

CANTON HIGH SCHOOL

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Dear Canton Families:

Last evening our Canton High School boys basketball team was involved in a well-played, hard fought contest with a league opponent Classical Magnet School as part as our league playoffs. While the game was highly contested, all players and coaches from both teams showed excellent sportsmanship, poise, passion, and intensity which truly represented interscholastic athletics at its best.

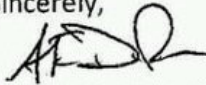
During the game a small number of students chanted "Trump, Trump, Trump" directed toward the opposing team. Many people perceived these comments to be divisive in the context of an athletic event. As we have worked diligently over the past few years to establish a more inclusive school environment, these actions are not in concert with our school mission or the pride we have built at Canton High School. As a result of these comments, community members from both teams expressed their concerns and spoke to school administration today. Students specifically involved have been spoken to directly. However, I wanted to share with you our greater concern about this issue. While students' right to free speech and forming educated opinions about politics and current events is a cornerstone of our educational system, the exact point where political opinion converges with disrespect, discrimination, or hate speech must be separated. We have a reputation as a welcoming community, and these students crossed this line with their comments and have damaged our reputation. As principal, I am disheartened that our message of community has not resonated with all students.

I think we can agree that it is important to have pride in our school, our students, and their accomplishments. I know this one event does not represent the overall beliefs and values of our school community. However, when these actions overshadow an event, we are all negatively impacted and students need to understand their responsibility to each other, to the town of Canton, and to the greater community.

My hope in reaching out to inform families is to begin to build a broader conversation at home regarding this complex issue with your student. I want all students to feel safe and their opinions to be valued in an environment of respect. In support of this belief, please know that in school and at school events, these types of behaviors will not be allowed, and they will result in appropriate school action.

In closing, Canton High School believes in and supports individual freedoms and expression, but we will not tolerate issues of disrespect. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me directly.

Sincerely,



Andrew F. DiPippo
Principal

