked about the pain level on a scale of 1 to 10, Student Name(s) said, “Um, we’ve done worse. The shock collars were kind of like all talk, I feel like, but it was, it did hurt. I’d say like a, like 7.” I asked Student Name(s) what had been done that was worse than the shock collars and he said, “Honestly, the worst is probably when Mario is like drunk and he’ll like roughhouse us and find like our, like mainly wrist pressure points and that, that is definitely the worst or when Eric, our like police officer, coach will like squeeze you, then Mario will just start doing other stuff to you. Yeah, those are, those are probably the worst. We’ve done other stuff like, the cold plunge is really bad, too, but yeah, that one’s probably the worst, even though the other stuff sounds bad, I’d say that one is probably the worst. Because that one actually leaves you, when Mario hurts you, it actually leaves you like bruises, and you’re actually, like, sore the next day, and that kind of stuff.” He said if they submit to the pressure points and the joint manipulation, “then it’s not as bad as if you try to stop him. Then if you stop him, it’ll just keep on going, do it worse and worse.”

Student Name(s) further reported additional activities at team functions and trips. He described events in Port Angeles where students were shot with BB guns, including in a root cellar and during other challenges, and stated that he was shot shortly after exiting a confined space with teammates. He said he was chased by Coach Mengarelli with a BB gun, which caused him to fall into vegetation and he sustained marks on his legs. He said he was shot in the “butt, calf, back, I’d say not really the head as much.” He stated that one of Coach Mengarelli’s rules was not to aim for the head or windows. He said the BB guns would just be laying out, “and anybody could just go around shooting each other. Mainly him (Coach Mengarelli), though, and the other coaches would have them.” He stated that every BB gun shot left a bruise. He said none of the silver metal BBs ever penetrated the skin, “but it would leave a bruise,” that would last “I’d say week and a half, week.” He said the first incident he had with Coach Mengarelli and a BB gun was his freshman year. He said he had missed a half-court shot, and “if you missed, then you’d get shot at team night, but that like, always happens. That was just kind of like a...normal.” Mr. Student Name(s) said, “That was his (Student Name(s)/PII) first, and I remember him being upset, scared. Why do I have to get shot with a BB gun? I don’t want to get shot with a BB gun.” I then clarified with Student Name(s) that the incident happened last year, as he was currently a sophomore at the time of our interview.

During a follow-up interview with Mr. Student Name(s) and Student Name(s)/PII. They provided me with pictures and video evidence of the Port Angeles trip. Student Name(s) provided additional information about the trip while we reviewed the pictures. He stated that Coach Mengarelli had a BB gun during the

Port Angeles gathering. He said [REDACTED], a Port Angeles player, was “trash-talking Mario” and then tried to hide from him. He stated that Coach Mengarelli chased [REDACTED], [REDACTED] went into the basement or attic area, and Mario pointed the gun toward him upstairs in the shop. He identified other Port Angeles players in photographs, including [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], although he did not know [REDACTED]’s last name. He said there were “a lot of other Zillah players” present, but the exact number was not specified.

[REDACTED] reported additional activities included being woken by disturbances, the tent being flipped, and the use of crabs or environmental stressors during team gatherings. He said when the team first arrived in Port Angeles, they went to a “nude coffee shop.” He said it was one of the first things that occurred after arrival, and before they set up tents. He then described the overnight events at the residence they camped at. He said it was mainly Coach Mengarelli flipping tents. He said, “It was me, and all the seniors staying in one tent, then that was the tent that Mario flipped over, and nobody else in all the other tents helped us. So, I remember we got really mad and then flipped someone else’s tent.” He said, “it was just Mario that did our tent, and then we took everyone else’s and flipped. There were three people staying in another tent, and we flipped theirs and then went back to ours, and they didn’t do anything back. It just was kind of like Mario did ours, we did theirs, and then we just stopped.” He said the crabs that were placed in his tent were large dark red crabs, which would match the description of Red Rock Crabs. [REDACTED] said, “And then that Saturday night was pretty bad. We didn’t get any sleep because Mario was just drunk and doing stuff to us all night. Flipped our tent over, started like punching us, then what else did we do? Oh, because nobody ever like tries to hurt Mario, because it’s always the opposite, and one of our players decided to try and shoot Mar’s BB gun and see how he would react to it. And that was like really bad because then he was...” I then asked [REDACTED] who shot Coach Mengarelli. He said it was [REDACTED] Student Name(s)/PII. He then continued to tell me, “And then he just would run around shooting us with his BB gun all night. Because I remember the very first thing, too, when we first got there, the coach’s house that we were staying at, he had like an underground cave, and Mario was like, seemed all like chill and was like, go and explore, go and explore, and then he kind of like, trapped all of us inside of it and just started shooting his BB gun, just nonstop.”

I looked into the claim from [REDACTED] Student Name(s) that the team stopped at a nude coffee shop or bikini stand in Port Angeles. There are no nude or bikini coffee stands in Port Angeles. During the follow-up interview, [REDACTED] Student Name(s) gave me additional information about the coffee stand. He said he did not think it was in Port Angeles. He recalled it was likely in another town and remembered it being near a Chick-fil-A, but he did not remember the name of the town or the coffee stand. I asked him about what route they took to Port Angeles. He described the route generally. He said they did not go over the pass and instead went “all the way around to Mount Rainier” or through the “Naches way,” then continued toward Port Angeles. He initially wondered if the town might have been Auburn, but I said Auburn would have been an extremely long way if they went through Mount Rainier. He then said he thought it was somewhere between Enumclaw and Port Angeles, but the exact location was not specified. Based on my research of their possible route, information from [REDACTED] Student Name(s) and later Coach Mengarelli admitting to going through a coffee stand near a Chick-fil-A, I was able to determine a likely location, which is named Bikini Baristas. Further details on that are found in the Coach Mengarelli interview summary in this report.

During the follow-up interview with [Student Name(s)] and Mr. [Student Name(s)] [Student Name(s)] provided additional information about what happened with the tents during the Port Angeles trip. He discussed a video involving his tent. He said he and other students had been inside the tent, and he identified himself and other students in the footage. He said Coach Mengarelli and Mr. [Student Name(s)] destroyed the tent, but when a still image or video segment was reviewed, he clarified the person I first thought to be Mario was [Student Name(s)]. Mr. [Student Name(s)] added he did not want to speak for [Student Name(s)] but said [Student Name(s)] had told him that coaches were inside filming, laughing, and talking about what was occurring. [Student Name(s)] said the students had been asleep or “all like asleep” and estimated it was about two hours after they had shot, but the exact time was not specified. He also identified a separate video connected to a cave area. He said it was not the moment when someone was shot with the BB gun, but it was approximately twenty to thirty seconds before. He said he believed the entire team may have been present, but he specifically recalled seeing [Student Name(s)] and [Student Name(s)]. He did not specify all students present.

Mr. [Student Name(s)] stated that [Student Name(s)] had shown him a video showing marks on [Student Name(s)] legs. He said [Student Name(s)] initially explained he had been chased, had fallen into a bush, and had marks on his legs. He then said [Student Name(s)] elaborated the same day and reported Coach Mengarelli had chased him with a BB gun, he slipped or fell into a bush, and he believed the marks may have been from poison ivy or something similar. The exact plant or cause of the marks was not specified. He said the video showed [Student Name(s)] legs and he agreed to send it through his legal counsel.

[Student Name(s)] told me that Coach Mengarelli regularly kept rattlesnakes at his property and used them during team gatherings to scare players, particularly [Student Name(s)] who [Student Name(s)] said was known to be afraid of snakes. He described Mario throwing or placing snakes on players and chasing players with them. He also stated that on the Wednesday of state basketball that year, Coach Mengarelli handed him a rattlesnake that was “almost dead,” but still moving, gave him a knife, and told him to kill the snake and remove the rattle. He said he killed the snake with the knife and removed the rattle, but later lost or left the rattle behind. He said he did not know whether the rattlesnakes had been altered in any way or whether their mouths were taped shut, but he believed a person could have been bitten. He said he was “not really scared of that kind of stuff as much. He’s, yeah, he doesn’t really scare me with the snakes as much as he does everybody else.”

[Student Name(s)] also discussed a photograph of [Student Name(s)] with a snake. He said he believed it was a bull snake and recalled the image was from when he was in approximately fifth grade, and [Student Name(s)] was in approximately seventh or eighth grade. He said he had the image on his iPad and remembered it during the prior meeting. He said he was not present for that event. The date and geolocation for that image were not specified, and [Student Name(s)] agreed to check whether that information was available.

Mr. [Student Name(s)] stated that he did not personally observe these events, but documented them based on his son’s accounts and communications with others. He reported raising concerns with school administrators and union representatives regarding activities he believed constituted hazing. He stated that some events were recorded and shared via Snapchat, but he did not personally receive or retain those recordings.

Mr. [Student Name(s)] said that he did not have a direct conversation with Coach Mengarelli about the specific hazing activities at the time they occurred. He stated that his concerns were communicated to school administration instead. [Student Name(s)] likewise did not report any direct conversation with Coach Mengarelli regarding the activities, and he did not report observing any admission or denial by the coach in response to these concerns.

Mr. [Student Name(s)] stated that recruiting concerns were part of the broader context surrounding his concerns about the basketball program. He stated that he had previously raised concerns about alleged improper transfers, fake addresses, and recruiting activity involving players from other districts, and he believed those concerns contributed to prior retaliation against him, including the loss of his cross-country coaching position. He identified [Student Name(s)] as someone whose name had been raised in connection with recruiting and stated that Mr. [Student Name(s)] coached a spring league team with players connected to the Zillah program. He stated that Jeff Charbonneau asked him about recruiting and other community members, including a Sunnyside coach, allegedly had information or documentation related to Coach Mengarelli recruiting players. He described the recruiting issue as part of what he viewed as a broader team culture involving favored relationships, outside influence from parents and coaches, and administrative awareness or support of questionable athletic practices.

Mr. [Student Name(s)] told me that after he raised concerns informally with district administration, information about his concerns spread quickly within the basketball community, and [Student Name(s)] experienced social exclusion and pressure from peers, parents, and others connected to the program. He said other students asked [Student Name(s)] whether his father was trying to get the coaches fired, and [Student Name(s)] began losing friendships and being excluded from basketball-related activities. He described examples including players and parents allegedly rallying at an AAU spring league game, comments being directed toward [Student Name(s)] about being on JV and not making varsity, [Student Name(s)/PII] ending their tennis doubles partnership, and [Student Name(s)] later being removed from team-related communications. He also reported that signs supporting the coaches were placed in locations [Student Name(s)] would see, including near their road and school routes, and police contact related to [Student Name(s)] taking signs contributed to his concern that [Student Name(s)] was being intimidated. He stated that he believed these events reflected retaliation and that [Student Name(s)] was being socially and emotionally affected because Mr. [Student Name(s)] had raised concerns about the basketball program.

Mr. [Student Name(s)] also stated that he did not attend the team banquet because he was teaching driver's education. He reported that [Student Name(s)] attended the banquet and later told him Coach Mengarelli opened the banquet by saying words to the effect of, "I know there are people in here that hate me and want to see me get fired." He stated that a parent named [Student Name(s)] responded by yelling, "Fuck those people." He said he later raised concerns about those comments with Mr. Charbonneau, Mr. Gonzalez, and Mr. Irion because he believed [Student Name(s)] was already experiencing social pressure and loss of friendships after Mr. [Student Name(s)/PII] concerns about the basketball program became known.

Mr. [Student Name(s)] and [Student Name(s)] told me about a negative interaction with Mr. McCullough. Mr. [Student Name(s)] said there was a recent AAU game in Toppenish where [Student Name(s)] experienced "a lot of trash talk." [Student Name(s)] said Mr. McCullough was in the stands and spoke negatively toward him throughout the game. He said Mr. McCullough commented whenever he touched or

dribbled the ball and yelled for a technical foul after a play involving the ball coming through the net. Mr. [Student Name(s)] said his parents also observed the conduct and stated that Mr. McCullough waved and gestured “go home” after the game. He said [Student Name(s)] did not say anything back that he observed, although he acknowledged [Student Name(s)] was upset at the end of the game. He also reported that a coworker, later identified as Eric Torres, spoke with Mr. McCullough afterward and said Mr. McCullough attributed the conduct to [Student Name(s)], a former athlete sitting near him. He said he, [Student Name(s)] and his parents believed the voice and conduct were Mr. McCullough’s, based on their familiarity with him from basketball. He stated a referee noticed tension during the game, but the referee’s name was not specified. When asked about an allegation that [Student Name(s)] mouthed or mumbled words toward Mr. McCullough during the handshake line, [Student Name(s)] denied saying it. Mr. [Student Name(s)] said Mr. McCullough had been in the stands, not in the handshake line, an estimated fifteen yards away.

Picture of marks on [Student Name(s)] legs during the Port Angeles Trip:

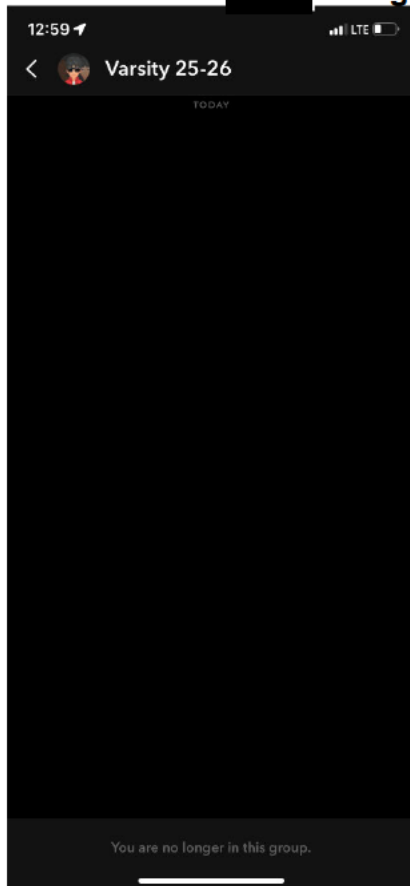




Picture of the inside of ^{Student Name(s)/PI} tent during the Port Angeles trip:



Screenshot of [Student Name(s)] being removed from the Team Snapchat:



Michael Gonzales, Teacher:

Mr. Gonzales explained that he became aware of potential hazing concerns through a report from Mr. [Student Name(s)]. He said Mr. [Student Name(s)] approached him with concerns about “some hazing-type things” involving the basketball team. He clarified that his information was limited to what Mr. [Student Name(s)] relayed and that he did not independently observe any of the reported conduct. He reported that Mr. [Student Name(s)] described possible activities involving “shock collars,” which Mr. Gonzales understood to be used “as a game,” though he indicated Mr. [Student Name(s)] did not specify details about how or when they were used. He said Mr. [Student Name(s)] also mentioned a situation involving BB guns, where “kids are being shot,” but Mr. Gonzales said no additional detail, including timing, context, or participants, was provided. He stated Mr. [Student Name(s)] referenced students grabbing an electric fence, though he noted uncertainty about whether this was described as part of a game, and confirmed that Mr. [Student Name(s)] did not provide specifics regarding the circumstances. He explained he did not ask Mr. [Student Name(s)] to expand on these reports and instead redirected him to district administration. He said he advised Mr. [Student Name(s)] to document his concerns and take them to Superintendent Doug Burge. He also stated he personally met with administration and relayed that the concerns might warrant further review. He stated there were limitations in his knowledge and he did not gather additional facts beyond what were initially reported.

Mr. Gonzales did not describe any direct interaction with Coach Mario Mengarelli regarding hazing allegations. He did not report asking the coach questions or receiving any response from him regarding these concerns.

Michael Torres, Middle School Principal:

Mr. Torres stated his awareness of potential hazing-related activity came through secondhand information shared during his role as a middle school principal. He said during a school dance on or about March 19, 2026, Mr. Gonzales advised him that Mr. [Student Name(s)] had raised concerns about a team event. He stated the concern relayed included a report involving a “shock collar or something like that that was being used” during a basketball team gathering. He clarified that he did not witness the activity himself and relied on the information as it was conveyed to him. He said he did not engage in further fact-finding regarding the reported activity at that time. He stated he contacted the school district administration shortly after receiving the information and relayed that there had been a report involving a team event and a shock-type device. He described his response as limited to reporting the concern, due to the potential involvement of students. He did not report conducting any independent review, observation, or verification of the alleged activity.

Mr. Torres reported no additional first-hand observations of activities at team dinners or team functions. He stated that Mr. [Student Name(s)] later spoke with him about concerns regarding the basketball program, but those comments were limited to recruiting and did not mention shock collars or similar activities. He confirmed Mr. [Student Name(s)] did not raise hazing-related concerns during that exchange.

Mr. Torres did not report having any direct discussion with Coach Mengarelli regarding hazing activities or the reported shock-collar incident. He stated his involvement was limited to relaying secondhand information to district administration and did not include conversations with Coach Mengarelli about the reported conduct.

Student Name(s)/PII, Teacher/Parent:

Ms. [Student Name(s)/PII] stated that she became aware of concerns related to team activities involving Coach Mario Mengarelli through conversations with other adults and secondhand information from students. She said she did not file a formal report with school administrators and described her discussions as informal conversations with Ms. Spicer and Ms. Thomas during lunch. She said she first heard about the situation from Mr. [Student Name(s)] who approached her privately and expressed concerns about how players were being treated. She told me that Mr. [Student Name(s)] described activities involving a “shock collar” and referenced additional conduct involving a BB gun. She said Mr. [Student Name(s)] expressed concern regarding the treatment of players and referenced [Student Name(s)]. She said she did not recall all the details of the conversation but remembered that the concerns focused on how players were treated, rather than solely on playing time. She said she did not personally observe any of these activities.

Ms. [Student Name(s)/PII] stated that her own children were reluctant to discuss the situation. She said one of her sons, [Student Name(s)/PII], admitted to being shot with a BB gun but minimized the event and described it as “no big deal.” She said her sons, [Student Name(s)] and [Student Name(s)/PII], were very uncomfortable talking about the issues with Coach Mengerelli. She said the boys shut down and did not want to be responsible for the coach being fired. She said they were also concerned about not being played if they provided a statement. She said she could not determine whether participation in activities, including the shock collar, was voluntary, because her children were reluctant to provide details. She said her concern increased upon learning the shock collar may have been used as punishment during basketball

activities. She said she knew about the handling of rattlesnakes and the ice bath, and those activities did not bother her. She said the shock collar thing is a punishment. She said she could not get the boys to tell her whether they put it on voluntarily. She said it was used if they missed a free throw, then they got shocked. She said the fact that it is a punishment is a whole other level for her, and she is not happy.

Ms. [Student Name(s)/PII] said the parents are not allowed to speak to the coaches, or they never get to play. She confirmed that the boys only communicate through Snapchat. She said her boys are not popular boys and do get left out sometimes. She said basketball is not their life, and they have other things that matter to them. She said she heard from Mr. [Student Name(s)] that Coach Mengarelli had posted about the shock collar in advance. She said she asked her boys but could not confirm due to their reluctance and the possibility they were not in the chat. Her primary concern was the use of the shock collar, and the boys downplayed it. She said she does not know why they got shot with a BB gun.

She stated that she had no direct observations of the alleged activities and did not witness any team events in which the conduct occurred. She stated that to her knowledge, middle school students were not discussing the issue. She said she intended to ask her children for additional information, but had not obtained further details at the time of the interview.

Ms. [Student Name(s)/PII] did not report any direct interaction with Coach Mengarelli regarding the alleged activities. She said she had not raised concerns with him and had not observed or heard any statements from him addressing the reported conduct.

Amanda Thomas, Teacher:

Ms. Thomas stated she did not personally observe any activities at team dinners or team functions. She said her awareness came from a lunchtime conversation approximately “a week or so after the state tournament,” during which Ms. [Student Name(s)/PII] raised a hypothetical scenario involving alleged activities at team events. She said the scenario referenced activities including “shock collars, BB guns,” and other unspecified actions at team functions. She stated that this information was secondhand and discussed among staff as hypothetical, rather than based on her direct observation. She told me the lunchtime discussion involved Ms. [Student Name(s)/PII] and Ms. Spicer. She said Ms. [Student Name(s)/PII] introduced the topic and later indicated she had asked her children about the allegations. She said Ms. [Student Name(s)/PII] stated her children confirmed that events like those described had occurred but characterized them as “not a big deal.” She indicated that this information was relayed during the group discussion and that she had not personally witnessed it.

Ms. Thomas further reported that during the conversation, participants speculated about the information's origin. She said Ms. [Student Name(s)/PII] suggested the information may have come from [Student Name(s)] who then told Mr. [Student Name(s)] “and I’m assuming that [Student Name(s)] told [Student Name(s)] and [Student Name(s)] told [Student Name(s)].” She described this as an assumption made during the conversation and not based on confirmed knowledge.

Ms. Thomas said after the lunch discussion, she shared the information with Mr. Gonzales during her planning period. She stated she provided the information because of his role and potential involvement in addressing staff-related concerns. She confirmed that Ms. Spicer was present during this discussion. She did not report conducting any follow-up or

independent review of the alleged activities and said further conversations on the topic were primarily “rumor mill” and not based on verified details.

Jennifer Spicer, Teacher:

Ms. Spicer reported her awareness of potential hazing-related activity came from a single lunchtime conversation and was not based on personal observation. She stated that Ms. [Student Name(s)/PII] approached her and Ms. Thomas with a hypothetical question involving a team night scenario where “you shoot a basket, and they miss, and you get shocked.” She described the discussion as general and hypothetical, stating it did not include details regarding location, timing, or individuals involved. She stated the lunchtime conversation was limited in scope and did not include any confirmed facts or specific reports. She said no names, specific events, or locations were identified, and the discussion remained focused on how a parent or coach might respond if such information were received. She said the purpose of the conversation appeared to be advisory in nature, rather than reporting a confirmed event.

Ms. Spicer told me that following the conversation, she and Ms. Thomas shared what they had heard with Mr. Gonzalez. She said they presented the information as something they had heard and wanted to determine whether it was already known. She stated she did not conduct any further review or seek additional information after reporting it. She said she had no additional involvement with the matter after the initial report. She stated she did not participate in further discussions and had been advised not to talk about the issue. She stated she had no additional knowledge about whether the described activity occurred or where it may have taken place. She said she did not interact with Mr. [Student Name(s)] and only saw him at staff meetings.

Jeff Charbonneau, High School Principal:

Mr. Charbonneau described his involvement in the matter as limited to administrative awareness and response to concerns raised by a parent. He said he had been with Zillah School District for seventeen years and has had multiple interactions with Mr. [Student Name(s)] and Coach Mengarelli. He said, “So, for this specific season, I heard no real complaints during the season from [Student Name(s)] or otherwise.” He said Mr. [Student Name(s)] had reached out to him a couple of times via phone, which led to their sit down meeting on April 1, 2026. He stated he did not personally attend any team dinners and did not directly observe any activities. His knowledge of alleged hazing-related conduct came from a report by Mr. [Student Name(s)] in late March and from their meeting on April 1, 2026. He said, “What was challenging about that particular interaction is that there were some things that he told me that he did not want me to share with others, that he felt like, hey, let’s not make this into a big deal just yet, but I think he was kind of planting some seeds there, to make sure that I was aware.” He stated Mr. [Student Name(s)] raised concerns regarding the use of a shock collar at a team event. He stated this was “one of the primary concerns” communicated to him during their discussion. He indicated this information was not based on his own observations and was relayed to him as a reported issue. He stated that he took the concern seriously, due to the potential for student harm and reported it to district leadership for further review.

Mr. Charbonneau said confidentiality was also one of Mr. [Student Name(s)/PII] “major concerns.” “He was reaching out to me because I’ve been a former supervisor of his, because I’ve been when I was teaching, union president, and there were some things that happened throughout there,

so he had a lot of trust in coming to me. And he felt that confidentiality was being breached all over the place.” He said Mr. [Student Name(s)] was worried that Mr. Irion had leaked information, and “what I tried to talk with [Student Name(s)] about was, [Student Name(s)] I am aware that you’ve actually had similar conversations with other people, right? And so, trying to pin this all on Justin is a little bit challenging there, right? It does sound like you’ve had some conversations while at the middle school with some other parents, or some other folks down there. So, while I understand you have some concerns, I don’t think that Justin Irion is the only one who’s ever received those concerns from you, right?” He also said recruiting was a “major sticking point” for Mr. [Student Name(s)] as well. Mr. Charbonneau stated as he reviewed his notes, that Mr. [Student Name(s)] was also concerned about transfer students coming in and taking away playing time and he questioned whether the transfers were being scrutinized appropriately. Mr. Charbonneau explained the process to him and said, “We do our due diligence.” He said, “He’s like, ‘I know this person isn’t always at their home, or I know this person isn’t always there,’ and I’m like, [Student Name(s)] do you know that, or do you think that? I mean, how do you know it, or how do you think it?’ And it really came down to who he thinks, right? But those concerns, if anytime somebody has concerns, I’m going to hear him out. Shared those concerns with Doug, make sure that he knew of these things.” He said Mr. [Student Name(s)] shared a lot of concerns, “There were rumors about the coaches, but actual complaints about parents, right?” He said Mr. [Student Name(s)] specifically complained and alleged that Mr. [Student Name(s)] was recruiting players. He said he told Mr. [Student Name(s)] that Mr. [Student Name(s)] is a parent, not an employee, and the school district does not encourage or endorse Mr. [Student Name(s)] and his alleged behavior. He said he asked Mr. [Student Name(s)] if he had any information about the coaches being involved in the recruitment process. “And he (Mr. [Student Name(s)]) goes, ‘Well, the coaches know about it.’ I’m like, [Student Name(s)] there’s a big difference here. Are the coaches actively doing this work?’ And he says, ‘Well, I don’t have any proof of that.’ And I said, ‘Well, okay.’ But he says, ‘It just looks bad.’” He then explained to me that Mr. Den Boer, the athletic director, followed the WIAA guidelines for transfers and eligibility for student-athletes who transfer into the school district.

Mr. Charbonneau told me that while he was working to schedule interviews for my investigation, parents shared with him that Mr. [Student Name(s)] had not attended the team banquet, but [Student Name(s)] had. He said parents shared with Mr. [Student Name(s)] “If you were that concerned about the behavior of a coach and the program and whatnot, why are you sending your kid without going yourself, right?’ Just comments like that have been ripping through the community.”

Mr. Charbonneau said he asked Mr. [Student Name(s)] if [Student Name(s)] was being bullied at school. He said Mr. [Student Name(s)] told him, “No, absolutely not. The boys are basically not talking to him, right?” He said, “Well, hey, but I can’t force people to talk to people. I can’t force people to be friends with people.” He said he asked about [Student Name(s)] being bullied because that was one of his biggest concerns as the principal, and said, “I don’t believe that’s happened. There’s a lot of people that are concerned about [Student Name(s)] to be honest.”

According to Mr. Charbonneau, the information regarding the alleged use of a shock collar was also communicated through other secondary channels within the district. He stated that staff from the middle school raised similar information after hearing it through parent or community communications. He said due to mandatory reporting obligations, the district determined the concern required a formal investigation, regardless of its source. He did not report any direct knowledge of how the device was used, who participated, or whether any

activity was directed or supervised by Coach Mengarelli. He did not observe the event and identified limitations in his knowledge, saying that the information was based entirely on reports, rather than firsthand observation.

Ryne Phillips, High School Assistant Principal:

Mr. Phillips described his involvement as limited to administrative awareness and general knowledge of program practices. He stated he had not attended team dinners and did not personally observe activities occurring at those events. He said his awareness of concerns related to team nights arose only recently, after concerns were raised within the community. He stated he had never heard complaints or concerns about team dinners prior to the recent allegations. He said, "Not, never heard a grumbling about a team night until just recently," indicating no prior awareness of issues involving team activities at those events. He stated that team dinners were common practices in school programs and were often hosted by parents to provide meals and foster team connection. He stated he did not know the specific details of what occurred at team dinners and did not describe any firsthand knowledge of a dog collar or similar activities. He said any information he received regarding alleged conduct was secondhand, reporting that he received "third-hand information" about alleged activities at team nights. He did not identify specific participants, conduct, or supervision related to the reported events.

Mr. Phillips said he had not received reports of bullying, hazing, or intimidation among team members in relation to team activities. He said he had heard of no conduct that "would constitute... bullying or intimidation or harassment." He also did not report any concerns from students or staff indicating forced participation in activities. He said he had not seen Mr. [Student Name(s)] or [Student Name(s)] being treated differently. He said, "I know [Student Name(s)] is upset about kids moving in. I believe that the root of all of this is his son, [Student Name(s)] who is a good kid. Unfortunately, the nature of the beast of today's athletics, not just in high school and college, their kids are moving to play sports, and some of those kids that have moved in have proved to be better in our coach's eyes, and they're getting more playing time than his kid, and so, his kid has suffered a little bit, and instead of encouraging his son to work hard and to get back in the, let's say it's the weight room or the gym, and earn that playing time. It's, let's blame the kids moving in here and create a, truly a problem that doesn't exist. There's been nothing that we've found where kids are moving illegally." He noted it had all been vetted by Mr. Den Boer and the WIAA.

Mr. Phillips told me that on or about March 17, 2026, he went to give keys to [Student Name(s)/PII], so he could oversee the Spring Fling AAU Basketball tournament. He said [Student Name(s)/PII] is [Student Name(s)/PII] Dad, who is also his neighbor. He said when he arrived at [Student Name(s)/PII] house to give him the keys to the gyms, [Student Name(s)] said, "[Student Name(s)] is hiding behind the door, standing, just waiting, and I'm like, 'Okay.' Because this is probably a week and a half after all this stuff's kind of coming to the surface, and so, I said, 'Need anything else, [Student Name(s)]?' Again, I'm sitting around all weekend. 'All right, see you later,' and then [Student Name(s)] jets out and says, 'Do you have a minute? I'd like to talk to you outside about something.' 'Sure, [Student Name(s)] we can go outside.' So, we're outside his father's house, and [Student Name(s)] just, on top of me about, you're aware of these recruiting things, you know what's happening, you endorse it, Mario and Mike are recruiting. I said, [Student Name(s)] I'm gonna stop you right there. Our coaches are not recruiting kids. Our coaches are not going and actively trying to get kids to move here. If anybody is doing that, parents that have connections to AAU select teams, kids from around the life play

together, they're probably telling about their experiences here at their school and those parents are seeing it and going that's something I'd like to be a part of.' So, my conversation was like, this has nothing to do with recruiting. I know you're upset about probably the lack of playing time that [Student Name(s)] has not been getting, and that means, just means you need to have a conversation with [Student Name(s)] about working hard and getting in the weight room and getting better, so he can get on the floor more, but the kids are going to move to Zillah, they always have. This is not a new thing. And if they're doing it legally and they're meeting WIAA expectations, there's nothing we can do about it. And he tells me it's bull crap and he's yelling at me and so I just said, [Student Name(s)] we're done. I'm not gonna have this conversation. I'm going home,' and I walk across the street and I'm just shaking my head, walking back in my house. And he's just from his dad's front porch yelling at me still and he's like, 'You've made fun of my kid before,' and I said, [Student Name(s)] you know that's not true. You're just throwing darts at a wall, see what sticks. We're done,' and I just went to my house, and talked to my wife about it." He said the conversation was all about recruiting, and there was never any mention of bullying, team nights, or safety.

Mr. Phillips did not describe any direct discussion with Coach Mario Mengarelli about alleged hazing activities. His involvement did not include questioning the coach or receiving any explanation, denial, or admission regarding the reported conduct.

Justin Irion, Assistant Superintendent:

Mr. Irion explained that he became aware of potential hazing concerns through internal reporting within the district. He stated that on or about March 23rd, or 24th, (2026), he received information from Mr. Torres that Mr. Gonzales reported hearing about a "dog collar" being used at the boys' basketball team dinner. He clarified that this was the first time he had heard of any allegation involving hazing or similar conduct. He stated that the information initially came from teachers who had heard rumors, rather than from direct observation, and he understood it to involve the possible use of a shock or dog collar in connection with basketball-related activities. He reported that he and district leadership followed up by meeting with Mr. Gonzales to clarify what had been reported. He explained that the reported information was secondhand and attributed to staff rumors, which may have originated from conversations involving a parent with children in the basketball program. He said he thought the reports started from a conversation that was held between Ms. [Student Name(s)/PII] Ms. Thomas, and Ms. Spicer. He stated that the district then elevated the concern for review and later initiated further inquiry, due to the nature of the allegation.

Mr. Irion stated that on March 26, 2026, he and Mr. Burge met with Coach Mengarelli. He said during that meeting, Coach Mengarelli acknowledged there had been "some activity with a dog collar" occurring at his home during a team night. He indicated Coach Mengarelli described the activity as initiated by students, though the exact details of what occurred, including participant conduct, frequency, or structure, were not specified in Mr. Irion's account. He stated Coach Mengarelli was directed to prepare a written statement detailing his recollection of the events, which was later provided to district leadership. He did not report observing any alleged hazing activity himself. He also did not describe witnessing the events or verifying their specifics. He said the district proceeded toward a formal investigation, based on the reported information and Coach Mengarelli's acknowledgment of some level of related activity.

Mr. Irion said Mr. [Student Name(s)] later accused him of violating confidentiality by allegedly telling coaches or others that Mr. [Student Name(s)] was trying to get them fired. He denied doing so and stated that he told Mr. [Student Name(s)] he had only shared Mr. [Student Name(s)] recruiting-related concerns with Mr. Burge and Mr. Den Boer so district leadership would be aware of them. He said Mr. [Student Name(s)] appeared to assume Mr. Irion was the source because Mr. [Student Name(s)] learned that others believed he was trying to get someone fired after concerns about recruiting had become widely known in the community. Mr. Irion stated that, in his view, the perception likely arose from Mr. [Student Name(s)] and Andy Affolter's repeated calls, complaints, and outreach to other schools, coaches, and community members, rather than from any disclosure by Mr. Irion. He also said he later clarified to Mr. [Student Name(s)] that he had not attended the gathering Mr. [Student Name(s)] referenced and had not discussed Mr. [Student Name(s)] complaints in the manner Mr. [Student Name(s)] alleged.

Mr. Irion stated that concerns about recruiting had been raised with him by Mr. [Student Name(s)] and Andy Affholter over an extended period, largely regarding student-athletes transferring into the district to play basketball. He said those individuals believed recruiting was occurring and suggested that district coaches or administrators were aware of it. However, he said he had no evidence that school staff were engaged in improper recruiting or that district personnel were directing families or students to transfer. He described the concern in his view, as driven in part by community frustration over local players losing playing time to incoming transfers. He stated that while he personally preferred building the program with local Zillah students, he also believed that students who lawfully transfer or move into the district and meet eligibility requirements should be allowed to attend school and participate. He stated that to his understanding, parents may encourage students to come to the district, and that such conduct is distinct from improper school-based recruiting, unless district employees are actively involved or endorsing it. Mr. Irion stated that his role in verifying transfers was limited to confirming school residency or living arrangements for enrollment-related purposes, not determining athletic eligibility. He explained that when a student in a qualifying situation moved in with another family, he followed the district's standard protocol by conducting a single home visit to verify that the student actually resided there, including checking for basic indicators such as clothing, toiletries, and a bed. He said if those indicators were present, the student would attend school in the district, and he would not continue monitoring the living arrangement after that initial verification. He further stated that he did not consider it his responsibility to investigate or decide sports eligibility beyond that point, and he denied knowingly allowing a student to participate based on false residency information, stating that he completed the required school-based verification and that any separate determination regarding athletics would fall to Mr. Den Boer.

Mr. Irion stated that Mr. [Student Name(s)] and Mr. McCullough had a confrontation at work, but he did not witness it and could not recall the exact words that were used. He explained that his understanding was that the exchange likely related to concerns that Mr. [Student Name(s)] actions and complaints about recruiting were being perceived by others as an effort to get coaches or program staff fired. He said he believed this may have been the source of Mr. [Student Name(s)] later accusation that district personnel thought he was trying to get someone fired. He said Mr. McCullough was both a middle school dean of students and a varsity assistant basketball coach, and in his view, Mr. McCullough and Mr. [Student Name(s)] were no longer seeing eye to eye because Mr. McCullough appeared to accept transfers as part of athletics, while Mr. [Student Name(s)] remained focused on the impact of transfers on local players' opportunities, and [Student Name(s)] spot on varsity.

Lance Den Boer, Athletic Director:

Mr. Den Boer stated he was the athletic director and described his involvement as limited to oversight of athletic programs and response to reported concerns. He reported he was not aware of any hazing-related activities occurring at team dinners until the issue was raised during the current investigation. He stated, "Not until this whole thing kind of started" did he hear about the "shock collar piece." He further explained he had not previously received any reports or complaints related to hazing or similar conduct within the basketball program. He said prior to the investigation, he understood only that team dinners were occurring, which he described as a common practice among school athletic programs. He stated that he "knew they would have team dinners, but that's it," and he had no knowledge of any specific activities occurring during those gatherings. He said he did not receive complaints, observe activities, or conduct any review of those events before the allegations were raised. He added he did not know how often the dinners occurred or what activities took place. Mr. Den Boer stated he did not personally observe any activities related to the use of a shock device, ice baths, or other reported conduct. He said his knowledge of those activities was limited to information learned after concerns were brought forward. He stated he had "zero complaints" regarding the team dinners prior to the investigation.

Mr. Den Boer stated that, in his role as athletic director, he followed WIAA transfer and eligibility procedures for every student seeking to enroll in the district for athletic participation, including collecting required paperwork, verifying residency documentation, and coordinating with district staff on residency checks, as needed. He said his purpose is to ensure compliance and avoid violations related to improper recruiting or ineligible participation. He said he had not found evidence of coaches engaging in illegal recruiting and described his understanding that responding to families' questions about their experience in the district was different from actively soliciting students to transfer. He stated that he reminded coaches not to involve themselves in recruiting matters and to refer such questions to him, so that transfer and eligibility issues could be handled through the appropriate process.

Mr. Den Boer stated that with respect to Mr. [REDACTED], he did not receive a direct complaint alleging recruiting, and instead, he heard secondhand concerns from community members that Mr. [REDACTED] might be involved. He said he contacted Mr. [REDACTED] to discuss the issue and to clarify the distinction between permissible conversations and impermissible recruiting. He stated that Mr. [REDACTED] told him that he was not recruiting students but was responding when families asked about his experience in the district and in the basketball program. He stated that he told Mr. [REDACTED] that answering questions about his experience was not, in itself, recruiting, but he reminded Mr. [REDACTED] that he could not proactively contact families and encourage them to come play in the district. He stated that Mr. [REDACTED] denied engaging in that conduct, and he relayed this information to the WIAA contact, Cindi Adsit, who said that the explanation was consistent with permissible conduct. He told me that he reminded Mr. [REDACTED] that even if his conduct was not recruiting, there could still be a perception issue for the district, and he wanted Mr. [REDACTED] to remain aware of that concern.

Student Name(s)/PII, Student, Student Name(s)/PII, Parents:

Mr. [REDACTED] and Ms. [REDACTED] were present during the interview, and [REDACTED] described his participation in team dinners held at Coach Mengarelli's residence. [REDACTED] stated that the

purpose of the gatherings was “basically just bonding as a team,” and he described various activities as team-driven, rather than organized by coaches. He reported activities included an “ice bath challenge,” which he characterized as voluntary and intended as a way for teammates to “it’s like a fun way to get out of our comfort zone.” He described a “shock collar incident” involving a device used during a free-throw activity. He said players would be shocked only if they missed a shot, and the activity was “player-ran,” and “the coaches had nothing to do with that.” He indicated he did not know who came up with the idea. He said the shock level as “really low” and “like, it was, you know how, like, when you get shocked, your fingers move a little bit, and that’s, it was just like that.” He said the device was placed on the forearm and he confirmed that players only received a shock if they missed. He said he did not recall anyone opting out of the activity and he believed “everybody did” participate, but he said there was no pressure from teammates and participation was not forced. He stated that coaches were present at the residence but remained inside the house while these activities occurred outside on the basketball court. He said the coaches provided no rewards, expectations, or incentives for participating in activities. He identified the coaches present as Coach Mengarelli, Mr. Godina, and Mr. McCullough. [Student Name(s)/PII] said the coaches did not participate in these activities.

[Student Name(s)/PII] also described other activities at team dinners, including informal wrestling and BB gun shooting at cans or “to kill, like a bird, whatever, like, you know, when it’s flying and stuff.” He said the shooting did not involve participants shooting at each other. He further described a situation involving a snake at the residence, which he believed to be a rattlesnake with its venom glands removed, and students had been allowed to handle or pet it. I asked [Student Name(s)/PII] if he felt bullied by anyone to participate in the activities at the team dinners. He replied, “No, I really didn’t.” He also told me that the coaches “obviously fed us and stuff, and then they just let us like go do our own thing.”

Mr. [Student Name(s)/PII] speaking as a parent, described the post-game gatherings as parent-organized social events in which a parent would volunteer a home, shop, or similar space and send a text inviting others to attend if they wished. He stated that attendance by players and families was optional, his family missed several gatherings without consequence, and there was no expectation that players attend. He did not describe the gatherings as hazing and instead characterized them as informal team or family gatherings. He also expressed an overall positive view of the basketball program and coaching staff, stating that the experience had been positive for his family.

[Student Name(s)/PII], Student, [Student Name(s)/PII], Parent, and [Student Name(s)/PII], Parent:
[Student Name(s)/PII] explained his participation in team dinners held at Coach Mengarelli’s residence and described the dinners as student-organized. He stated that activities during these gatherings were “things that, like for the past four years, we’ve done like on our own as students,” and players coordinated activities through group communication and mutual agreement. He described the process as player-led, stating participants discussed and agreed upon activities together prior to conducting them. He described using a shock collar during one activity. He said the idea came from multiple players and was not attributed to any single individual. He stated that players had seen similar activities online and collectively decided to try them. He said participation was based on group agreement and all participants were informed in advance of the activity. Regarding the shock collar activity, he said the device was placed on players’ arms, typically the bicep area, and set at a low

level. He confirmed that he was shocked and described the sensation as mild, “like a little muscle twitch,” and not painful, “like a little tickle.” He stated that the activity occurred outside while the coaches were inside the residence preparing food.

Student Name(s) stated that participation in activities was voluntary and described a group consensus approach. He said there had “never been a point... where I’ve... seen... anyone forced to do anything,” and participation required full agreement from all players. He said the group would not proceed with an activity unless all players agreed, and he described this as a “12 out of 12” decision process. He stated that if a player expressed discomfort with an activity, the group would discontinue or move on to another option. He said he did not observe any BB gun or airsoft activities at the team dinners. Regarding the dinners, he said, “So, especially with this year with the high stakes, it was more of a, we get there and we have our time, but as soon as we’re done getting, as soon as we get like our food, it’s like lock in, like let’s review who we’re going to play against, who we can play against, and like film it.” He said the coaches did not organize, direct, or encourage these activities. He explained that activities were not suggested by coaches and were conducted independently by players. “It’s just kind of like, do whatever you guys do, keep yourself busy, but as soon as like it’s time to lock in, then that’s when you switch your focus.” He said the coaches did not impose consequences for non-participation or require players to engage in any activity. He said, “I feel like our team nights, it kind of sucks hearing about like all the questionings about the team nights because I’ve always seen team nights as like the main factor why I’m playing basketball is because those team nights build character with me to other players, like players that might have came in a few years later, I got closer to them through those team nights and I got closer to them through activities just away from basketball, which made the whole basketball trip easier and the journey easier.”

Student Name(s) and **Student Name(s)/PII**, **Parents:**

Mr. **Student Name(s)/PII** and Ms. **Student Name(s)/PII** described their awareness of team dinners and activities based on conversations with their child and general familiarity with the basketball program. Mr. **Student Name(s)/PII** said he understood activities such as handling snakes, airsoft, and BB gun use, and other conduct occurred during team events, including the use of an electric fence and a shock-type device. He characterized these activities as “dumb farm kid stuff” and reported he did not have concerns about them. He said the dog collar device “basically vibrated and didn’t actually cause pain,” based on what was conveyed to him. He said the boys were “screwing around” and nobody was forced to take part.

Mr. **Student Name(s)/PII** reported he understood students participated in activities such as handling snakes, including bull snakes, and experimented with an electric fence. He stated these activities were known to him through his son, **Student Name(s)/PII** and were perceived as informal and student-driven. He did not describe directly observing the activities and did not specify dates, frequency, or the exact circumstances under which they occurred. He indicated he did not believe students were forced to participate in these activities. He explained he would have had concerns if his child reported being uncomfortable or harmed, but he had not received such information. He stated that based on what he had been told, students generally looked forward to team dinners, which he described as a positive aspect of the program.

Ms. [Student Name(s)/PII] did not provide separate firsthand observations regarding specific activities but expressed agreement with Mr. [Student Name(s)/PII] understanding of the program and its dynamics. Neither parent described observing coaches directing, organizing, or supervising the reported activities. They did not specify coach presence or involvement during the activities.

The [Student Name(s)/PII] stated that the team is really tight. They said Mr. [Student Name(s)] had been running his mouth, and because he could not get his way on the transfer and recruiting complaint, he was now being vindictive and coming up with a different complaint two months after the season was over. Mr. [Student Name(s)/PII] said Coach Mengarelli had nothing to do with recruiting and had nothing whatsoever to do with student transfers. He said if [Student Name(s)] had come home and told him there was an issue that made him uncomfortable or injured, he would have had an issue with it. He told me that Andy Affholter is his first cousin, and Mr. Affholter called him and asked him to talk to Mr. [Student Name(s)] about the transfers and recruiting. He said the call was on March 11, 2026. He said, "Then this stuff started up a few days later, and it's BS." He told me he purchased the "We Stand With Our Coaches" signs that were posted around town. He said the signs and message were intended to show support for the coaches, not slander Mr. [Student Name(s)] or [Student Name(s)]. He showed me trail camera footage of [Student Name(s)] pulling up in his burgundy colored Mercury Mountaineer and stealing some of his signs. He said he reported the theft to the Sheriff's Office, and the case number was 26C05682. While I was at the high school conducting interviews, I was notified by Mr. Charbonneau that the police had come to the school and found the stolen signs in [Student Name(s)] car.

Ms. [Student Name(s)/PII] told me that at a tennis match in College Place, Washington, [Student Name(s)] was [Student Name(s)/PII] doubles partner. She said this was after the accusations started to come out. She said [Student Name(s)] asked [Student Name(s)] why Mr. [Student Name(s)] was trying to get Coach Mengarelli fired, and [Student Name(s)] said if Coach Mengarelli got fired, he would get more playing time, and there would be no more transfers into the school district or players potentially taking [Student Name(s)] spot on the team. She said this conversation took place in the tennis van, coming back from College Place. She said another parent told her about it, but she was reluctant to share the other parent's name. She shared her concerns for [Student Name(s)] safety with Mr. [Student Name(s)] if Mr. [Student Name(s)] found out that [Student Name(s)] said that. She said the conversation between [Student Name(s)] and [Student Name(s)] happened on March 25, 2026. The [Student Name(s)/PII] stated that they were very concerned about [Student Name(s)] and his mental health and depression. They said if Mr. [Student Name(s)] thought [Student Name(s)] was in danger from the coach, why would he send [Student Name(s)] to the basketball banquet alone. Ms. [Student Name(s)/PII] said, "If I felt that strongly about his son's safety, why were you not there at the dinner?" She said that it speaks poorly of Mr. [Student Name(s)] as a father and his character. The [Student Name(s)/PII] then provided me with a written statement and declined to let me interview [Student Name(s)/PII].

Student Name(s)/PII Family Written Statement:

April 28, 2026

Subject: Statement Regarding Investigation Interview Request

To Whom It May Concern,

This correspondence is submitted in response to your request to interview our son, **Student Name(s)/PII**, in connection with an investigation being conducted on behalf of the Zillah School District.

At this time, we do not consent to **Student Name** participation in any interviews, meetings, or questioning. As his parents and legal guardians, we are exercising our rights under applicable Washington State law, school district policy, and federal student privacy protections to be fully informed before authorizing any such participation.

Prior to any interview, we require written disclosure of the following:

- The nature and scope of the investigation
- The specific allegations or complaints at issue
- Whether the allegations relate to student conduct, staff conduct, or program operations
- The individual(s) or position(s) to whom the allegations pertain
- The authority under which this investigation is being conducted

Absent this information, it would be inappropriate and inconsistent with fair process standards for our son to participate.

We also wish to formally state our support for the Zillah High School basketball coaching staff. **Student Name** has participated in the program for four years. Throughout that time, the coaching staff has demonstrated professionalism, adherence to district expectations, and a sustained commitment to student safety and well-being. Team activities, including team nights, have consistently been well supervised, appropriate, and positive. At no time has **Student Name** felt unsafe, pressured, or exposed to conduct of concern.

We are prepared to cooperate in a reasonable and appropriate manner consistent with district policy and Washington State investigative standards once we receive the requested information. Upon review, we will determine whether and under what conditions our son's participation may occur.

All further communication regarding this matter should be provided in writing.

Sincerely,

Student Name(s)/PII

Student Name(s)/PII, Student:

Student Name(s) said he did not attend any team dinners or functions related to the boys' basketball program because he was a wrestler. He said he had "never been to any team dinner" and had "never been to [Coach Mengarelli's] house." As a result, he stated he did not have firsthand involvement in or direct observation of any alleged activities occurring at those events. He stated he had limited awareness of the allegations from general conversations with student-athletes. He said he had "heard that" from tennis teammates but did not provide details about specific activities or events. He did not identify any specific conduct, participants, or circumstances related to the allegations and did not describe observing any activity involving shock devices, BB guns, or other behaviors described in the allegations. He said he did not hear the conversation between **Student Name(s)** and **Student Name(s)/PII** when coming back from the College Place tennis match. He said, "I think they had already discussed something before we headed out, or before we left. I think it was kind of awkward on the way home, a little bit." He reported he did not remember **Student Name(s)** or **Student Name(s)/PII** having an argument but said that since the investigation had started, **Student Name(s)** had not spoken to him about it, "but you can kind of tell just how he's acting different. He's been acting different the last couple weeks."

Student Name(s) did not report reviewing any recordings, messages, or other materials related to team dinners or team functions. He did not describe receiving detailed accounts from individuals who attended such events. He said the basketball players have been talking about the investigation, and are worried about coaches losing their jobs, but “they haven’t been like talking bad about really anyone.” He stated he had not witnessed anyone trying to bully Student Name(s) and his knowledge was limited to general statements among students, and did not include specifics regarding what occurred, when it occurred, or who was involved.

Student Name(s)/PII, Parent:

Mr. Student Name(s)/PII stated his awareness of team dinner activities was based on his presence at a team dinner held at Coach Mengarelli’s residence. He said there had been “only one team dinner...this year,” and he attended the event. He said the location was a large property where students were dispersed across different areas, including the yard, barn, and inside the home, and described the environment as students “being kids” and engaging in various informal activities. He said the students would be out trying to rope Coach Mengarelli’s goats, “There’s kids over there messing around with the little guys, messing around with his (Coach Mengarelli’s) son. And then you’d have kids in the kitchen trying to steal the most, who could steal the most brownies. And then you had kids in the back, where the hoops were. And then I think that’s how the collars came out.” He stated he became aware of the use of a dog collar after the activity had already occurred. He said the collar activity was spontaneous, stating he believed “one of the kids... grabbed them and messed around,” and indicated it was not planned or directed by adults. He said students interacted with the device among themselves and the interaction was mutual participation among players. He stated there were no instructions or requirements communicated by adults to use the device.

Mr. Student Name(s)/PII said adult supervision was limited during the time the activity occurred, and the coaches and parents were inside preparing food, while students were outside on the property. He stated that the number of adults present was not sufficient to always monitor all areas of the property. He said he arrived after the activity had concluded and did not observe the activity directly. He said he did not observe any student being forced to participate in the dog collar activity. He stated, “No one was ever forced...told they had to do it,” and he described participation as voluntary. He said the students engaged in other activities, such as ice baths, and he described those as voluntary and driven by students challenging each other, rather than being directed by coaches.

Mr. Student Name(s)/PII stated he did not observe any Airsoft or BB guns during the team-related activities he attended. When asked whether there were “Airsoft or BB guns or any of that kind of jazz,” he responded by asking, “Airsoft?” and then stated, “No, I didn’t see no Airsoft.” When the question was clarified as whether he had ever seen any Airsoft guns, he again responded, “No, I didn’t,” and added, “I never seen that.” His statements did not identify any BB gun or Airsoft activity at the gatherings he described, and he did not report any safety concerns related to those items.

Mr. Student Name(s)/PII stated there were snakes at the location, describing them as being “in his little thing,” but he did not identify the type of snakes. When asked what kind of snakes they were, he stated he did not know and stated that he personally did not like snakes, roaches, or “monsters,” so he stayed away from them. His statement reflected that he was aware snakes were present and contained in a designated area, but he did not report seeing them

used as part of any activity, challenge, or safety concern involving the students. He did not describe any instance where Coach Mengarelli instructed, encouraged, or supervised these activities. He did not report any direct conversation with Coach Mengarelli regarding the dog collar or other activities at the team dinners.

Mr. [Student Name(s)/PII] referenced Port Angeles, Washington in two contexts. First, he stated that when the team went to Port Angeles, individuals associated with that program commented favorably on Coach Mengarelli, telling Zillah's families that they were "lucky" to have him as a coach and describing him as a "big brother" to the players. Second, he stated he personally went to Port Angeles with the team for four days and served as the cook. He said he observed the boys during that trip and stated that he believed the players, including [Student Name(s)] were involved with the group and not excluded. He also referenced a photograph or example of [Student Name(s)] being in the water at Port Angeles, stating that no one forced him to do so and that he went in voluntarily.

Mr. [Student Name(s)/PII] stated that his confrontation with Mr. [Student Name(s)] arose from a WSU basketball camp that he and another parent, Mr. [Student Name(s)/PII] organized independently as parents, not as a school-sponsored or coach-directed activity. He said the weekend had been blocked out by the basketball program, due to football, and Coach Mengarelli was not involved because he did not want to conflict with the football coach. He said he and Mr. [Student Name(s)/PII] decided to take eight players to the camp, based on who they considered the best available players, and [Student Name(s)] was not selected. He stated that Mr. [Student Name(s)] later approached him in the gym and objected that another student, who had recently moved into the district, was selected instead of [Student Name(s)]. He said he told Mr. [Student Name(s)] that [Student Name(s)] "didn't make the roster" and that there would be another opportunity the following year. He characterized Mr. [Student Name(s)] as upset about the decision and stated that Mr. [Student Name(s)] had an issue with transfers and playing time. He emphasized that the WSU camp was organized by parents, that the coaches had "nothing to do with it," and the parents handled the arrangements themselves.

Mr. [Student Name(s)/PII] denied actively recruiting players or engaging in any activity under the authority of the school district. He stated that he had played with the same group of boys since approximately third grade and that they "just happen to be good." When asked directly whether he was trying to recruit anyone, Mr. [Student Name(s)/PII] responded, "No," and stated that he had nothing to offer prospective transfers, including no money, housing, or official basketball role. He stated he was "nothing" in relation to the school basketball program and was not acting as a coach or school representative. He acknowledged that some players may talk about wanting to play in Zillah, but he characterized that as general talk rather than recruiting, stating that actually moving districts required a significant family decision and investment. He stated that if students legally transferred and followed the proper process, his view was that others should direct concerns to the youth athletic association or governing rules, rather than assume improper recruiting by him. He provided a written statement.

Family Written Statement

Page 1
August 28, 2026

Subject: Statement Regarding Investigation Interviews – Zillah Boys Varsity Basketball

To Whom It May Concern,

We are submitting this statement jointly on behalf of ourselves and our two sons in response to the investigation being conducted on behalf of the Zillah School District. We understand that a complaint has been filed and that members of the Zillah High School Boys Varsity Basketball team are being asked to participate in interviews.

At this time, the only information that has been provided to us is that the complaint allegedly relates to a specific "team night" function. We initially became aware of the investigation through comments made by a member of the varsity team who has been openly vocal about dissatisfaction with his playing time and concerns regarding several student transfers into the district over the past two years. It has been our understanding—based on statements shared among students—that this individual believes the transfers negatively impacted his opportunity to play.

We are providing this written statement because the district has not been transparent regarding two critical issues:

1. Who the complaint is against, and
2. What the specific allegations are.

Our two sons are good students and committed student-athletes. They have never been disciplined nor required administrative intervention of any kind. Given their ages, it is unacceptable to us as parents for them to be interviewed in an investigative setting without knowing their role in the investigation or the nature of the complaint itself. Accordingly, while we are not permitting our sons to be interviewed at this time, we feel it is important to share what little we do know and to express our broader concerns.

First and foremost, transferring our three children to the Zillah School District has been one of the best decisions we have made as a family. Few people truly understand the environment we left behind at the Sunnyside School District, where we experienced issues involving verbal mistreatment, favoritism, and serious safety concerns. Our experience in Zillah has been entirely different. Academics are held to an exceptionally high standard, with Zillah High School offering more College in the High School credit opportunities than any other district in the area. Athletics are also embraced and supported at a level we had not previously experienced.

Over the past two years, our family has had an exceptional experience both academically and athletically. Our boys are supported not only by their teachers, teammates, families, and coaches, but also by the broader community. This level of collective support has had a profound and positive impact on their development.

With specific regard to the Zillah Boys Basketball program, we have complete trust and confidence in the coaches and the culture they have intentionally built. The coaches care for the boys at a level that goes well beyond basketball, and this contrast is especially clear to us given our prior experiences elsewhere. We have participated in numerous school-sponsored events, athletic events, and parent-organized activities, all of which have been well-run, appropriate, and positive.

Our sons have grown significantly under the leadership of Coach Mario Mangarelli and Coach Mike McCullough. We have attended many team-related activities and have never witnessed a situation in which a student was placed in harm's way or exposed to inappropriate conduct.

We also believe it is important to share context regarding what we understand to be underlying tensions surrounding this situation. Based on our personal observations and information shared with us, members of the **Student Name(s)** family—specifically **Student Name(s)** and **Student Name(s)**—have been openly vocal about dissatisfaction related to playing time and student transfers. We are aware that concerns regarding transfers were reportedly raised with multiple school districts and the WIAA, including outreach to Sunnyside and Selah school districts, which resulted in frustration and concern among families in those communities.

When those efforts did not appear to result in the desired outcomes, we were informed—through statements attributed to **Student Name(s)**—that his father was seeking the removal of the current coaching staff under the belief that such action would result in increased playing time and limit future transfers. We acknowledge that this reflects our understanding of statements shared among students and is not presented as verified fact. However, we believe this context is relevant in understanding potential motive and intent surrounding the filing of the complaint.

We want to be clear that our family offers its full support to the Zillah Boys Basketball coaching staff. We have nothing but positive experiences and deep appreciation for a program that has given so much to our children and to this community.

Sincerely,

Student Name(s)/PII

Student Name(s)/PII and Student Name(s)/PII, Parents:

Ms. Student Name(s)/PII and Mr. Student Name(s)/PII stated their awareness of team dinner activities was based on their roles as parents of Student Name(s)/PII, and Ms. Student Name(s)/PII involvement in organizing team dinners. She said team dinners were parent-organized events, not part of the school or basketball program, and attendance was optional. She stated the events were intended to provide meals and opportunities for students to interact through games and informal activities. She said her understanding of activities at the team dinner hosted by Coach Mengarelli were based on information provided by Student Name(s)/PII. She stated that multiple activities occurred simultaneously across the property, including outdoor activities and games inside the home. She did not attend that specific event. She stated she could not identify the specific location of adults or coaches during all activities because "there was multiple things going on" and participants were spread across the property.

Ms. Student Name(s)/PII stated that Student Name(s)/PII discussed the use of a shock collar device. She said the device was plugged into a wall and "they were playing with them," describing the activity as students interacting with the device. She said Student Name(s)/PII indicated some students tried the device on their fingers or ankles and characterized the activity as a "joke." She said Student Name(s)/PII did not personally participate because of a prior medical condition, but he described the activity without concern. She reported that Student Name(s)/PII did not experience pressure to participate. She stated Student Name(s)/PII "never said that anyone did this to him or he was forced to do something," and she described the activities as student-driven behavior referred to by the students as "shenanigans." Mr. Student Name(s)/PII stated that if Student Name(s)/PII felt uncomfortable, he would have chosen not to attend and would have withdrawn from the activity.

Ms. Student Name(s)/PII described additional activities at team dinners, including handling snakes and other informal challenges, based on information shared by Student Name(s)/PII. She reported these activities were perceived by participants as recreational and did not indicate awareness of injuries or harm associated with them. She said activities varied by location and could occur at multiple homes, not exclusively at the coach's residence. She said, "Well, they're pretty country boys because I'm gonna tell you, everything that probably happened there probably happened at some of our houses. Yeah, I'm just being honest. I mean, run through orchards naked. I mean, I can just keep going, right? Like they're dumb 16, 17-year-old boys. I mean, they really are. And so, so anyway, so, nothing that, and Student Name(s)/PII is very open with us. I mean, to be honest, he's gonna hate when I say this, but he's the baby. He probably told us more than the other two did." Ms. Student Name(s)/PII said she had no concerns for Student Name(s)/PII safety and Student Name(s)/PII "never felt uncomfortable."

Ms. Student Name(s)/PII also described ongoing concerns and discussion among parents regarding recruiting, transfers, and playing time. She stated that Mr. Student Name(s)/PII was upset about the offseason and varsity team selection decisions and repeatedly raised concerns that transfer students or other selected players were taking opportunities from Student Name(s)/PII. She stated that Mr. Student Name(s)/PII complained about "transfers," playing time, and perceived unfairness, including claims that specific players had taken Student Name(s)/PII spot or that Student Name(s)/PII would have started varsity if not for a transfer. She stated she was contacted by parents from other districts after Mr. Student Name(s)/PII allegedly raised concerns with school officials about students from those districts potentially transferring to Zillah, although Ms. Student Name(s)/PII characterized those students as long-time participants on Mr. Student Name(s)/PII's offseason team and she did not believe they intended to

transfer. Ms. [REDACTED] and Mr. [REDACTED] both stated that the offseason teams were not school-district teams, that Mr. [REDACTED] and Mr. [REDACTED] selected those teams independently, and that school coaches or parent volunteers did not control those selections. They provided a written statement.

[REDACTED] **Family Statement:**

April 28, 2026

Subject: Statement Regarding Investigation Interview

To Whom It May Concern,

We are submitting this statement in conjunction with our son, [REDACTED] regarding the pending investigation being conducted on behalf of the Zillah School District.

At this time, we understand that a complaint has been filed with the Zillah School District and that members of the Zillah High School Varsity Boys Basketball team are being scheduled for interviews with a third-party investigative organization. Beyond acknowledgment that an investigation exists, no additional information has been provided to the student athletes or their families.

We became aware of the investigation primarily through comments made by the complaining party's child, who has been vocal regarding his playing time and recent transfer decisions. However, to date, we have not been formally informed of several critical details, including:

1. [REDACTED] role in the investigation — specifically whether he is being interviewed as a witness/observer or whether there are any allegations or complaints involving him directly; and
2. The nature or scope of the complaint(s) under investigation.

We fully understand and support the school district's obligation to take reports seriously and to investigate concerns thoroughly. That said, we also have growing concerns regarding the lack of transparency surrounding this process, particularly as it relates to minor students.

Our family has been part of the Zillah School District throughout our children's entire education. We are deeply appreciative of the district, its administrators, teachers, and programs. Our experiences have been overwhelmingly positive, and we are grateful for the support and care shown to students at all levels.

With respect to [REDACTED] experience in the Zillah High School Boys Basketball program, his involvement began in the summer following eighth grade and continued through his senior year. Over the past four and a half years, his experience has been nothing but positive and memorable. He values his coaches, teammates, and the strong bonds formed through shared experiences, including both team-organized and parent-supported events. The Zillah basketball program truly embodies the meaning of "family," and that culture is evident in the commitment demonstrated by coaches, players, parents, and the broader community.

Neither [REDACTED] nor we have any concerns related to the Zillah Boys Basketball program, including team events, team nights, or any other associated activities. We understand that a "team night" has been referenced as part of the complaint. Team nights have long been an established and optional tradition within both the boys' and girls' basketball programs. These gatherings focus

fact, but we believe it is relevant context in understanding the broader environment surrounding this situation.

We remain open to reconsidering participation once the above information is provided and appreciate your understanding of our position.

Sincerely,

Student Name(s)/PII

Student Name(s)/PII

Family Written Statement:

April 27, 2026

Subject: Statement Regarding Investigation Interview Request

To Whom It May Concern,

This letter is in response to your request to interview my son, Student Name(s)/PII in connection with an investigation being conducted on behalf of the Zillah School District.

I, nor Student Name consent in Student Name participation in any interviews or questioning. We are not aware of what the allegations are, nor do we know who is being investigated.

If you would like our participation in this investigation you will need to put in writing the nature/scope of the investigation, the complaint, and also disclose who the allegations are against. Without this information, we do not consent to any interviewing or questioning.

As far as our experience with the Zillah High School Boys Basketball program, we have had an amazing experience. Student Name has thoroughly enjoyed this program, and the coaches have mine and Student Name full trust and support. Student Name became the manager last year after suffering multiple seizures. The coaches, teammates, and families have been supportive and included Student Name in every aspect of the basketball program. He was involved in team activities, team nights, and always had a great time at these events. These events have always been supervised, and Student Name has never felt unsafe or concerned with attending any of these events.

Sincerely,

Student Name(s)/PII

Student Name(s)/PII

Student Name(s)/PII, Student, and Student Name(s)/PII, Parents:

Mr. Student Name(s)/PII, Ms. Student Name(s)/PII, and Student Name(s)/PII described their awareness of team dinner activities based on Student Name(s)/PII direct participation and parental follow-up conversations after the event. Student Name(s)/PII stated he attended the February team dinner and personally participated in activities involving a dog collar device. He said he wore the dog collar while participating in a basketball activity. He said players wore the device while "shooting hoops," and when a shot was missed, the collar would activate. He said the sensation was minimal, stating it "didn't hurt" and felt "just like an itch." He did not recall the intensity setting of the device and stated he did not know who initially introduced the dog collar, indicating he "just kind of came into it." He stated the activity originated from teammates rather than coaches. He did not identify a specific individual responsible for initiating the activity. He stated that participation was voluntary, and if a participant chose not to engage, "nothing happened," and there were no incidents of coercion, teasing, or bullying tied to participation decisions. He said he did not recall where the coaches were located during the specific dog-collar activity and could not identify whether they were present or supervising at that time, which reflected a limitation in his observation regarding adult oversight.

Student Name(s)/PII said multiple activities occurred simultaneously at the team dinner, including BB gun use, interaction with animals, and other recreational activities. When asked what they were shooting with BB guns, Student Name(s)/PII stated, "Mostly rabbits." He also stated he did not recall anyone being shot with a BB gun. He said he did not experience safety concerns during

team dinners and had “no” concerns regarding his safety at any point. He said he did not hear other participants express concerns about safety or feeling threatened. Ms. [REDACTED] said [REDACTED] discussed the activity at home and characterized it as not serious, explaining he described it as “no big deal.”

With regard to the team dinners, Mr. [REDACTED] said, “Yeah, it was just massive bonding, like the kids just this group of kids, multiple groups of kids through the years that he's played, it's getting to know each other and like, hey, we're not doing basketball. We're going to gel as a family or as a team.” He asked [REDACTED] if there was value in the team dinners. [REDACTED] said, “I feel like we got more connected through the team nights just by also learning about people. More people that are shy and stuff, they came out, and we just got to know each other more.” Ms. [REDACTED] said, “I can share that that particular team night, I remember him coming home and talking about the dog collars and laughing. It was no big deal. It was nothing, and so we, of course, thought no big deal, right? It was not anything that we were concerned about whatsoever. We are well aware of things that go on at these team nights and zero concerns.” She stated that if she did have a concern about [REDACTED] safety or the activity, she would not be “waiting months to be like, oh, this happened back in February. Now I’m going to report it.” She also stated that the boys on the basketball team were “so polite, so respectful.” She stated she was impressed with them, and “there might not be another group of kids just like this, right, that have the same qualities, but they bonded so well together. Sorry. That’s why I’m so angry about this. I feel like this takes something from them. Everything that they did over the season, this is not how it should end.” Ms. [REDACTED] stated that she believed the concerns raised about the basketball program were connected to frustration over student transfers into Zillah and the potential effect those transfers could have on existing players’ playing time. She specifically referenced Mr. [REDACTED] and stated that the concern appeared to begin as opposition to transfers because they could “take from my kid’s [REDACTED] playing time.” She stated that when that concern did not yield the desired outcome, the issue shifted to other allegations she believed were affecting the coaches’ reputations. She also referenced possible similar concerns from Andy Affholter, stating she knew they were frustrated about potential transfers, but clarified that she could not say whether they were involved in the other allegations. They provided a written statement.

Student Name(s)/PII

Family Written Statement:

August 29, 2026

Subject: Statement Regarding Investigative Interview

To Whom It May Concern:

We are submitting this statement in conjunction with our son, **Student Name(s)/PII** regarding the investigation being conducted on behalf of the Zillah School District.

We have been informed that a complaint has been filed with the Zillah School District and that members of the Zillah High School Varsity basketball team are scheduled for interviews with a third-party investigator. However, upon repeated requests, no further information has been provided to us. We are unclear on the nature of the allegations, the time and place in which any incident occurred, and whether our son is being looked at as a witness or a contributor.

That said, we want to be very clear on our stance about the Zillah High School basketball program, the coaches, and our son's teammates. We understand that a "team night" has been mentioned in the complaint. Team nights have been a long-standing tradition of the program. Parents host these to provide the boys with a fun environment where they can eat dinner, play games, and get to know one another better. Multiple adults always supervise these team nights and provide a safe setting for our kids. Attendance and participation in team nights are optional for all players. Topics such as appropriate behavior and the prevention of hazing have been openly addressed and actively discouraged by coaches and parents, but as importantly by the boys themselves. We hosted a team night, and this group of boys demonstrated respect for us, each other, and our property. They were mature, appropriate, and polite. We have zero concerns about our son participating in *any* team night hosted over the last year.

The Zillah High School Basketball coaches have created an environment in which the boys feel safe to be themselves, to laugh and cry with each other, to work hard, and make mistakes along the way. This characterizes family. The coaches dedicate many hours outside of their contracted time to make sure the high school boys are supported and that the community has a place to participate and grow. They host speed and agility every summer for a month, in which the coaches and varsity athletes can mentor younger kids in the community by building their basketball skills. They show up at other sporting events and cheer on the Zillah student athletes. They get to know their players beyond athletes, but as human beings. This is more than what is asked of them and more than what is received in most districts.

These coaches are people whom we have entrusted our kids with on multiple occasions. Our daughter is friends with Mario Mengarelli's daughter and, therefore, has spent days playing at their house from dusk to dawn. She has spent the night there many times and will again in the future. We do not allow our kids to be over at just anyone's home, and certainly would not allow sleepovers if we did not fully trust the parents supervising our kids. We never hesitate to allow her to go with the Mengarelli's as we have no doubt she is in great hands.

Several years ago, our son was asked to go on a trip to Disneyland with Mike McCollough and his family, as **Student Name(s)/PII** is good friends with their son. He had never been out of town, and definitely not out of state,

without a close relative or us. We did not blink an eye at this request because this is a family that we wholeheartedly trust.

We share this information as it is important to know who these individuals in question truly are. It is also important to look closely at the individual(s) making the complaints. What is the motive? Without fully knowing who made the allegations, we cannot say, but we encourage a deeper dive into the timeframe of the complaints and what the individual(s) are hoping to get from these allegations. Please keep in mind that statements made without sufficient context could be misunderstood or mischaracterized.

Student Name(s)/PII along with us as his parents, has full confidence in his coaches. These are trusted individuals in both our kids' lives, and we appreciate the positive influence and mentorship they have shown.

Thank you for considering our perspective on the situation.

Sincerely,

Student Name(s)/PII

Student Name(s)/PII, Student:

Student Name(s)/PII reported he attended team dinners at Coach Mengarelli's house, including the February 3rd event. He described a dog-collar activity in which participants wore a collar and attempted a free throw. He said, "If you miss a free throw, then you get shocked." He stated that the idea had been discussed within the group and he did not know who originated it. He confirmed he participated in the activity after trying the device beforehand inside the

house, describing participation as voluntary and “not...a forced thing at all.” He stated he wore the collar on his neck during the activity, missed his shot, and was shocked. He said the sensation as minimal, reporting it was on a “very low power” and that he “didn’t feel very much at all.” He stated that he believed Coach Mengarelli was the individual who activated the shock in his instance, though he expressed some uncertainty. He stated that Coach Sebastian participated in the dog collar activity as a participant. He also said participants tested the device in advance by touching it with their hands if they chose to do so.

Student Name(s)/PII described additional activities at team dinners, including roping goats, ice-plunge challenges, and other recreational activities. He said the ice plunge involved entering cold water for approximately one minute to “get out of running,” and he described it as an optional activity without punishment for non-participation. He stated that students who did not participate completed normal running at practice, rather than additional running. He also reported that other activities, such as interacting with snakes, were optional and involved students choosing whether to participate. He said the snakes were “tame snakes,” and they would play with them on the living room floor. He said, “I’m pretty sure one was a bull snake.” He said he did not think there were any rattlesnakes around, just garden snakes and bull snakes. He confirmed the snakes were never thrown at anyone, but they were left to crawl on the floor, and players could touch them if they wanted to. He also told me they would carry goats to a pen and then try to lasso them. He said if they caught one, they would get out of running the next day.

Student Name(s)/PII reported that BB guns were present and that some students used them outside. He said some students would shoot birds with the BB guns. When asked if anyone had been shot, he stated, “I’m sure there was, yeah, maybe, maybe a couple times, but it’s from like, long and they’re like playing, and then they were seeing birds over there, and then they came over here just to see if they could hit one of us, and they did.” He stated he did not recall coaches being present outside while BB guns were being used and reported he did not observe coaches shooting students. He stated that BB guns were not used as part of structured activities, similar to the dog collar activity, or as a consequence for not participating in other activities. I asked Student Name(s)/PII if anyone ever handled a loaded firearm. He told me, “No, it was always just the BB gun. He (Coach Mengarelli) had them, like we saw them, but they were never used.” He stated that the firearms were locked up.

Student Name(s)/PII stated that he did not go on the Port Angeles trip, but he was present when Port Angeles traveled to the area and stayed with the team. He said the activities during that visit as “pretty similar” to other team gatherings, but there were no guns or similar items involved. When asked about a Port Angeles player getting on the barn or roof, he said the incident occurred after the player was teasing Coach Mengarelli. He stated that Coach Mengarelli chased the player in a manner he described as neither serious nor threatening, stating that Coach Mengarelli was known to “mess with” players who teased him. He said the player got on top of the barn, Coach Mengarelli waited for him to come down, and then the two “tasseled for a second.” He agreed with the characterization that the interaction was roughhousing and Coach Mengarelli “just messed with him.” I asked him what Coach Mengarelli did when he roughoused. He said Coach Mengarelli used pressure points, and “like twists your fingers,” and “he’ll get you in your spots that hurt. But it’s like two minutes later, you’re good.” He stated it was similar behavior as if he was wrestling around with his brothers. He told me he had never seen Coach Mengarelli touch Student Name(s)/PII “because Student Name(s)/PII

kept his space.” He said [Student Name(s)] willingly took part in the activities at Coach Mengarelli’s house, and said, “When we were doing that stuff, he looked like he was having fun. Like, I never seen him like, bro, I don’t want to do that. Like, he was just like, I’ll go next.”

[Student Name(s)/PII] reported that participants, including himself, generally viewed the activities as recreational, stating he “thought they were fun activities.” He said, “It’s just a totally different environment than it was in Zillah, like we were just having fun outside.” He did not describe any instance in which a participant was required to take part or penalized for declining, and he told me he thought the activities were “fun” and that he loved Coach Mengarelli. He said, “Maybe he didn’t do the smartest things, but like, I never felt unsafe, if that makes sense. And I just feel like I got so much better throughout the season.”

[Student Name(s)/PII], Student, and [Student Name(s)/PII], Parent:

[Student Name(s)/PII] reported he attended the February 3, 2026, team dinner at Coach Mengarelli’s residence and described the dog collar activity as something that “started off as like a joke between the guys.” He said a device was brought out by someone, and participants began testing it on low settings before transitioning to a basketball activity in which “if you missed, you got shocked.” He stated he believed the idea originated with the players, stating he was “pretty sure it was the players.” He stated he personally participated in the activity. He said that devices were attached to arms or necks and “I was an idiot. I did mine on my neck just because, I wanted to be cool.” He stated he was shocked after missing a shot and described the sensation as minimal, stating it felt “like somebody just pinched me” and rating it as “like a 2” on a scale of one to ten. He stated he believed [Student Name(s)/PII] activated the device, but was not certain who did so. He stated the coaches were not directly involved in the activity. He stated he believed coaches, including Coach Mengarelli, were inside while the activity occurred outside. He reported no knowledge of any coach participating in administering shocks or organizing the activity.

[Student Name(s)] described additional activities occurring during team gatherings, including airsoft games, roping goats, handling animals, and roughhousing among students. He stated airsoft “wars” occurred among students and clarified he did not observe BB gun use. He discussed optional activities, such as interacting with snakes and wrestling, as well as general recreational conduct among players. [Student Name(s)] and Ms. [Student Name(s)/PII] indicated that the snakes Coach Mengarelli had were pet bull snakes. He also indicated he was not sure about the players handling them and said “Mario had a rubber snake that he had, like a toy one that his kid had, [Student Name(s)] or [Student Name(s)]. You’d throw them on players and they’re like, ok, watch out, it’s a snake, but it’s just the fake rubber snake.” He said there was an incident where Coach Mengarelli placed a bird talon on top of [Student Name(s)/PII] head and told him it was a snake because [Student Name(s)/PII] was afraid of snakes, and [Student Name(s)/PII] began to “freak out,” but “it was a bird claw.” Ms. [Student Name(s)/PII] said, “So, you know, I will say it from a parent’s standpoint, whether you want to hear this or it’s important or not, I never at any point have been concerned with my son’s safety with my safety with Mario or any of the coaches ever.” She stated, “Quite literally, the coaching staff saved my son’s life.” She told me about the important role they played in helping him navigate a difficult and unfortunate event in their lives. She said they “completely intervened and got him reconnected with a solid group of boys that absolutely love and adore [Student Name(s)/PII] and quite literally saved him from the hell that he was living in.”

Student Name(s) reported that participation in activities was voluntary. He indicated “nobody was forced” and described the atmosphere as students choosing to participate, stating that participants expressed interest and engaged willingly. He also discussed a cold plunge activity, which he described as optional, stating he participated and did not believe there was a clear reward tied to it. He said he was not aware of any threats or consequences imposed for non-participation.

Ms. Student Name(s)/PII said she had hosted team nights at her home. She said, “I can tell you that these kids are the most respectful boys because Mario will make them run if they leave like plates out or shoes out or whatever. They had to run. I mean, they walk in the house, they take their shoes off, they give you a hug, they clean up the kitchen. My house is cleaner after they come over to eat.” She said the boys do joke around and “wrestle like crazy,” and “I mean, they’re boys, which I love for my son. He needs that.” Student Name(s) said, “Like, nothing we would do to each other would be malicious or anything like that. Like it’s all, it’s all in fun.

Student Name(s) said he participated in the Port Angeles trip and recalled general horseplay among the players, including tents being flipped and crabs reportedly being placed in some tents, though he stated his own tent was not flipped, and he did not have crabs placed in his tent. He said he shared a tent with Student Name(s)/PII, and Student Name(s) and they were sleeping during at least part of the activity. Regarding the Port Angeles team’s later visit to Zillah, Ms. Student Name(s)/PII clarified that the overnight event was not at Mario’s personal residence, but at Coach Mengarelli’s mother and stepfather’s property, identified as the Status Event Center, where Coach Mengarelli’s family hosted dinner for both teams and players slept in the event center. Student Name(s) stated he slept in his truck. When asked about reports that a Port Angeles player ended up on top of a barn after joking with Coach Mengarelli, both Student Name(s) and Ms. Student Name(s)/PII questioned that account, stating there was no barn in the area where the players stayed and describing the property instead as an event center or wedding venue. Student Name(s) stated he spent much of the evening fishing at a pond with Student and did not provide firsthand confirmation of the reported incident involving Coach Mengarelli chasing or wrestling with a Port Angeles player.

Ms. Student Name(s)/PII stated that, in her view, student transfers into the Zillah basketball program were not the result of recruiting, but instead reflected the program’s reputation, community support, booster involvement, team resources, summer opportunities, and close relationships among players and families. She described the program as having a strong “family” and “small town” culture and stated that parents may want their children involved because of those features. She also attributed some of the complaints to dissatisfaction from Mr. Student Name(s) and Student Name(s) regarding Student Name(s) role and playing time in the program. She stated that Student Name(s) wanted a larger role on the team and she believed some complaints stemmed from frustration that he was not among the top players. Student Name(s) stated he had not personally heard Student Name(s) say he wanted Coach Mengarelli fired, but he reported hearing from Student Name(s)/PII that Student Name(s) allegedly said that if Coach Mengarelli were fired, he would become a starter. Student Name(s) stated that he had heard Student Name(s) express dislike for Coach Mengarelli and frustration about playing time. These statements were presented by Ms. Student Name(s)/PII and Student Name(s) as their perspectives and reported observations regarding possible motives behind the complaints, rather than as independently verified facts.

Justin Alcala, Volunteer Coach:

Mr. Alcala stated he had limited involvement in team dinners, due to his work schedule and family obligations, and he attended only some of the events at Coach Mengarelli's house. He described general activities at team dinners, such as barbecuing, team bonding, and optional challenges such as an ice plunge. He said players could participate in a cold plunge for "thirty seconds to a minute" to receive relief from running drills. He said he observed students engage in activities involving airsoft guns. He said students "were just shooting them" in what he characterized as "an airsoft kind of little war." He stated that no coaches, including Coach Mengarelli, participated in these activities during the times he attended. When asked about the handling of snakes, he said there was a rattlesnake that was barbecued once, but other than that, he did not recall the handling of any rattlesnakes.

Mr. Alcala said he observed an incident involving a dog collar. He explained that students "found them and...started messing around with them." He said he was seated at a table and did not see who initiated the activity. He said he only observed students interacting with the device and did not witness discussion among coaches beforehand. He described the activity as students "messing with" the collar and confirmed that the conduct involved "kids shocking kids." He said no coaches were involved in administering shocks or directing the activity. He said, "I didn't think anyone was in danger." He said he did not recall any prior communication about the dog collar in the team's Snapchat group. He said participation in activities, including the dog collar and the ice plunge, was voluntary, with the ice plunge being the only activity coordinated by the coaches. He said, "I mean, the phrase 'boys being boys,' I mean, I hate to say that, but like, to me, that's what it was." He also explained that students were not required to participate and there was "no recourse" for declining. He estimated that only a portion of the team chose to participate in the ice plunge and he could not recall which specific players participated.

Mr. Alcala did not report any direct discussion with Coach Mengarelli regarding these activities. He did not ask questions or receive any explanations from Coach Mengarelli about the dog collar or other student-led activities. He maintained that most of the behaviors he observed were initiated by students and not directed by coaches.

Sebastin Godina, Assistant Coach:

Mr. Godina reported he attended the February 3, 2026, team dinner at Coach Mengarelli's house and described his direct observations of events that occurred following the meal. He explained that after dinner, a student brought in a shock collar from another area of the home. He said students asked to see how the device felt, and Coach Mengarelli "just let them do it." He said the device was set to a low level, level 3 out of 60, and it was passed around among participants, including himself, who tested it on their fingers. He said, "And it felt like the little prankster gun that you pull on, and it just feels like a little tingle." He stated that students then created a free-throw activity involving the shock collar. He said students chose to wear the device while shooting free throws, and if a shot was missed, another student would activate the collar. He described that "the boys decided" to conduct this activity and that students controlled the device. He said he participated in the activity and did not receive a shock because "I actually made mine, thankfully. So, I didn't get shocked." He stated that only students operated the control and no coaches administered shocks.

Mr. Godina also described additional activities occurring at team functions. He reported that students used a BB gun to shoot at targets and, at times, shoot at each other. I asked him what kind of BB gun was used, and he confirmed it was a Daisy Red Ryder BB Gun, which had a brown stock, a black barrel and receiver, and is lever-action. He stated he typically supervised while students were outside and he had instructed students to stop shooting one another after observing a player receive a welt. He said, "And, so, I told them to put that one away, because that one just seemed a lot, just a little bit more powerful than the regular one, but the other one, that one just didn't seem to leave marks or anything when they did shoot it at each other." He said the BB gun activity was not structured and occurred based on student actions. He stated that students sometimes engaged in "BB gun wars," with informal safety measures, such as avoiding aiming at the face, wearing hoodies, jeans, and glasses. He said, "So, most of the time they don't have their glasses on, but they know to, if they're like doing that to not aim at the face, obviously." He said he did not know of any instances of a coach being shot with a BB gun, or a coach shooting a player with a BB gun. I also asked Mr. Godina if anyone had ever picked up a loaded pistol at Coach Mengarelli's. He said, "No, Sir," and confirmed only BB guns were ever used.

Mr. Godina stated that Coach Mengarelli offered an optional cold plunge activity where students could "get out of running" if they participated. He said participation was voluntary and only a small number of students chose to take part. He also described other optional activities, including roping goats for the same purpose. He stated that handling snakes was also voluntary and described it as occurring only if individuals chose to participate. He said Coach Mengarelli sometimes had bull snakes and during the prior year, players would "hang out" with a bull snake and have it on the carpet. He clarified that Coach Mengarelli had one rattlesnake during the current year, but they did not play with or handle the rattlesnake. When asked whether anyone had ever been asked to kill a snake, Mr. Godina said, "No." He also denied seeing any animals shot with BB guns and stated he was not aware of a rattlesnake being barbecued during the prior year or summer, saying that he was not present for most of the summer. He stated there was "no punishment" if students chose not to participate and confirmed that students were not required to take part in any activity.

Mr. Godina stated that activities were not pre-planned by coaches and generally occurred based on student ideas in the moment. He said "It's not planned" and described the activities as developing spontaneously during team gatherings. He did not report any direct discussion with Coach Mengarelli, questioning these activities or receiving guidance from him about boundaries or limitations beyond general supervision.

Mr. Godina stated that he was aware of allegations regarding recruiting but denied that coaches actively recruit or communicate with students from other schools for that purpose. He said some current players play with students from other schools in AAU and they may discuss wanting to play together, but he characterized that as player-to-player communication, rather than coach-directed recruiting. He stated he had heard from players that [Student Name(s)/PII] and [Student Name(s)/PII] did not like the environments they were previously in, and that [Student Name(s)/PII] had wanted to change schools because he reportedly felt he was not treated well by his prior coach. He said those players had played with [Student Name(s)/PII] and he believed their parents may have spoken with [Student Name(s)/PII] parents about how players are treated in the program, the team culture, and the players' experience. He stated that the program does not tell students to move schools, but he acknowledged that students may

want to attend because they want to win, play for a successful program, access college credit opportunities, and be in an environment where players feel well-treated and want to be around the coaches.

Mr. Godina stated that roughhousing occurred between Coach Mengarelli and players, but he described it as player-initiated and generally playful in nature. He said players would “egg Mario on,” grab him, and hold onto him, after which Mario would grab one of the players, get the player off him, and wrestle with them. He stated that when multiple players were on Coach Mengarelli, the players would eventually get off him. He also stated that Coach Mengarelli would sometimes use pressure points during these interactions, causing players to let go or causing other players to try to help the player get away from Coach Mengarelli. He denied observing anyone become angry during these incidents and described the participants as “messing around and laughing after.”

Michael McCullough, Assistant Coach:

Mr. McCullough described his involvement as direct participation in team dinners as an assistant coach. He said he attended team dinners and was present at the February 3, 2026, dinner. He said team dinners involved multiple informal activities occurring across the property, with students engaging in recreational “country” activities, such as animal handling, basketball, and target shooting.

Mr. McCullough described BB gun and airsoft-related activities as part of the informal activities that occurred during team dinners or team nights at private residences. He stated that students sometimes engaged in target practice with airsoft guns and, at times, BB guns, including shooting at targets, and in some instances, birds or rabbits. He stated that students were not shooting at each other during the events he observed, although he had heard that students had played “tag” with airsoft guns at other team nights. He stated that his own son had used BB guns to shoot birds and targets, and Coach Mengarelli had small metal targets available on the property. He characterized the activities as occurring in a large outdoor setting where students were generally allowed to engage in various recreational activities, including roping goats, playing with horses, shooting hoops, watching basketball, and using airsoft or BB guns.

Mr. McCullough stated that he became aware of the dog-collar activity during the team dinner and explained that students initially found the device inside the house or garage area. He said students were touching the device and later began placing it on themselves. He stated he did not know which student initiated the activity and did not recall any direction from coaches to begin it. He said he did not personally handle the device and did not use it on any student. He indicated he and Coach Mengarelli were aware students were using the device. He asked about safety or hearing discussion regarding it, and reported Coach Mengarelli indicated “they’re not going to hurt a kid” and “no one’s going to get hurt.” He stated that this contributed to his understanding that the activity did not present a safety concern at the time. He said participation in the activity was voluntary and the students “all wanted to try it,” and no student was directed or required to participate. He stated that no student was forced to take part and described no instances in which students were assigned turns or pressured to participate. He stated that across team dinner activities generally, students could choose not to participate without consequence, and cited examples such as cold plunge participation, where some students declined without coercion. He said coach

oversight was intermittent and not continuous. He said the coaches were present both inside and outside, interacting with students and “making sure they’re safe,” but the students were not monitored at all times. He acknowledged his observation was limited in that he was not with students continuously and could not account for all activities at all times.

Mr. McCullough did not describe any direct instruction from Coach Mengarelli directing or organizing the dog collar activity. He attributed the initiation of the activity to students and stated that coaches became aware while it was occurring. He stated that once aware, the coaches’ involvement focused on confirming whether the activity posed a safety concern rather than directing participation. He said, “Safety’s a big thing to me. It is, it truly is.”

Mr. McCullough said he attended the Port Angeles summer ball trip. He said he did not recall an instance of players going through a topless or bikini coffee stand during the trip. He also stated that the players stayed in tents, while coaches slept in the house owned by Casey Ulin. He said [Student Name(s)] was a willing participant during the various activities in Port Angeles. He also confirmed there were BB guns in Port Angeles, and they were used to shoot targets. He said he was not aware of anyone getting shot with the BB guns. He also confirmed that there was a garage and he did not recall a cellar or a stone cave.

Mr. McCullough stated that he believed some of the conflict involving Mr. [Student Name(s)] was directed at Coach Mengarelli, and at times, also affected him (Mr. McCullough) because of his role on the coaching staff and his willingness to engage Mr. [Student Name(s)] in conversation. He described Mr. [Student Name(s)/PII] concerns as including allegations about transfers, recruiting, the basketball program’s priorities, and whether the program was serving “Zillah kids.” He stated that Mr. [Student Name(s)] repeatedly pressed him about those issues during a private office conversation, and he believed Mr. [Student Name(s)] thought he could influence or manipulate him because he had historically listened to concerns and tried to resolve issues civilly. He also described his son’s [Student Name(s)/PII] perception that Mr. [Student Name(s)] or [Student Name(s)] was “trying to get you fired,” and stated that he instructed [Student Name(s)] not to say anything to [Student Name(s)] and to continue treating him normally.

Mr. McCullough stated that he had no involvement in recruiting students to attend or play basketball for Zillah. He identified [Student Name(s)/PII], [Student Name(s)/PII], and [Student Name(s)/PII] as students whose transfers had been discussed, but stated he did not know or speak with those students before they came to Zillah, aside from generally knowing of [Student Name(s)/PII] from prior competition against Wapato. He stated he had no affiliation with getting students to come to Zillah and believed the same was true of the other coaches. He described a later conversation with Mr. [Student Name(s)] in which Mr. [Student Name(s)] raised concerns about additional students allegedly coming to Zillah and Mr. [Student Name(s)] accused others, including Mr. [Student Name(s)], of recruiting. He stated he told Mr. [Student Name(s)] he had no knowledge of any incoming students, did not discuss recruiting with Mr. [Student Name(s)], and could not control what a parent said because Mr. [Student Name(s)] was not a coach. He characterized students practicing with outside or travel teams as a longstanding activity that had occurred since elementary school and not as evidence of recruiting by the coaching staff.

Mr. McCullough described multiple interactions with Mr. [Student Name(s)] that he viewed as separate from the recruiting allegations. He stated that he had worked with Mr. [Student Name(s)] for several years and believed Mr. [Student Name(s)] knew he was someone who would listen and try to resolve concerns through a civil conversation. He stated that he had previously viewed their

relationship as decent, though not particularly close outside of work, and that they had spoken regularly over the years. Mr. McCullough also said Mr. [Student Name(s)] questioned why he had not “stuck up” for him after Mr. [Student Name(s)] was let go from his cross country position, and he told Mr. [Student Name(s)] he stayed out of that matter because they worked together and he did not want it to affect their relationship. He said he believed Mr. [Student Name(s)] later repeated or characterized his comments inaccurately to others, including comments related to his (Mr. McCullough’s) daughter’s cross country experience. He said following the office conversation with Mr. [Student Name(s)] he had not spoken with Mr. [Student Name(s)] for more than a month, despite working in the same building, explaining that he did not want additional conflict and no longer trusted that his statements would be accurately represented.

Student Name(s)/PII Written Statement:

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to provide my perspective as [Student Name(s)/PII] parent regarding the current investigation. Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your commitment to a fair and thorough process to ensure appropriate support and protection for all parties.

By profession, I am a mental health therapist specializing in trauma. I offer this statement from my perspective as a parent, community member, and mental health provider. I approach concerns involving student safety with seriousness and care, and I recognize the importance of thorough and objective investigations.

Over the past eight years, I have observed the Zillah High School Boys Basketball program closely. The coaching staff has been consistent in how they treat players and families, how they involve parents, and how they foster a culture of inclusiveness, sportsmanship, accountability, and self reflection. I have directly observed their interactions with players and parents in various contexts, which have emphasized transparency and open communication. As leaders, the coaches take accountability for team performance and behavior.

When players have faced challenges and hardships outside of basketball, including physical injuries or mental health concerns, the coaching staff has responded with professionalism and appropriate boundaries by encouraging families to seek additional support through medical or mental health resources. They consistently model humility, compassion, and responsibility. Based on my professional and personal observations, I have full confidence in the coaches as trusted adults who prioritize student safety and well being.

I also recognize that parents may have different comfort levels regarding team activities. That is appropriate and should be respected. Any parent with concerns about program activities should have access to a safe, receptive, and transparent process to raise those concerns and have them addressed appropriately. In my experience, those channels have been available within this program. Delaying the expression of concerns until a point at which they may serve a personal interest undermines transparency and diminishes the credibility of legitimate safety issues.

It is my understanding that the complaint may have been initiated by [Student Name(s)/PII]. I believe context is important when evaluating any report. Based on my direct experience, he does not represent my perspective or my family’s experience within the program. I have observed instances in which concerns respectfully raised by others were met with defensiveness, and I have been aware of ongoing interpersonal conflicts involving him within the program and broader community, some of which are documented. I do not consider [Student Name(s)/PII] a reliable source to speak on behalf of my child or our experience.

As a provider who works directly with individuals impacted by trauma and abuse, I take all reports of harm seriously. I also recognize the importance of accuracy and integrity in reporting. Allegations must be evaluated carefully to ensure that legitimate concerns are addressed while avoiding harm that can result from misinformation or mischaracterization.

At any point over the years, there have been clear and accessible lines of communication between parents, coaches, and school leadership to address concerns. This structure has supported transparency and accountability within the program.

Sincerely,

Student Name(s)/PII

Student Name(s)/PII Written Statement:

To Whom It May Concern,

We submit this statement on behalf of our son, Student Name(s)/PII regarding the pending investigation being conducted for the Zillah School District. We understand that a complaint has been filed in regard to team night and that members of the Zillah High School Varsity Boys Basketball team are being scheduled for interviews with a third party investigative organization. Beyond acknowledgment that an investigation exists, no additional information has been provided to student athletes or their families. While we support the district's responsibility to take reports seriously and conduct thorough investigations, we have concerns regarding the lack of transparency, particularly given the involvement of minor students.

All of our children attend Zillah School District. Our experience with the district, its staff, and its programs has been positive. Student Name(s)/PII involvement in the Zillah High School Boys Basketball program began in 2018 as a water boy, then as a team manager, and later as a player starting his freshman year. Over the past eight years, his experience has been good and meaningful. He consistently values his relationships with coaches and teammates and the strong sense of connection built through shared experiences.

We have no concerns regarding the basketball program, including team events. We understand that a team night has been referenced in the complaint. Team nights are hosted by families who volunteer their time and resources to create opportunities that strengthen camaraderie and build a sense of community. Participation, both in hosting and attending, is voluntary. These events are supervised by multiple adults, and many times, invitations are extended to non hosting parents, reinforcing transparency and inclusiveness. Over the past eight years, Student Name(s)/PII has attended team nights, and I have attended some as well. At no point did I observe any situation in which a participant was in danger or being forced to engage in activities. During this time, Student Name(s)/PII has also never reported being subjected to or witnessing such instances.

The program has consistently fostered a culture of accountability both on and off the court, emphasizes sportsmanship, and maintains clear expectations for conduct. Favoritism is not demonstrated, and attitudes of entitlement are not supported within the team environment. This is evidenced by the Zillah Boys Basketball Team being awarded the 2026 SCAC Team Sportsmanship Award.

Due to the investigative nature of the requested interview and the lack of clarity regarding its scope and purpose, we decline Student Name(s)/PII participation at this time. We are concerned that statements made without sufficient context could be misinterpreted. We will reconsider participation upon receipt of the following information: a clear description of the general scope of the investigation and clarification of Student Name(s)/PII role as either a witness or a subject of the complaint.

This decision is not intended to reflect a lack of cooperation or concern for student safety. It reflects our responsibility to ensure fairness, clarity, and appropriate protections for our child.

Finally, Student Name(s)/PII has full trust and confidence in his coaches. They have been consistent and supportive influences in his life, demonstrating care, mentorship, and commitment to student well being. During a period of personal hardship, Coach Mario made a consistent effort to check in with Student Name(s)/PII ensure he felt included in team activities, and support his confidence. We believe the coaching staff acts in the best interests of students at all times and would not place them in harm. Based on our perspective, the concerns underlying this complaint may relate to dissatisfaction regarding playing time and student transfers, which are permitted under applicable rules and occur within the district.

Sincerely,

Student Name(s)/PII

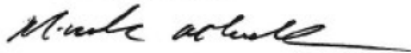
Michael McCullough, May 7, 2026, Written Statement about Toppenish Incident with Student Name(s)/PII:

Incident on 5/7/26 at Toppenish High School

Zillah basketball had a game versus Central Washington Select at Toppenish High School at 7:10PM. The Zillah team was filled with Zillah students and on the CWS team there was a current Zillah student (Student Name(s)/PII) and was coached by his dad (Student Name(s)/PII). The game was physical, and words were said between several players. The thing that concerned me was after the game; after going through the handshake line, (Student Name) stared at me and mouthed, "You're a motherfucker, your fucking ass is going to get fired." There were other things mouthed in my direction but I can't say I know exactly what was said. I did not respond to him. There were several parents in attendance, and I believe (Student Name(s)/PII) and (Student Name(s)/PII) witnessed this.

I am writing this statement, so it is on file.

Michael McCullough



Michael McCullough Final Written Statement

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to inform you that I am no longer going to be part of this investigation. I feel I have said what I need to say. This investigation has continued longer than expected and is starting to take a toll on my life. I have not been there for my family the way it needs me to be, I am not sleeping, and I continue to lose weight. My family and life are more important than basketball. I feel (Student Name) is going out of his way to try to ruin my life and others. If he was concerned with the things he is bringing up, then why wouldn't these things have been brought up sooner. I know a lot of the things being investigated are from last summer and even further back to last season, with some of the things not even involving his son. (Student Name) also references the team night in February at Mario's house. If he was concerned then, why did he allow his son to attend another team night at Mario's house in March? I have also talked about how (Student Name) has talked to me just recently, as of my knowledge, nothing has been done or will be done. If I were to talk to a student like that, I would face some sort of consequence regardless if I said it to a student at school or outside of school. If a student made those comments to me at school, there would be some sort of consequence. I know and understand everyone that is a part of this is doing things behind the scenes, but I no longer want to be part of it. I have been told as of right now I am just a witness, and I am not being investigated. Please understand, I know things like this take time, but again, my family and health are more important to me.

I love the Zillah community, I love the people I work with, and I love Zillah Basketball. I have been here for 8 years and poured my heart and soul into this community, the program and have built a culture that is trying to be ruined by a single individual because his son wants more playing time.

All the best,



Michael McCullough

Mario Mengarelli Written Statement:

Mario Mengarelli

ZHS Head Boys Basketball Coach

Team Night at my house 2/2/2026

Attendance

Coaches: Mario Mengarelli, Mike McCullough, Justin Alcala, Sebastian Godina

Players

Student Name(s)/PII
Student Name(s)/PII

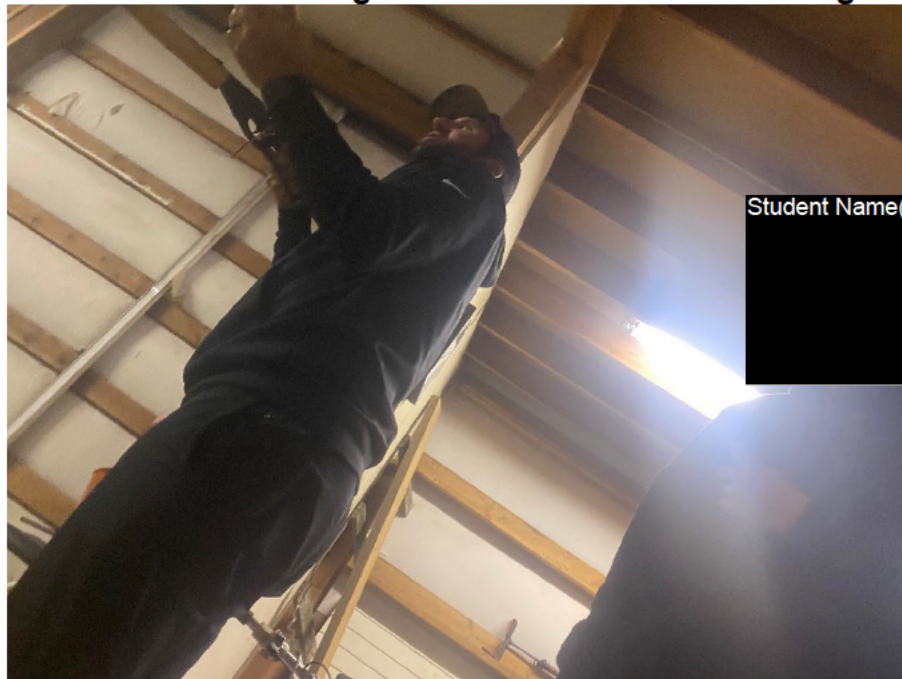
Managers: Student Name(s)/PII

The boys came over after practice for dinner. After dinner they seen the shock collar plugged into an outlet in my house, so the boys started messing with it. They started playing with the shock collars to see how bad it hurt on their fingers. They started with it on level 1 and then passed it around. Then they came up with the idea to shoot pressure free throws while wearing the shock collar. It was decided to only put it on level 3 during free-throws. The collar goes up to 60. No one was forced to do it. If they missed, they got shocked. Coaches were not involved but were there. Other activities that night were individual cold plunge for 30 seconds to get out of running. We also roped goats and roped the dummy for rewards to get out of running if they caught.

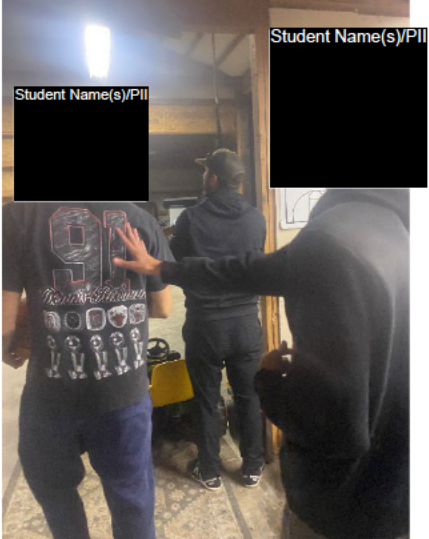
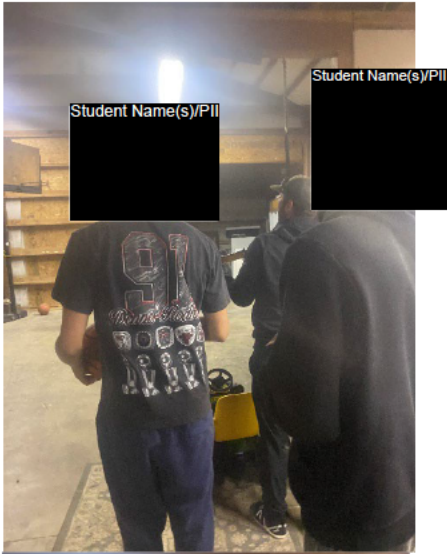
In the past years we have always tried to do a team bonding activity out of their comfort zone at my house. They grabbed the hot fence while holding hands, all jumped in a frozen trough for a cold plunge, jumped in rivers and lakes, did rodeo events, rode horses, handled and ate snakes, ate wild game, stuck hands in mouse traps, played airsoft, shot archery and firearms at targets. Whole point is to do something out of their comfort zone to bring them closer together while creating lifetime memories! As you can see, we have done some out of the box activities, so the shock collar was not a crazy idea!

In the past 10 years I have never had any negative comments about the team bonding activities!

Pictures of Coach Mengarelli with a BB Gun in Port Angeles, Washington:



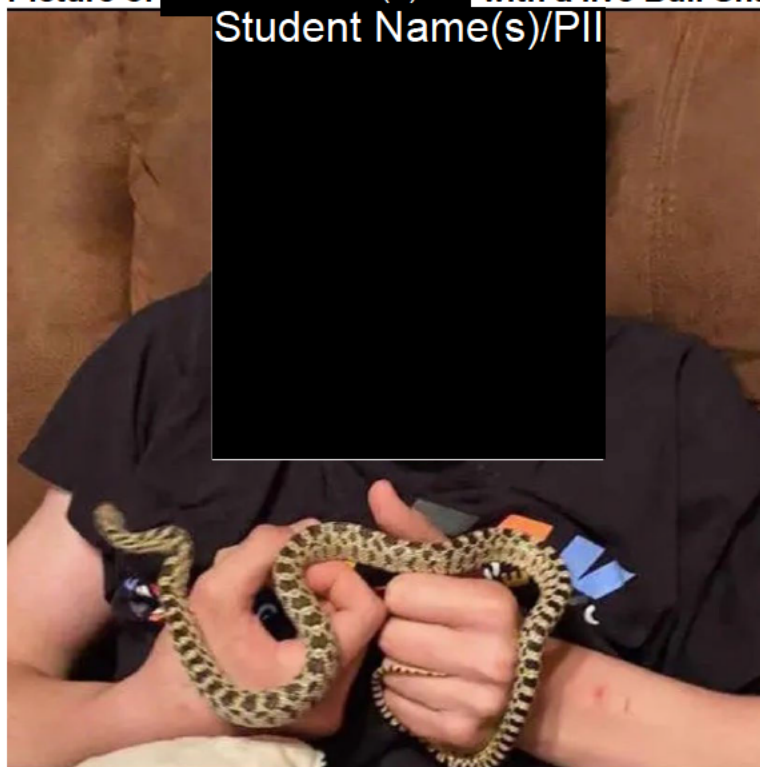
Student Name(s)/PII



Picture of Destroyed Tent in Port Angeles, Washington:



Picture of Student Name(s)/PII with a live Bull Snake:



Mario Mengarelli, Head Basketball Coach:

Mr. Mengarelli described various activities that occurred during team dinners and team-related functions, which he characterized as team-building exercises intended to push players out of their comfort zones. He stated that activities were typically developed by senior team captains and included games, such as musical chairs, “Minute to Win It” competitions, scavenger hunts, and skill-based challenges, with prizes including gift cards or other items, sometimes shoes provided by the Student Name(s)/PII. He said they also did things like ice bath plunges. He stated that in some activities, participants could win rewards, such as exemption from conditioning. He said the scavenger hunts were coordinated with Lindsey Kirkman at the SunDome and usually yielded a prize for no running for a week. He acknowledged that some activities involved physical or unusual elements, including the use of a dog training shock collar. He stated that the collar had been purchased online from Amazon for \$50.00, but he could not remember its make and model. He said players initially tested it on their fingers to gauge its effect, and he believed Student Name(s)/PII was the first to try it. He also said the players showed him a YouTuber who did a similar challenge with dog collars, so they said they wanted to give it a try, as well. He said the device was then passed among players, who made their own agreements about its use, including who would hold the remote while another participant shot the ball. He stated that no coaching staff member operated the device and he did not operate it himself. He stated that participation in activities that involved the collar was voluntary and Student Name(s)/PII had opted out, due to a medical condition. He said he was not directly supervising the activity at all times and described himself as being outside while the activity occurred near a basketball court at his residence. When asked if players were forced by other teammates or coaches to participate, he indicated that it did not happen. He said players could opt out of any activity if they wanted to.

Mr. Mengarelli confirmed that students handled live bull snakes during team-related activities. He stated that the purpose was to teach snake safety and provide an out-of-comfort-zone experience. He stated that the snakes used were non-venomous bull snakes and denied that students handled rattlesnakes. He stated that snakes were handled in an open environment, such as on the living room floor, and students self-selected their level of participation, with some actively engaging and others remaining at a distance. He denied throwing live snakes at students, but acknowledged that a rubber snake had been used as a prank and that individuals, including himself, had startled others while holding snakes. When asked whether he had ever asked ^{Student Name(s)} to kill a rattlesnake with a knife, he denied having done so and again stated that if a rattlesnake was around, he was the one who handled it or dealt with it, not any of the students. He also confirmed that he had killed a rattlesnake and cooked it for the students to try, which was sometime during summer ball in 2025, when the Port Angeles team had come to Zillah. He said other activities that took place at his house were roping goats, riding horses, roping cattle, specifically calves. He stated that although his players were athletes, they were not very good at roping, which was a difficult sport. When asked whether there had ever been a student placed in a pen with a bull, he denied it had ever happened.

Regarding firearms-related activities, Mr. Mengarelli stated that students participated in controlled target shooting activities under his supervision at his residence. He stated that firearms used included shotguns, a .357 revolver, pistols, and a .22 caliber rifle, although he stated that firearms had been used only twice in the ten years he had been the coach. He described more frequent use of BB guns or airsoft guns for target shooting competitions and stated that shooting occurred in safe directions and under controlled conditions. He denied knowledge of any instance in which ^{Student Name(s)} or any student had pointed a firearm at another individual or engaged in unsafe firearm handling. He said the firearms were discharged in a safe direction on his property, not at a designated firearms range. He also indicated that they had participated more frequently in Archery activities. He confirmed there were airsoft wars at his residence during team dinners. He stated that everyone who chose to play wore the appropriate safety equipment; eye protection. He said he sometimes participated in airsoft wars and it was fun to play, and if you knew how to move correctly and keep rounds on target, you could really dominate the other players. He said nobody was forced to play airsoft, and it was optional. He also denied that Daisy Red Ryder BB guns were used in the wars or used to shoot at students. When asked what projectiles were used in the BB guns, he stated they were the standard copperhead metallic .177-caliber BBs.

Mr. Mengarelli also described outdoor and recreational activities occurring during team trips and gatherings, including swimming, crabbing, and hide-and-seek games on private property. He stated that during the July 2025 summer ball trip to Port Angeles, they stayed at Coach Kasey Ulin's property and camped there. He stated that he generally supervised or observed rather than actively participated in some activities, such as hide-and-seek. When asked whether BB guns had been used in Port Angeles, Mr. Mengarelli said they had been used for target-shooting competitions. I asked him if he had ever shot any students with an airsoft gun or the Daisy Red Ryder BB gun, and he denied having done so in Port Angeles. I asked him where on the property they had been firing the BB guns, and he indicated it was outside, and they were firing at bottles. I showed Mr. Mengarelli a picture of him holding a Daisy Red Ryder with two students inside a shop. I asked him to tell me more about what was happening in the picture and what he was shooting at. He told me he

did not recall any of that. When I indicated I had been told he was about to shoot at a Port Angeles player that was off frame, he denied having shot at any players or remembering that incident. He stated that he had been shot by one of the players, although he was not sure who. He said he had been told it was [Student Name(s)/PII] but he did not believe it was [Student Name(s)/PII] who had sniped him because [Student Name(s)/PII] is not a very good shot. He told me he was not sure if he was shot with an airsoft gun or a Daisy Red Ryder BB gun. He said, "After I got hit," he tried confronting a couple of the players to find out who shot him, and he ended up in what he characterized as a friendly wrestling match with [Student Name(s)/PII]. He said he tried to catch [Student Name(s)/PII] to confront him about it, but [Student Name(s)/PII] was too fast for him, so the only player he was able to catch, confront, and wrestle with was [Student Name(s)/PII].

I asked Mr. Mengarelli if there had been a stop at a bikini barista shop during the Port Angeles trip. He confirmed that there had been. He said they had stopped to eat at a Chick-fil-A, and after eating, the players had requested they stop and get coffee. He said they stopped at the nearest coffee stand, and he did not realize what it was until it was too late. He also told me he did not know if the players were messing with him when they requested to stop and get coffee or Red Bulls. When asked for more specifics about where the bikini stand was, Mr. Mengarelli was unable to give any specifics other than that it was close to where they ate. He also confirmed that while driving to Port Angeles, they went over the Tacoma Narrows Bridge. Based on statements that it was close to a Chick-fil-A and the assumption that they would not deviate far from their path to Port Angeles, I was able to cross-reference the locations of Bikini Baristas and Chick-fil-A. I found a bikini barista named Steamy Shots Espresso located at 3611 South 56th Street, Tacoma, Washington. The nearest Chick-fil-A is located at 3902 South Steele Street, Tacoma, Washington. These two locations are only two miles apart from each other, and the barista stand is only a 2.3-mile drive back to Highway 16 westbound.

Mr. Mengarelli also told me about when the Port Angeles team came to Zillah for more summer ball. He said they were practicing and swapping players to simulate a controlled tournament environment. He said the teams all camped at his mom's house, and there was a pool party, and they played wiffle ball, varsity against varsity. Winners got steaks, losers got hot dogs. He said there were no airsoft or BB guns. They also played one-on-one basketball to see who could dunk on who, hide-and-seek, spike ball, and volleyball. He said he had taken part in the hide-and-seek games and confirmed that a Port Angeles player had climbed onto a large metal building. He said the building was used to support weddings and host big events, and is approximately 60 feet by 120 feet, with 10-foot-high walls. He told me he thought the student crawled up some of the exterior air ducting to get onto the roof of the building and lie down for his hiding spot. He told me he was the one looking for people, and he remembered finding the student up there. He crawled onto the roof of the building and then instructed him to get down and not climb up there again.

Throughout his responses, Mengarelli stated that participation in activities was voluntary and that there was no expectation, discipline, or consequence for students who chose not to participate. He denied any peer pressure or coercion from the coaching staff regarding participation in team activities.

Conclusion:

Based on the information gathered, the allegation is substantiated in part. Multiple witnesses, including student participants, parents, assistant coaches, and Coach Mengarelli, confirmed that team dinners and team-related functions included activities involving a dog training shock collar, BB guns or airsoft guns, cold plunges, roping animals, handling snakes, roughhousing, shooting firearms, archery, and other physical or unusual activities. The evidence established that the shock collar activity occurred during a team dinner at Coach Mengarelli's residence and involved student athletes being shocked after missed free throws. While several witnesses described the activity as voluntary, student-led, and conducted at a low intensity, the activity occurred in a team setting, on Coach Mengarelli's property, while coaches were present or aware. Coach Mengarelli acknowledged that the activity occurred, that he was aware of it, and that students participated in it during a team gathering. Although many witnesses characterized these activities as recreational, voluntary, and part of team bonding, the documented activities included physical risk, discomfort, or potentially humiliating or coercive elements within a team environment involving student athletes and coaches.

- **Allegation 2:** Zillah Boys' Basketball coaches consumed and allowed volunteers to consume alcohol in front of student athletes at team functions.

Student Name(s)/PII, Teacher/Parent, and Student Name(s)/PII, Student:

Mr. Student Name(s) reported that he became aware of alcohol use by coaching staff and adults at team functions primarily through statements made by Student Name(s) and through communications with other parents. He stated that due to personal experiences and concerns, he avoided attending events where alcohol might be present, and therefore, did not personally observe Coach Mengarelli consuming alcohol.

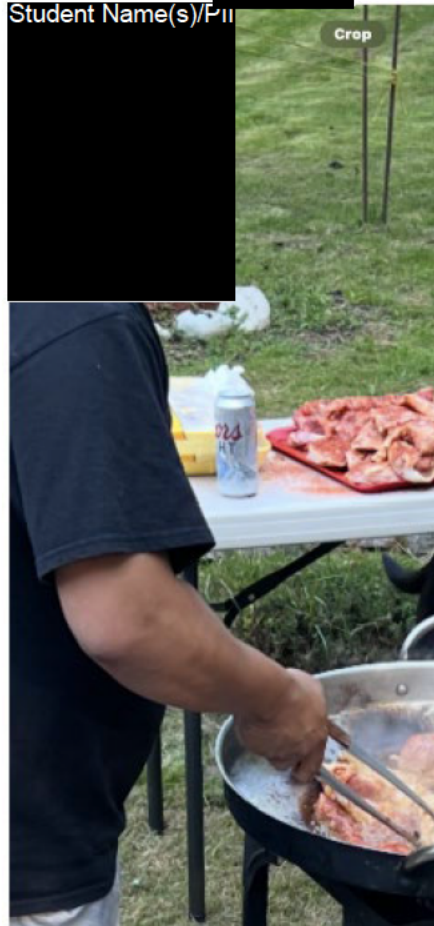
Student Name(s) reported that he observed alcohol present at team-related gatherings and described instances where Coach Mengarelli and other adults consumed alcohol in the presence of student athletes. He stated he saw beer cans, liquor, and related items during gatherings at private residences and team events, though he did not consistently identify specific brands or quantities.

Mr. Student Name(s) described reports from Student Name(s) and others regarding an incident at a Yakima steakhouse during a team event where alcohol was consumed by adults, and he reported that he was told a student drove the team van afterward. He stated that he discussed this incident with a union representative, who provided background on related disciplinary action, though Mr. Student Name(s) did not personally witness the event. He said he received messages and viewed event communications that referenced "bring your own beer" for team gatherings. He stated that this contributed to his understanding that alcohol use at team functions was routine. He said concerns about alcohol use were raised with administrators and staff, but he perceived that the behavior was normalized within the group of parents and coaches.

Student Name(s) also stated that, during the Port Angeles summer basketball trip, Coach Mengarelli was drinking and that the most disruptive conduct occurred on Saturday night, when Student Name(s) described Coach Mengarelli as "drunk" and engaging in conduct toward players throughout the night, including flipping a tent, punching players, shooting or chasing players with a BB gun, and pouring water on players' belongings. Student Name(s) also stated that some parents traveled with the team and "hung out" during the Port Angeles trip, and Mr. Student Name(s) referenced a photograph from that trip showing Mr. Student Name(s)/PII cooking for the team with a Coors Light

visible in the background. More generally, [Student Name(s)] reported seeing Coach Mengarelli drink at Port Angeles, Coach Mengarelli's house, [Student Name(s)/PII] house, [Student Name(s)/PII] house, and other team parties, though he did not consistently identify the specific brand of alcohol. Mr. [Student Name(s)] also raised concerns that alcohol was a recurring part of the team culture and that adult drinking occurred in settings where student-athletes were present. Mr. [Student Name(s)] reported that he did not personally confront Coach Mengarelli regarding alcohol use and did not observe him drinking directly. He stated that he communicated concerns to administrators and coaching staff.

Picture of Mr. [Student Name(s)/PII] cooking during the Port Angeles trip:



Michael Gonzales, Teacher:

Mr. Gonzales stated he became aware of concerns about alcohol use at team functions through information provided by Mr. [Student Name(s)]. He said Mr. [Student Name(s)] raised concerns about the atmosphere at "team nights," which Mr. Gonzales understood to refer to team-related gatherings. He confirmed he did not personally attend these events and did not directly observe any alleged conduct. He stated that Mr. [Student Name(s)] reported concerns "of drinking, coaches drinking, and being unprofessional" during these team-related events. He emphasized that Mr. [Student Name(s)] did not claim firsthand observation. He said Mr. [Student Name(s)] said he "wasn't there" and had "heard" about the conduct, possibly from [Student Name(s)] or other unspecified individuals. He stated Mr. [Student Name(s)] did not identify specific individuals involved, dates, or locations where alcohol consumption allegedly occurred.

Mr. Gonzales said that he did not independently verify the allegations and did not investigate further. He stated he redirected Mr. [Student Name(s)] to report his concerns to the superintendent and advised him to document the information. He explained that he also communicated the concerns to the administration for awareness. He did not describe any direct discussion with Coach Mario Mengarelli regarding allegations of alcohol use. He did not report that he asked the coach about these claims or received any response or denial regarding the allegations.

Michael Torres, Middle School Principal:

Mr. Torres stated he did not have firsthand knowledge of alcohol consumption at team functions. He explained that his only awareness of potential alcohol use came from a brief conversation with Mr. [Student Name(s)] who mentioned a concern about drinking. He stated that Mr. [Student Name(s)] referenced “something about drinking,” but did not provide details regarding who was involved, what occurred, or where it took place. He said he did not ask follow-up questions or seek clarification regarding the comment about drinking. He said he directed Mr. [Student Name(s)] to communicate his concerns directly with the school district administration, rather than discussing them with him. He stated he understood Mr. [Student Name(s)] may have been referring to coaches, but he emphasized that this was not explicitly stated and remained unspecified. He said he had no direct observation of alcohol use at any team-related function. He did not describe witnessing any instance of alcohol being consumed by coaches, staff, or volunteers in the presence of students. He also did not report reviewing any documentation or receiving additional reports that provided further details regarding alcohol use.

Student Name(s)/PII, Teacher/Parent:

MS. [Student Name(s)/PII] said she had no direct knowledge of Coach Mengarelli consuming alcohol or allowing others to consume alcohol in front of student athletes at team functions. She said the information shared with her by Mr. [Student Name(s)] did not include any mention of alcohol use. She further reported that she had not received any information from her children to indicate that alcohol was present at team gatherings. She said her children were generally unwilling to discuss the broader situation, and she did not obtain any details related to alcohol use.

Justin Irion, Assistant Superintendent:

Mr. Irion explained he became aware of concerns regarding alcohol use in connection with basketball-related gatherings through complaints raised by Mr. [Student Name(s)]. He said Mr. [Student Name(s)] referred to social gatherings after games, with parents and coaches present. He clarified that these gatherings were hosted at private residences by parents, including [Student Name(s)/PII], and were not organized or sanctioned by the school district. He said he did not attend regular post-game gatherings and had limited firsthand knowledge of what occurred at those events. He said Mr. [Student Name(s)/PII] concerns were related to the presence of alcohol at these gatherings and to the attendance of student-athletes. He stated his understanding was that adults, including some coaches, attended these events and that alcohol consumption occurred among adults. He said he understood these to be parent-organized events and characterized students' attendance as dependent on parental decisions. He said the extent of alcohol use, including frequency, quantity, and whether coaching staff consumed alcohol in front of students, was not specified.

Mr. Irion said that during a later conversation with Mr. [Student Name(s)] Mr. [Student Name(s)] asserted he had previously reported that coaches were “drinking around kids.” He stated he did not recall

Mr. [Student Name(s)] making that specific allegation earlier and distinguished between social gatherings at private homes and team-related functions. He said if alcohol consumption occurred during a team-sanctioned event, it would warrant a different response, but he did not receive clear information identifying such an occurrence. He did not report any direct discussion with Coach Mario Mengarelli specifically addressing allegations of alcohol consumption in front of student athletes at team functions. He did not describe asking the coach questions about alcohol use or receiving any direct response or denial related to that allegation.

Lance Den Boer, Athletic Director:

Mr. Den Boer stated he did not observe or receive reports of alcohol consumption by coaches during team dinners at Coach Mario Mengarelli's residence. He said he had no prior knowledge of alcohol use occurring at those team-related events and did not describe any complaints or reports of such conduct. His understanding of team dinners was limited to their occurrence, without knowledge of activities taking place during those events.

Mr. Den Boer discussed after-game gatherings that occurred at private residences, including those hosted by parents, such as [Student Name(s)/PII]. He said these events were social gatherings organized by parents and not affiliated with the school district. He stated that invitations were typically extended informally by individuals and not issued by the school or coaching staff. He stated he had attended some of these gatherings and described them as "pure social event[s]" rather than organized team functions. He said alcohol consumption occurred at these after-game gatherings, which he described as adult social events. He stated that the gatherings consisted "mainly [of] parents," and although he had occasionally seen students present, they were not typically participating in the adult social setting and were engaged in separate activities. He said no expectations were set by coaches or the school district for attendance and stated he had "never felt that way one time."

Mr. Den Boer did not report any instance in which coaches were directed to attend these gatherings or required players to be present. He said he had not communicated expectations for attendance or participation in such events and had not observed them being treated as team functions. He did not describe any direct discussion with Coach Mario Mengarelli specifically addressing allegations of alcohol use in front of student athletes at team functions. He did not report asking the coach about alcohol consumption or receiving any response related to that allegation.

[Student Name(s)/PII], Student:

[Student Name(s)/PII] said he did not attend after-game gatherings and he had no firsthand knowledge of those events. He said he "never went to one" and indicated he was not invited to any after-game parties. As a result, he said he did not observe alcohol consumption at those gatherings. He did not report observing alcohol consumption by coaches or others at team dinners. He did not provide any account indicating alcohol was present during team dinners at Coach Mengarelli's residence. He said there was no interaction with Coach Mengarelli regarding alcohol use at any team-related event.

[Student Name(s)/PII], Student, [Student Name(s)/PII] and [Student Name(s)/PII], Parents:

[Student Name(s)/PII] said he attended team dinners at Coach Mengarelli's residence and he did not observe alcohol being consumed by coaches during these events. He responded, "No," when asked whether coaches were drinking at team dinners. He also stated coaches did

not participate in activities and described their involvement as providing food and allowing players to engage in their own activities.

Mr. [Student Name(s)/PII] described after-game gatherings and reported these events were organized by parents, not school staff or coaches. He explained that a parent would typically send a message inviting others to their home or property to gather following games. He stated these gatherings were not school-affiliated and attendance was optional for both players and families, with no expectations set by coaches. He reported that alcohol was present at after-game gatherings and stated “everybody was” consuming alcohol, primarily among adults. He said gatherings typically lasted a couple of hours and involved food and social discussion. He explained that attendance at these events generally consisted of adults, with players rarely present unless the event occurred at their own home. He reported that these gatherings occurred approximately five to six times during the season, typically following significant games. He reported that coaches and administrators were invited to after-game gatherings along with parents and community members.

[Student Name(s)/PII] reported he rarely attended these after-game gatherings and with regard to players, “usually none” attended. He did not describe observing alcohol consumption by coaches in the presence of students.

Student Name(s)/PII, Student, Student Name(s)/PII, Parent, and Student Name(s)/PII, Parent:
[Student Name(s)/PII] said he attended team dinners at Coach Mengarelli’s residence and he had not observed alcohol consumption in connection with those events. He said, “I’ve never been around alcohol when it comes to the basketball program,” and indicated this applied to both team dinners and other program-related activities.

Mr. [Student Name(s)/PII] and Ms. [Student Name(s)/PII] said after-game gatherings were organized by parents. Mr. [Student Name(s)/PII] said these events occurred when “parents want to get together” following games and were not organized by the school or coaching staff. He said gatherings typically occurred at parents’ homes and were voluntary for attendees. He stated that alcohol was present at these parent gatherings and described them as informal social events among adults. He stated that if students were present, it was typically because they were at their own home and were not participating in the adult gathering, instead “went and did their own thing.”

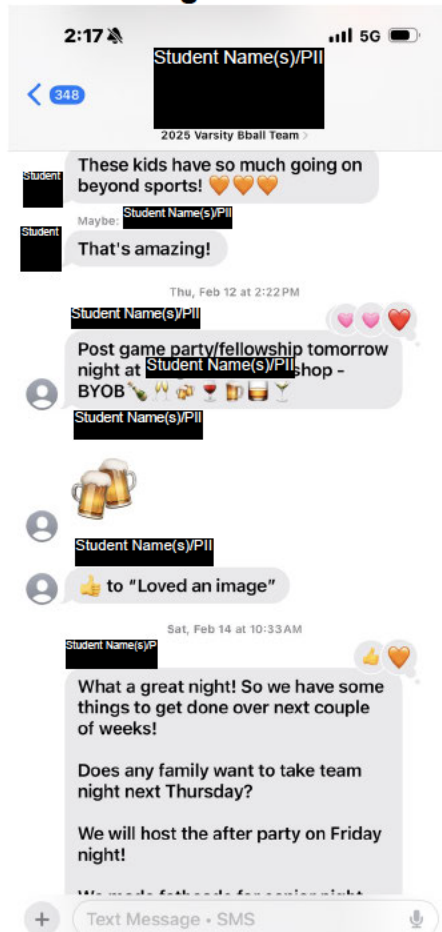
Ms. [Student Name(s)/PII] further described the gatherings as social events rather than organized team functions. She said that most gatherings consisted of parents interacting, discussing games, and supporting each other. She said a Halloween event was the only gathering she considered a “party,” and no students were present at that event. She also said attendance was optional and not directed by the school or coaching staff.

Student Name(s) and Student Name(s)/PII, Parents:
Mr. and Ms. [Student Name(s)/PII] described two types of gatherings associated with the basketball program. They distinguished between team dinners, which involved students, and separate gatherings organized by parents. Mr. [Student Name(s)/PII] stated he was not aware of alcohol being consumed during team dinners and did not describe any observation or report of coaches consuming alcohol in the presence of student athletes during those events.

Mr. [Student Name(s)/PII] stated that gatherings hosted by parents occurred separately from team dinners and were not school-sanctioned events. He said invitations to parent gatherings were communicated through group texts among adults. He described these as “parent parties” where adults gathered socially, often with food, and occasionally with a student or team manager in attendance. He said alcohol was present at these parent gatherings and such events were organized independently of the school or coaching staff. He also stated that coaches sometimes attended these gatherings but described the setting as informal and adult-focused.

Ms. [Student Name(s)/PII] agreed with this distinction and said these gatherings were not intended for student participation. Mr. [Student Name(s)/PII] stated that invitations were shared among parents and that coaches might attend at times, but participation was informal and not directed by the school. He did not describe any requirement or expectation for students to attend these gatherings or for coaches to participate in any official capacity. Neither Mr. nor Mrs. [Student Name(s)/PII] reported any instance in which Coach Mario Mengarelli consumed alcohol in front of student athletes during team functions. They also did not describe any direct discussion with the coach regarding alcohol use at either team dinners or parent gatherings.

Text Message for Parents of Varsity Basketball Team:



[Student Name(s)/PII], Parent:

Mr. [Student Name(s)/PII] described two types of gatherings associated with the basketball program; team dinners involving students and separate gatherings organized by parents. He said he

did not observe alcohol consumption by students during team-related events and did not indicate that alcohol was present at team dinners. He said student activities at team events did not involve drinking and described them as supervised gatherings with food and social interaction.

Mr. [Student Name(s)/PII] described after-game gatherings as events organized by parents rather than the school or coaching staff. He said these events occurred when parents chose to gather socially following games and were not directed by the school district. He stated these gatherings were informal and voluntary for attendees. He said alcohol was present at these parent gatherings, which he described as events for “parents... having adult beverages.” He said coaches were sometimes present at these gatherings but described their attendance as personal, rather than in their roles as coaches. He did not report any instance in which Coach Mario Mengarelli or other coaching staff members consumed alcohol in front of student athletes during team functions. He also did not describe any direct conversation with Coach Mengarelli regarding alcohol use in connection with team activities.

[Student Name(s)/PII] and [Student Name(s)/PII], Parents:

Ms. [Student Name(s)/PII] and Mr. [Student Name(s)/PII] described after game gatherings as parent-organized social events, rather than team functions directed by the school or coaching staff. Ms. [Student Name(s)/PII] stated that these gatherings took place in private homes and were initiated by parents who invited others to attend. She said attendees were instructed to “bring your own booze” and food and described the events as informal social gatherings among adults. She stated that these gatherings were neither school-sanctioned nor organized by coaches. She said the purpose was to “celebrate a win” or spend time together as parents and community members. She said invitations were widely distributed via group communications and described the events as open to families, including parents, spouses, and younger children. She said, “And so, and then the parents are invited if you want to stop by, bring a side, and bring your own booze basically. Bring your own booze, and come by, and have some food. I don’t know how many we had over the season or seasons in prior years. And so again, on the group text, everyone’s invited, including Mr. [Student Name(s)/PII]. And so, everyone was. It was an open invitation. Kids, the majority of the time, weren’t there. [Student Name(s)/PII] would pop in, and he might stop in with somebody, and they grab food and they take off. So, same at the [Student Name(s)/PII]. We go to the [Student Name(s)/PII]. Sometimes they have a food truck. Sometimes parents would just bring snacks. Sometimes the kids will rewatch a game, and all the coaches and all the families would be there, wives, little kids, everybody.” She said alcohol was consumed by adults at these parent gatherings. She clarified that alcohol consumption was limited to adults and described the gatherings as controlled environments, stating participants were parents responsible for their own conduct and children. She stated that when coaches attended, they were accompanied by family members and were present in a personal capacity rather than acting in their official roles. Neither Ms. [Student Name(s)/PII] nor Mr. [Student Name(s)/PII] reported any instance in which Coach Mengarelli or other coaching staff members consumed alcohol in front of student athletes during team dinners or school-affiliated team functions. They did not describe any direct discussion with Coach Mengarelli regarding alcohol use at team functions or gatherings.

[Student Name(s)/PII], Student, and [Student Name(s)/PII] and [Student Name(s)/PII], Parents:

Neither Ms. [Student Name(s)/PII] nor Mr. [Student Name(s)/PII] described their awareness of after-game gatherings based on their participation as parents. They stated these gatherings were organized by

parents and took place at private homes. Ms. [Student Name(s)/PII] said these events were initiated by a parent inviting others to visit after games and were not affiliated with the school or team operations. Ms. and Mr. [Student Name(s)/PII] reported that the gatherings were intended for adults, rather than student athletes. Mr. [Student Name(s)/PII] explained the events were “towards the adults,” where attendees could “have some snacks” or “have a beer,” and were not organized as student-focused functions. Ms. [Student Name(s)/PII] confirmed the events were not structured for student participation and described them as adult social interactions. She said students who did attend these gatherings typically stayed briefly, then left together to spend time elsewhere. Mr. [Student Name(s)/PII] added student presence was limited and often separate from adult activities. Mr. and Mrs. [Student Name(s)/PII] stated that coaches sometimes attended these gatherings, but their attendance was not consistent, and they did not organize or host the events. Ms. [Student Name(s)/PII] said coaches would occasionally “stop by,” but she described their presence as informal and separate from any team-directed function.

The [Student Name(s)/PII] family did not report any instance in which Coach Mengarelli or other coaching staff consumed alcohol in front of student athletes during team dinners or team functions. They did not describe witnessing alcohol use by coaches in the presence of students, and they did not report any direct discussion with Coach Mengarelli regarding alcohol use.

Student Name(s)/PII, Student:

[Student Name(s)/PII] stated he did not observe alcohol consumption by coaches or others during team dinners at Coach Mengarelli’s house. When asked directly about alcohol at team dinners, he responded that there was “never” alcohol at those events. He described after-game gatherings as separate events that occurred following games. He said alcohol was present at those gatherings and confirmed he had observed coaches consuming alcohol at those events. He explained that these gatherings involved parents, coaches, and players, with players often engaging in separate activities, such as playing basketball while adults remained in other areas of the home. He stated that attendance at after-game gatherings was optional. He said there was no expectation from coaches that players would attend and participants were not teased or criticized if they chose not to go. He said families were invited, and players attended if permitted by their parents.

Justin Alcala, Volunteer Coach:

Mr. Alcala said he had not observed alcohol being consumed at team dinners held at Coach Mengarelli’s house. When asked directly about alcohol use at those events, he responded, “Negative, no,” indicating he did not observe alcohol consumption at team dinners. He described attending after-game gatherings that occurred following home games. He said these events were organized informally, typically by individuals inviting others to come over. He said student athletes attended these gatherings with their parents. He stated alcohol was present and consumed at after-game parties. He acknowledged that he personally consumed alcohol at these events. He stated he could not speak to whether other coaches were drinking. He described the setting as similar to a social environment where adults consumed alcohol in the presence of their children. Mr. Alcala did not report any direct discussion with Coach Mengarelli about alcohol consumption at team events. He did not indicate asking Coach Mengarelli about alcohol use or receiving any guidance or direction from him on this topic. He also reported he could not identify all attendees at the after-game gatherings and did not track which individuals were present on specific occasions.

Sebastin Godina, Assistant Coach:

Mr. Godina stated he did not observe any alcohol consumption by coaches or others during team dinners held at Coach Mengarelli's home when student athletes were present. He said beverages available at the dinners included "Powerade, sodas, water," and he reported that "alcohol is never consumed around the boys" at those events. He described after-game gatherings as informal events organized through text messages and not required for attendance. He said he attended one such gathering in the prior year and recalled that alcohol was present at that event. He said he personally did not consume alcohol but observed others drinking. He identified that he believed Mr. Alcala consumed alcohol at that gathering and he did not recall whether another coach present consumed alcohol. He said Coach Mengarelli was not present at the specific after-game gathering he attended, where alcohol was consumed. He did not observe Coach Mengarelli consuming alcohol in the presence of student athletes at any event. He also did not describe any direct communication with Coach Mengarelli regarding alcohol use at team functions.

Michael McCullough, Assistant Coach:

Mr. McCullough described his involvement with team-related events as participation in team dinners and attendance at some after-game gatherings. He said he attended a limited number of team dinners and he had no knowledge of alcohol being consumed at those events. He said he did not observe alcohol consumption by coaches, staff, or volunteers at team dinners. He directly answered that alcohol was not consumed at the team dinners he attended. He said his attendance at team dinners during the relevant period was limited to a small number of events, which he identified as a limitation of his observations.

Mr. McCullough described after-game gatherings as informal, parent-organized social events held at private residences and not associated with the school or coaching staff in an official capacity. He said these events were organized by a parent and attended by adults, with student attendance described as intermittent and brief. He stated alcohol was present at after-game gatherings, which he characterized as adult social settings. He said students who attended would typically arrive briefly, eat, and then leave to spend time elsewhere, and were not the focus of these events.

Mr. McCullough did not report any instance in which Coach Mario Mengarelli or other coaching staff members consumed alcohol in front of student-athletes at team functions, including the Port Angeles summer ball trip. He did not describe any discussion with Coach Mengarelli regarding alcohol use at team dinners or team functions.

Mario Mengarelli, Head Basketball Coach:

Mr. Mengarelli stated that no alcohol was consumed during team dinners by himself, the coaching staff, or participants. He denied any alcohol use at those specific events. Regarding a team trip to Port Angeles, Mr. Mengarelli stated that two adult individuals, identified as Student Name(s)/PII and Student Name(s)/PII, consumed alcohol while present with the group. He stated that these individuals were functioning as cooks for the team. He stated that he did not personally consume alcohol during the trip but acknowledged that the two individuals did drink in front of students. He also stated that Mr. Student Name(s)/PII and Mr. Student Name(s)/PII served as the team's cooks and prepared brisket and crab, adding, "the boys ate like kings."

With respect to after-game parties, Mr. Mengarelli stated that such events were organized by parents, including the [Student Name(s)] and [Student Name(s)/PII] families. He reported that alcohol was present and consumed at most of these gatherings and acknowledged that he sometimes consumed alcohol at these events. He stated that alcohol consumption was primarily limited to adults and that students were generally present to eat and socialize separately. He stated that attendance at these gatherings was not required and that there were no consequences for players who chose not to attend. He stated that he and his spouse would alternate responsibilities for driving when alcohol was consumed, indicating an effort to ensure transportation safety.

Conclusion:

Based on the information gathered, the allegation is substantiated in part. The evidence does not substantiate that alcohol was consumed during the team dinners held at Coach Mengarelli's residence. Multiple witnesses, including students, parents, assistant coaches, and Coach Mengarelli reported that alcohol was neither present nor consumed during team dinners at which student-athletes participated in team activities. Several witnesses also distinguished those team dinners from after-game parent gatherings held at private residences, which they characterized as parent-organized, informal social events, rather than school or team-sanctioned functions.

The evidence established that alcohol was present and consumed by adults at after-game gatherings attended, at times, by coaches, parents, and some students. Multiple witnesses stated that these gatherings were organized by parents, were voluntary, and were primarily adult social events, but they also acknowledged that coaches sometimes attended, students were sometimes present, and alcohol was consumed by adults. Coach Mengarelli acknowledged that alcohol was present and consumed at most after-game gatherings and that he sometimes consumed alcohol at those events. [Student Name(s)/PII] also stated that he observed coaches consuming alcohol at after-game gatherings where players were present, though players were generally described as engaging separately from adults.

Coach Mengarelli acknowledged that [Student Name(s)/PII] and [Student Name(s)/PII] consumed alcohol during the Port Angeles summer basketball trip, while present with the team and while serving as cooks for the students. [Student Name(s)/PII] stated that Coach Mengarelli drank during the Port Angeles trip and described him as intoxicated during disruptive conduct, but Coach Mengarelli denied personally consuming alcohol during that trip. The document, therefore, contains conflicting evidence regarding Coach Mengarelli's personal alcohol consumption on the Port Angeles trip, but it includes an admission that adult volunteers consumed alcohol in front of students during that team-related trip.

The above is a summary of the information I gathered during the course of my investigation.

Respectfully,



Michael C. Shay
Investigator