

***SARATOGA SPRINGS
CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT***

**REPORT OF INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION
OF ALLEGED INCIDENTS IN CERTAIN SPORTS OF
THE ATHLETIC PROGRAM**

March 13, 2024



Attorney-Client Communication

Only intended for review of the Saratoga Springs City School District Board of Education.

This report has been prepared for the exclusive use and benefit of the Board and solely for the purpose for which it is provided.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides a detailed analysis of various allegations brought to the Saratoga Springs City School District's attention related to certain athletic team coaches. This report was prompted by a document submitted to various New York State agencies concerning complaints made against District coaches and the athletic program. That document ("SAFE complaint") was submitted by an out-of-state attorney claiming to represent former District athletes and parents who have concerns about District athletics.

The District took the SAFE complaint seriously. It hired the law firm Harris Beach to independently investigate the claims. Importantly, the investigation could not turn back time to examine exactly what conduct may or may not have occurred in the past. Further, what is considered appropriate coaching techniques and training changed over the course of the last 30 years. The purpose of this independent investigation was to: (1) identify the allegations made, (2) determine if the District was aware of those allegations at the time of their alleged occurrence, and (3) if so, what, if anything, did the District do to investigate and/or respond to the allegations. Harris Beach conducted this investigation with full independence. The Saratoga Springs City School District made no attempt to influence the investigation and provided, at Harris Beach's request, all pertinent documents for inspection by investigators as well as contact information for prospective interviewees.

The SAFE complaint involved five (5) of the District's approximately 103 athletic teams and six (6) coaches over a 34-year period. On average the District employs 134 coaches each year.

Examining these complaints, Harris Beach conducted over 30 interviews and reviewed over two thousand pages of documents provided by the District. Some complainants agreed to

interviews by the investigators while others agreed only if their names would not be published or made public. Some declined to be interviewed at all.

The overall findings of the investigation include the following:

- No unlawful conduct was identified.
- The District addressed matters of concern with coaches in a timely manner when they arose or were reported to the District.
- In some cases, the District's response to complaints, when deemed founded, resulted in ending coaching appointments.
- In some cases, the District's response to complaints led to counseling and formal discipline of coaches.
- When the District was made aware of complaints or allegations, it investigated those in the vast majority, but not all, circumstances.

Our investigation focused primarily on the specific allegations raised in the SAFE complaint. Of the five (5) subject athletic programs, the District timely and appropriately responded upon learning of students' or parents' allegations regarding the following programs:

- Girls Lacrosse (2022)
- Girls Soccer (2015)
- Boys Basketball (2020-21, 2022)

In each of those sports, upon learning of the alleged incidents and coaching misconduct, the District investigated in a timely manner and took remedial action, if appropriate to do so.

With regard to a single complaint related to Girls Basketball (2015), neither the District nor the coach were aware of the student's complaint at the time. Therefore, no investigation took place because no timely complaint was filed.

With regard to Cross Country and Track and Field, allegations were received over nearly 35 years (1989-2022). The investigation revealed that when the District was made aware of

complaints or allegations, it investigated those in most, but not all, circumstances. The investigation also revealed that the District took actions regarding Cross Country and Track and Field coaches.

With respect to some of the complaints or allegations about the Cross Country and Track and Field coaches, evidence reviewed by the investigation team suggests the District's review and actions may not have gone far enough. The way the District addressed several of the complaints or allegations lacked sufficient follow-through with these coaches. Effective oversight of directives given by District supervisors was not always in place.

Our extensive review leads to the recommendation that the District's Board and administration review the information in this report and use it to critically assess current policies and procedures regarding the hiring, training, and retention of coaches. We encourage the District and its leaders to take all appropriate steps to fully investigate all matters brought to their attention as well as protect against any harmful conduct or any form of misconduct in the future, as it has done with respect to most of the complaints and allegations examined in this report.

INTRODUCTION

On October 3, 2023, Martin J. Greenberg, Esq., an attorney in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, sent a letter to certain New York State officials/offices alleging past “coaching abuse” in the Saratoga Springs City School District (the “District”). Attorney Greenberg indicated that he represents former athletes in the District and parents¹ who reported to him there was a lack of response by the District in the past to complaints of alleged physical, mental, and verbal abuse of student athletes.

The October 3rd letter indicates it was sent to New York State Governor Kathy Hochul, New York State Attorney General Letitia James, New York State Commissioner of Education, the Chancellor of the New York State Education Department, and the Executive Director of the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (“NYSPHSAA”). Attorney Greenberg neglected to send the October 3rd letter to the District or its Board of Education, nor did he contact the District about any of the reported incidents which allegedly occurred as far back as 1988 and, most recently, in Spring 2022 – two years ago. The District first learned of the October 3rd letter from the media. At the District’s request, a local media source shared a copy of the October 3rd letter via email with the District.

While the October 3rd letter is 77 pages, only half of those pages contain actual allegations. Those are set out in a copy and paste format from past communications or a summary to Attorney Greenberg or Mr. Johns. Most of the complaints or incidents are set forth in the October 3rd letter. Additional allegations were thereafter raised by Attorney Greenberg in a letter dated October 30,

¹ These former athletes and parents are said to refer to their group as “Safe Athletics for Everyone” or “SAFE”. The SAFE group is not an incorporated association, but is seemingly led by Richard Johns, a former (now retired) teacher and coach at the District. Mr. Johns is also the founder and President of a 501(c)(3) nonprofit charitable organization named “Act With Respect Always,” which is said to provide character education programs for and within schools and athlete programs for a fee.

2023 (again sent to New York State officials/offices and not the District²). Attorney Greenberg expressed his conclusion regarding the District’s athletic programs, provided additional statements and identified the names of three (3) individuals who had previously asked to remain anonymous. On November 15, 2023, Attorney Greenberg sent a letter to the District’s Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Michael Patton, expressing his disappointment with the re-appointment of two (2) coaches named in the allegations (Art and Linda Kranick), submitted an additional statement and provided the names of additional individual complainants. (Attorney Greenberg’s letters are collectively referred to as the “SAFE complaint.”)

INSTITUTIONAL HISTORY

The District has six elementary schools for grades kindergarten to five, one middle school for grades six to eight, and one high school for grades nine to twelve. The District serves students from the City of Saratoga Springs and the Saratoga County towns of Milton, Wilton, Malta, Greenfield and Saratoga. There are approximately 5,790 students currently enrolled in the District. Of those students, 2,804 are in grades 7-12 and eligible to participate in the District’s competitive athletic teams. For the 2022-2023 school year (the last completed school year for which we obtained data), approximately 810 student athletes competed in Fall sports, 539 student athletes competed in Winter sports and 632 student athletes competed in Spring sports. (Note: some students participated in more than one sport.)

The District currently has over 25 interscholastic programs, also referred to as “sports”, and 103 athletic teams.

² Prior to October 30, 2023, it was widely publicized that the District would be addressing the allegations made in the October 3, 2023 letter by having an independent investigation completed.

1. District Administration

During the time period at issue in the allegations, the names of the superintendents and athletic directors are as set forth below, along with their approximate dates and years of service to the District.³

Superintendent:

Dr. Michael Patton	January 1, 2018 - Present
Dr. Michael Piccirillo	July 1, 2012 – December 31, 2017
Dr. Janice White	July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2012
Dr. John MacFadden	1991 – June 30, 2007

Director of Athletics:

John Goodson	July 17, 2023 - Present
Nicholas McPartland	July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2023
Wayne Bertrand (interim)	April 1, 2019 – June 30, 2019
Peter Sheehan	April 30, 2007 – March 30, 2019
Robert Stulmaker	July 1, 1996 – March 16, 2007
Raymond Waldron	Pre 1988 -1996 (now deceased)

2. Relevant District Policies

(a) Dignity for All Students Act and Title IX Policies

New York State’s Dignity for All Students Act (“DASA”) seeks to provide public elementary and secondary school students with a safe and supportive environment free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying on school property, a school bus and/or at a school function. DASA was intended to foster and expand concepts of tolerance, respect for others and dignity to include: an awareness and sensitivity in the relations of people, including but not limited to, different races, weights, national origins, ethnic groups, religions, religious practices, mental or physical abilities, sexual orientations, gender identity, and sex.

³ All of the District administrators listed were interviewed, with the exception of Mr. Bertrand and Mr. Waldron. Additional administrators were also interviewed.

The District has maintained its DASA policy since 2012, when the law took effect. In accordance with this policy, the District appoints a District-wide DASA Coordinator and annually appoints a DASA Coordinator at each school building. The District created a page on the District's website to explain and address DASA, as well as developed a form that could be used to report suspected violations of DASA.⁴

*(b) Board of Education Policy: 0115 (Student Harassment and Bullying Prevention and intervention) and 5030 (Student Complaints)*⁵

Policy 0115 and Policy 5030 further expand upon the District's DASA policy as well as student concerns. The policies provide examples of conduct that could be considered harassment or bullying, and outline procedures for reporting and investigating violations.

*(c) District Code of Conduct*⁶

On an annual basis, the District adopts a Code of Conduct. This document sets forth the long-standing set of expectations for conduct on school property and at school functions by all members of the school community and visitors. These expectations are based on the principles of civility, mutual respect, citizenship, character, tolerance, honesty, and integrity. These expectations for acceptable conduct on school property are defined within the Code, as well as identifying possible consequences of unacceptable conduct and ensuring that discipline, when necessary, is administered promptly and fairly.

*(d) Athletic Code of Conduct*⁷

The District's Athletic Code of Conduct prohibits bullying, harassment, and hazing. The language largely mirrors that included in the District's other policies addressing bullying and

⁴ <https://www.saratogaschools.org/about-us/policies-and-procedures/dignity-for-all-students-act-dasa/>

⁵ https://boardpolicyonline.com/?b=saratoga_springs_city

⁶ <https://www.saratogaschools.org/about-us/policies-and-procedures/code-of-conduct/>

⁷ <https://www.saratogaschools.org/athletics/athletics-code-of-conduct/>

harassment. The policy further states that “[a]ny member of the School District community confirmed to have been involved in such activity will be subject to disciplinary action for violation of this policy.” The policy also includes a statement to the students, which reads in part: “Your health and safety, including your mental and physical well-being, is the school’s first priority. To ensure that, it is important that all student-athletes adhere to the established rules found in the Athletic Code of Conduct.”

The Code does outline procedures for reporting and investigating alleged violations of the Code, but it appears to be aimed at investigating student violations rather than the conduct of staff or coaches.

(e) Collective Bargaining Agreement

Article 6 of the July 2018 to June 2022⁸ collective bargaining agreement (“CBA”) between the District and Saratoga Springs Teachers Association (“SSTA”) includes language related to personnel assignments, including for coaching the District’s interscholastic teams. The CBA grants SSTA members rights to a coaching position over a non-member of the SSTA. It further provides coaches who have successfully coached for three (3) consecutive years or more (referred to as “good standing”) the right to first refusal over another SSTA member who may also want to coach that same sport/team. The Superintendent fully reserves the right and discretion to make the final determination as to filling any coaching vacancy, even if there is a coach in “good standing.” The Superintendent also has the right and discretion to remove any coach prior to completion of a season or coaching appointment, but a written statement of reasons must be provided to that coach by the Superintendent which are relevant to the specific assignment.

⁸ A successor to the 2018-2022 CBA was recently negotiated but did not change the language of this section of Article 6. The investigation team is not certain of when this language was first included in the CBA.

(f) Coaches Handbook

The District provided the investigation team with an undated Coaches Handbook, which the District (through its athletic directors) indicated has been periodically amended.

Relevant portions of the Handbook are as follows:

- In the “Philosophy of Interscholastic Athletics,” the Handbook states that: **“Guiding the team to attain maximum potential is the ultimate goal.”** (emphasis in the original) (p. 4).
- The Handbook indicates that if there are serious concerns about a coach, the coach may be dismissed at any time, but the coach has a right to appeal the decision. (p. 14).⁹
- “NYSPHSAA regulations allow 6 practices and/or games within a 7-day period. Typically, Sunday is the day of the week when there will be no practices. On the 7th day (one day of rest) there are to be no team meetings, captains’ practices, or any other formal or informal team practices (such as voluntary practices).” (p. 19).
- The Handbook explains how to handle injuries and when students are permitted to return after an injury. (pp. 32-35).
- The Handbook describes precautions coaches should take to avoid any lawsuit or negligent behavior. (pp. 47-51).
- Guidelines for injury prevention, handling heat illness. (pp. 52-56).

ATHLETIC TEAMS AND COACHES

The SAFE complaint pertains to five (5) of the District’s 103 athletic teams, namely Girls Varsity Lacrosse, Girls Varsity Soccer, Boys Varsity Basketball, Girls Varsity Basketball, and the Cross Country/Track and Field program and only six (6) of the District’s current¹⁰ 132 coaches for its athletic teams. The alleged incidents were claimed to have occurred during an expansive time period (primarily for Cross Country/Track and Field) from 1988 until 2022¹¹.

⁹ The right of a coach to appeal his/her dismissal decision goes beyond what the CBA requires.

¹⁰ There was an allegation involving the former Girls Varsity Lacrosse coach (Spring 2022) (who would have been considered a 7th coach for purposes of this report), but that individual is no longer coaching.

¹¹ The October 30, 2023 letter also provided a statement concerning the death of a student in a neighboring school district. That matter did not involve the District’s athletic programs nor any of its coaches and, therefore, was not examined for purposes of this investigation.

During the investigation, additional information was also provided from individuals not named or referred to in the SAFE complaint. This included other alleged incidents and/or matters that had been examined by the District. Further details regarding personnel actions taken by the District concerning the coaches named in the SAFE complaint, as well as other coaches, were also made known to the investigation team. Those matters are beyond the scope of this written report, as the report focuses on the allegations set forth in the SAFE complaint but were shared with the District.

THE INVESTIGATION

At a District Board of Education Meeting on October 24, 2023, the Board unanimously agreed to retain Harris Beach PLLC to conduct an independent investigation. Harris Beach assembled an investigation team and conducted the review independently, free of influence or interference from the District or SAFE. The District fully cooperated with the investigation team to provide access to materials, reports, and documents as well as contact information for individuals to be interviewed.

While Attorney Greenberg indicated the complaints are about “whether or not these coaches acted appropriately on the field and in training,”¹² the investigation team was understandably not able to turn back time to examine what may or may not have occurred in the past. **Rather, the purpose of this independent investigation was to: (1) identify the allegations made, (2) determine if the District was aware of those allegations and (3) if so, what, if anything, did the District do to investigate and/or respond to the allegations.**

The investigation team did not have the power to compel compliance from individuals for the purposes of collecting documents or conducting interviews, including District personnel,

¹² October 3, 2023 SAFE complaint letter, page 2.

coaches, students, and parents. Attorney Greenberg provided us with the contact information for some individuals identified in the SAFE complaints¹³. Some individuals identified never responded to outreach by the investigation team, while others explained they were not interested in participating in the investigation unless their identities remained confidential. With regard to those who indicated they would only participate if they remained completely anonymous, the investigation team could not guarantee anonymity or confidentiality as it needed to assess the credibility of the facts and evidence on which the allegations are based. As indicated above, while the investigation team could not mandate cooperation, it would have been unreasonable for the investigation team to ask the District to review a matter that may have involved a named coach relating to something that allegedly happened in the past without identifying “who” the situation involved. Further, to adequately respond to an allegation, the accused coach or District official may need or want to provide information on the complaining individual (e.g. bias, prejudice and/or motive for making the allegation), which would not be possible if the allegation was made by an anonymous individual/source and their identity remained unknown. Importantly, investigating anonymous complaints would have required the investigation team on its own to gather evidence, and the accused coach would not have been provided with procedural due process. Thus, anonymous complaints or individuals refusing to be interviewed unless their identity would remain confidential necessarily have less weight than named individuals who agreed to be interviewed.¹⁴

¹³ Attorney Greenberg indicated some individuals were not willing to identify themselves citing fear of retaliation, although the complaining individuals involved *former* student athletes (and/or parents of former student athletes) at the District who graduated – and graduated at the very latest in June 2022.

¹⁴ While the anonymous allegations could not be corroborated with detailed records or witness accounts, those allegations were not disregarded. Many were still discussed with the subject coach. Further, the District provided a vast number of records regarding the named sports teams. However, in the absence of corroborating evidence - such as someone with personal knowledge coming forward or documentation relating to the issue - those accounts of events were not included in this report. Those allegations were nonetheless considered in the context of other allegations.

Notwithstanding these challenges, the investigation was broad and thorough. The investigation team conducted approximately 30 interviews of individuals¹⁵ who wished to participate (ranging from 30 minutes to three (3) hours)¹⁶. The District provided the investigation team with access to approximately 2,000 pages of confidential documents and archived files of information, student and employee records, legal files and notes.¹⁷ The District also shared numerous letters of support received from former student athletes and parents in favor of their coaches and the District's athletic program. Many of the letters were delivered or emailed to Superintendent Michael Patton following the October 24, 2023 Board of Education meeting at which the independent audit of the athletic program was discussed.

ALLEGED INCIDENTS

1. Girls Varsity Lacrosse

In the SAFE complaint, two (2) lacrosse parents and one (1) lacrosse player were referenced regarding circumstances in Spring 2022. Only one name was provided to the investigation team to allow for an interview, that of a parent, Jessica Walton Todd. That notwithstanding, the District provided significant documentation on concerns raised with the Girls Lacrosse team in Spring 2022 and how it was handled.

¹⁵ Due to health concerns/issues, long time coach Art Kranick was unable/not made available to be interviewed. Linda Kranick, however, submitted herself to two lengthy interview sessions and provided various letters of support received from runners who participated in the cross country/track and field program during the time frames in question.

¹⁶ One of the former track and field athletes included in the complaint, ██████████, recently told the media that she also spoke to a USA Track and Field investigator. She commented that her interview with the Harris Beach investigators was much shorter than the one she had with the investigator from USA Track and Field. "My one with USA Track and Field was maybe an hour-and-a-half, two hours," she said. "The Harris Beach interview was more like 15 to 20 minutes. It was definitely not thorough," she said. Contrary to Ms. ██████████ claim, she was interviewed by two Harris Beach attorneys for approximately 40 minutes. The interview addressed and covered the allegations contained in the SAFE complaint and concluded only after offering Ms. ██████████ the opportunity to provide any other information she wanted to share.

¹⁷ It is possible that records received may have been incomplete due to the passage of time. The investigation team has no reason to believe that the District was not forthcoming with the information and records requested.

In May 2022, concerns were raised to the District regarding the conduct of then Head Coach, Katie Hannan. The District met with Coach Hannan and looked into the concerns raised and completed an investigation that concluded Coach Hannan had engaged in conduct that was unacceptable and/or unprofessional including, for example, using body image to motivate students (even if trying to do so in a “joking” non-malicious manner). It was reported thereafter that Coach Hannan was regularly supervised by the then Athletic Director (at practices and games), so similar conduct to that reported would not reoccur. Further, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

In accordance with Athletic Director McPartland’s [REDACTED] memo, on May 17, 2022, Coach Hannan met and spoke with the Girls Lacrosse team to apologize and acknowledge that her words and actions fell short of what the team should expect from her. Coach Hannan also sent an email stating the same to the parents. However, it appears that some players and parents believed that Coach Hannan was not genuine in her apology and stated that she appeared to merely be “checking a box” in apologizing to the team. A letter written by Parent Walton Todd dated May 18, 2022, was then submitted to the District’s superintendent and athletic director, which was signed by the parent(s) of 12 athletes (of the team’s 22 families). The letter generally takes issue with the District not removing Coach Hannan from her position for the remainder of the 2022 season following the above-referenced conduct.

There were discussions among Athletic Director McPartland and Superintendent Patton as to whether [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. [REDACTED] Coach Hannan was permitted to finish the 2022 season as the head coach – with the supervision of Athletic Director McPartland – as the District determined it had already addressed her behavior [REDACTED]

[REDACTED].

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. Coach Hannan has not since applied for a coaching position with the District.

Katie Hannan did not respond to a request for an interview. Parent Walton Todd was interviewed and explained that her primary concern was the District’s lack of communication regarding how the situation was being handled and that Coach Hannan was ultimately allowed to finish the remainder of the season. According to Parent Walton Todd, after raising concerns about Coach Hannan on May 18, 2022, the parents did not hear from the District until June of that year.

With respect to the allegations against Coach Hannan, there does not appear to be a factual dispute. Coach Hannan’s email to the parents effectively acknowledges that she engaged in inappropriate conduct. While Coach Hannan was permitted to finish the season, she was not reappointed to a coaching position. Some parents expressed concern that the District permitted Coach Hannan to continue to coach and/or finish the season, and a few of the parents who raised concern about Coach Hannan also expressed frustration with the timing of the District’s communication. In fact, the District did take affirmative actions to address the substantiated allegations. There was an email notification to parents letting them know that their complaints were being addressed with Coach Hannan sent June 1, 2022 by Superintendent Patton.

The District assessed and investigated the claims at the time they were alleged to have occurred. The District addressed and took action with regard to their findings. While certain parents on the team did not agree with the actions the District took regarding Coach Hannan, including allowing her to continue to coach (during post season play) after an apology they found insufficient, the District did respond to the allegations and substantively communicated to the parents in writing.

2. Girls Varsity Soccer

(a) November 2015

After the soccer season had ended, two students filed a DASA complaint with the High School DASA Coordinator regarding soccer coach, Adrienne Dannehy.¹⁸ The then DASA coordinator and then Athletic Director were notified of incidents raised and soon thereafter¹⁹ interviewed multiple students and other individuals. Coach Dannehy was also made aware of the complaints, but the names of the complaining students/student athletes were kept confidential at that time. The complaints focused on the alleged treatment by Coach Dannehy of student athletes such as, practicing in “extreme heat,” expressing disgust if student athletes vomited during practice, having to practice through blisters or stress fractures. The complaints also generally alleged that Coach Dannehy spoke negatively toward and demoralized some of the student athletes. While the High School DASA Coordinator investigated this matter²⁰, it was determined that the incidents reported did not fall under DASA and/or were unfounded. The matter was then

¹⁸ Coach Dannehy has been a physical education teacher in the District since October 2001 and has been appointed as a Girls Varsity Soccer coach since 2006 (becoming head coach in 2008).

¹⁹ The Thanksgiving holiday occurred just after the DASA complaint was made.

²⁰ The interpretation of DASA investigations and protected individuals and incidents have expanded greatly since the 2015-2016 school year.

referred to the Athletic Director as the complaints pertained to coaching. The student athletes who complained were made aware of this by the High School DASA Coordinator.

The Athletic Director investigated the matter. He found the complaints were either inaccurate/did not have factual support (e.g., intentionally mispronouncing a student's last name) or were to provide corrective feedback, not to belittle or pick on certain student athletes. He also noted that several of the student athletes complaining were those who did not make the Varsity team that year.

(b) December 2015

At the end of December 2015, Parent Ann Marie Pendergast contacted the District requesting "an immediate change in coaching staff for the girls' varsity soccer team". At that time, the soccer season had concluded, and Parent Pendergast's child was then a senior, who would therefore not play for Coach Dannehy again. The District, including the Superintendent and/or Assistant Superintendent, met with Parent Pendergast as well as the student athlete. It was explained to Parent Pendergast and her student athlete/child that because their concerns involved a personnel matter, the District could not share what they would do to address or how, if at all, they would respond to the concerns. In looking into this matter, the District office (including the District DASA Coordinator) reviewed the interview notes and information from the High School DASA Coordinator.

(c) May 10, 2016 Board meeting

Individuals showed up at a meeting of the Board of Education and lodged complaints and allegations against soccer coach Adrienne Dannehy.²¹ In response, other individuals who learned of the concerns being raised also attended the Board meeting to speak in support of Coach

²¹ The timing of these complaints may have been based upon when coaches for the Fall sports teams, like Girls Varsity Soccer, were to be appointed by the Board.

Dannehy. While the concerns pertained to a personnel matter, the then Board allowed individuals to speak publicly about the matter. At the Board's next meeting on May 26, 2016, the Board continued to hear differing perspectives on Coach Dannehy, but this time it was done during executive session. As a part of the concerns/allegations raised and support for Coach Dannehy, many letters were also sent to the District.

Then Superintendent Dr. Michael Piccirillo thought the timing of complaint(s) was odd since it occurred after the season was over, but more importantly, there were two completely different sides and perceptions on the coach. It was determined that there was not strong corroboration at that time of issues raised against Coach Dannehy. Nonetheless, the Superintendent and Athletic Director discussed that they would begin to closely monitor soccer, including through unannounced "drop ins" at practices where/when the alleged incidents had occurred.

Importantly, the anonymous Soccer Player 1 referenced in the SAFE complaint did come forward and was interviewed. She expressed concern, among other things, that, while she was typically a "starter," the treatment of others on the team especially regarding "head-to-head" drills of players at differing levels and verbal so-called encouragement went too far.

The District investigated the concerns raised on three (3) separate occasions. It seems that the District could have examined these matters further or documented how they were addressed with a conclusion and associated reasoning. Additionally, written communication back to the individuals raising concerns unfortunately did not occur, leaving some to believe that nothing was done, when matters were in fact investigated at various levels within the District. Nonetheless, it appears that the primary concern expressed by certain individuals was that they were not in agreement with the decision made to continue Coach Dannehy as the Head Coach for the Girls Varsity Soccer team.

Around this same time period of May 2016, then Superintendent Piccirillo recalled having a meeting with coaches to emphasize that the athletic program should allow the students an opportunity to grow and should not be solely focused on wins and losses. Superintendent Piccirillo shared that other coaches were removed from their coaching duties for definitive/known conduct taken that the District did not consider was proper. In fact, certain individuals/coaches soon thereafter met with Superintendent Piccirillo explaining that they [the coaches] did not feel supported by him. After listening to those individuals/coaches, the Superintendent responded that if a coach engages in conduct that is inappropriate, action will be taken.

The District assessed and investigated the claims at the time they were alleged to have occurred. While certain parents on the team did not agree with the findings of the District, the District did respond to the allegations.

3. Girls Varsity Basketball

The SAFE complaint contained only one student athlete complaint against current Girls Varsity Basketball coach, Robin Chudy.²² The student athlete, [REDACTED], graduated from the District in 2016, having attended and played basketball for the District in her freshman, junior, and senior years. She recalls that in 2015, during her junior year, there were rumors going around about her and a male student. Ms. [REDACTED] thought the rumors were started by another student, but said she also heard that Coach Chudy told people about the rumor, including, as alleged, another coach at the District. Ms. [REDACTED] also believed that Coach Chudy was somewhat aggressive in her demeanor, and that she attempted to undermine Ms. [REDACTED] college recruiting process.

Importantly, Ms. [REDACTED] said she never spoke to Coach Chudy or any District personnel about the rumor, her perceptions of Coach Chudy's demeanor or issues with recruiting. Ms. [REDACTED]

²² The District has received no other complaints regarding Coach Chudy through any other source. It is understood that Coach Chudy is in her 10th year of coaching.

stated that she just wanted the entire incident to fade away, and at the time did not think that complaining to the District would be helpful.

The investigation team interviewed Coach Chudy who, like the District, was unaware of Ms. [REDACTED] complaints until recently. As such, Coach Chudy explained that she had no discussion with Ms. [REDACTED] or the District about the allegations during the relevant time period (2015-2016) since she was unaware of any concerns. In short, Coach Chudy denied the allegations put forth in Ms. [REDACTED] complaint in their entirety. Coach Chudy explained substantively her approach to coaching and her philosophy regarding college recruitment, which involves the student athlete assisting with the selection of videos to share with her chosen schools. Neither Coach Chudy nor the District had the opportunity to assess the claims at the time they were alleged to have occurred. These allegations were not substantiated by any additional witnesses and at no time did the District receive individual complaints or documents relevant to Ms. [REDACTED] allegations which are largely personal in nature. The District and its Girls Basketball Coach did not investigate the matter because they did not know about it.

4. Boys Varsity Basketball

The SAFE complaint includes one (1) anonymous complaint regarding the Varsity Boys Basketball team. In that no individual was identified and offered for interview, the investigation team was unable to confirm or discuss this matter with the complaining individual. Nonetheless, based on the documents provided to the investigation team by the District, it appeared that this “anonymous” complaint concerned a DASA complaint lodged by a parent²³ on September 1, 2022, through the District’s DASA reporting process available on the District’s website. The complaint generally alleged that Head Coach Matt Usher and Assistant Coach Mitch Snyder were demeaning

²³ The name of this parent will remain confidential for purposes of this report, although the investigation team and District are aware of his name.

and threatening towards the complainant's son. The complaint included a number statements the coaches were alleged to have made when speaking with players, including language such as – “I’ll sit your ass on the bench” and “if you are not buying in, then the door is over there,” amongst others.

The District acknowledged receipt of the complaint to the parent directly and advised the parent how his complaint would be processed, including an investigation. The parent also had a conversation with a District DASA coordinator after which the parent thanked the DASA coordinator for the time and confirmed their conversation. The parent thereafter further alleged that the coaches were leading the team by fear, as well as intimidating, harassing and bullying players and that the program was run in a dysfunctional manner because it was not clear which coach was “in charge.”

Approximately one (1) month later, and as was then conveyed to the parent, the investigation (which included interviewing several returning players on the team and parents) was completed by two administrators and “the outcome of the investigation yielded zero reports that a culture of bullying/harassment is part of the Varsity Boys Basketball team.” The parent acknowledged the District’s response, specifically addressing the DASA coordinator, Superintendent and Athletic Director and thanking them for their time. The parent, however, indicated he believed those interviewed were just not seeing the “value in sharing anything negative about their coach.”

In December 2023, the investigation team received an email from a parent - who used a fictitious name and email address indicting he wanted to remain anonymous - regarding his son’s experience on the Saratoga Springs Varsity Boys Basketball team during the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 seasons. This parent indicated he did not want the investigation team to speak with him or

his son, stating he already made a formal complaint with the District. Based on the records reviewed, it appears that the parent and allegations referenced in the SAFE complaint are the same as those set forth in the December 2023 email, which was investigated by the District in 2022.

The District assessed and investigated the DASA complaint and related claims pertaining to coaching at the time they were alleged to have occurred. While this one parent of a player on the team did not agree with the findings of the District, the District did respond to the allegations.

5. Cross Country/Track and Field

A significant number of the allegations in the SAFE complaint pertain to the Girls Cross Country and the Girls Track and Field programs²⁴. The SAFE complaint focuses on Art and Linda Kranick, longtime cross country and track and field coaches, and spans over thirty years beginning in approximately 1988 and ending in 2022.

The Kranicks have been affiliated with the District for multiple decades. Linda Kranick was hired as a Science teacher by the District in 1973. She retired from teaching at the end of the school year in 2007. She began coaching in 1980. Her husband, Art Kranick, was hired as a Science teacher by the District in 1985. He retired from teaching at the end of the school year in 2009. Art Kranick began coaching within the District in 1985. The pair have coached cross country and track and field for more than 40 years. Their coaching contracts were renewed annually without interruption until 2023. They were renewed to coach in the Fall of 2023 after receipt of the SAFE complaint for indoor and spring track and field with Art Kranick named as head coach and Linda Kranick as assistant coach.

(a) Individuals referred to in the SAFE complaint (for cross county/track and field)

²⁴ While the Kranicks had responsibility for the Boys Track and Field programs at different times throughout their careers, the SAFE complaint pertains solely to Girls Cross Country and Track and Field.

The SAFE complaint listed the names of seven (7) former athletes, five (5) of whom remained anonymous. The two former athletes named and agreed to be interviewed were [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. An 8th anonymous athlete was referred to in the SAFE complaint (3rd letter), but no information regarding any reports by this anonymous athlete were provided. The names of two additional former athletes were provided by Attorney Greenberg after the SAFE complaint was sent, but soon thereafter the investigation team was told by Attorney Greenberg to not to contact one of the former athletes. The other former athlete declined to be interviewed.

The SAFE complaint listed the names of seven (7) parents of former athletes, four (4) of whom remained anonymous. The names of the three (3) parents/sets of parents of former athletes were Christian Mathiesen, Steve Anthes/Jen Wilcox and the Sniders. One set of the known parents was unreachable even after obtaining various contact information for them from Attorney Greenberg. Two of the remaining two parents/sets of parents of former athletes agreed to be interviewed. The names of two other parents were additionally provided by Attorney Greenberg after the SAFE complaint was sent, but those parents declined to be interviewed.

The SAFE complaint also listed the names of five (5) individuals who are not former athletes or parents of former athletes but are more accurately described as concerned community members. Three (3) of those community members remained anonymous (anonymous MPT, anonymous PT, anonymous former sports reporter). The other two community members were former District Board of Education member, Steve Grandin, and Dr. Jama Peacock Birsett²⁵

²⁵ A statement from Dr. Peacock Birsett was sent to the investigation team on January 22, 2024 by Attorney Greenberg with a request that she be interviewed. While the interviews for the investigation had been completed at that time, the investigation team reopened its interview process to obtain information and/or concerns from Dr. Peacock Birsett who is a physician in the community.

As set forth above, the investigation team did not have the power to compel compliance from third parties for the purposes of collecting documents or conducting interviews including students and parents who remain anonymous in Attorney Greenberg's complaint. While Attorney Greenberg provided the investigation team with the contact information for some witnesses named directly, many witnesses were never identified, and Attorney Greenberg indicated that those witnesses were not comfortable identifying themselves or participating in the investigation. In addition, several individuals refused or chose not to participate in this review since the investigation team could not guarantee anonymity or confidentiality, and at least one former athlete choose to be interviewed only by the USA Track and Field, which was said to be concurrently conducting its own independent review of allegations pertaining to the Kranicks. The investigation team had no opportunity to explore, validate, investigate or pursue these anonymous allegations further. Nonetheless, the team reviewed the District's records regarding the incidents referenced in the SAFE complaint by these individuals in an effort to determine what, if any, complaints the District may have been aware of and, of those, what, if any, were examined. Since the investigation team was not able to interview or gather evidence regarding the allegations, the anonymous claims were aggregated and taken into account generally.

In particular, the SAFE complaint and the information subsequently provided by Attorney Greenberg and/or Mr. Johns contain allegations from approximately nine (9) "anonymous" complainants consisting of former runners from the late 1980s and 1990s and parents of runners from the 2010s. The anonymous allegations reflect individual experiences and very personal accounts of those athletes and parents. They can be generalized as follows: an athlete was forced to run while injured, athletes were forced to overtrain, coaches administered Vitamin B powder causing an athlete to become ill, coaches regulated food intake before races and coaches yelled at

athletes during and after races for poor performance. Importantly, the District has no record of these exact allegations and/or record of their occurrence. Therefore, no negative inferences can be made relative to the District’s failure to investigate claims it was not aware of.

(b) Allegations Generally

The allegations set forth in the SAFE complaint pertain to the following broad claims: excessive training, training in dangerous conditions, exerting undue influence and control over athletes’ diet, administering vitamins without consent, use of orthotics without consent, lack of communication with parents, isolation of athletes, poor management of athletes’ injuries, and creating an environment of intimidation and negativity. As will be set forth in more detail below, importantly, the District (through its administration) implemented various measures for investigating these complaints depending on its level of awareness of each. The allegations brought forth through the SAFE complaint for the first time were not previously investigated by the District as the District was not aware of related allegations when they occurred.

(c) Timeline

The allegations pertaining to the cross country and track and field program cover an expansive period – almost 35 years. The District produced to the investigation team’s attention “any and all” relevant documentation. Given the breadth of the District’s files, the investigation team attempted to address the allegations in chronological order below.

1. Late 1980s

██████████ – a former runner at the District from approximately 1985 to 1989 – alleges she made the District aware of incidents involving her experience on the track and field team coached by Art and Linda Kranick. She alleges overtraining, monitoring of food intake, aggressive coaching, and disregard for injuries, amongst other allegations of improper behavior.

Importantly, Ms. [REDACTED] alleges that she and/or her mother directly made the District aware of these allegations in 1989. Specifically, Ms. [REDACTED] recalls that a meeting took place between her parents and then Athletic Director Raymond Waldron and the Kranicks where these allegations were discussed.

Ms. [REDACTED] recalls that on one occasion she was tied at the waist by rope to the back of Art Kranick's truck and instructed to run behind his vehicle in a District parking lot (an alleged method for speed training – aimed at increasing a runner's "turnover").

Former Superintendent Dr. John MacFadden recalled Athletic Director Ray Waldron addressed the truck incident with Art Kranick immediately upon learning of it. This method of training was never repeated. Dr. MacFadden did not recall the District being made aware of Ms. [REDACTED]'s remaining allegations.

In sum, the District met with Ms. [REDACTED]'s parents and the Kranicks in or about 1989 to address, at minimum, some of the allegations put forth in her complaint. The District is not in possession of written complaints or other documents related to these allegations and there is no record of [REDACTED] for Linda or Art Kranick based on Ms. [REDACTED]'s complaints. These allegations concern a time period prior to New York State's Dignity for All Students Act, and therefore the District did not yet have a DASA coordinator to field complaints of this nature.

2. 1990s

In March 1993, Dr. Christian Mathiesen, a local dentist, and parent of a former runner at the District, met with Superintendent MacFadden and brought forth complaints regarding the track and field program. Dr. Mathiesen raised concerns over the coaching style and techniques implemented by Art and Linda Kranick as well as concerns over the frequency of training. Dr.

Mathiesen stated that the coaches should not be providing runners with vitamins (including vitamin B-12) prior to events – and especially not without parental consent.

In April 1993, Superintendent MacFadden directed Athletic Director Waldron to conduct an investigation into these allegations. Days later, Dr. Mathiesen reached out to the District largely repeating the complaints put forth in his March communications and following up on his initial complaint. Notably, Dr. Mathiesen included multiple letters from other parents and athletes supporting/reiterating his concerns as well as a statement from his daughter contextualizing her experience with the track and field program.

The District then conducted an investigation in which Athletic Director Waldron and Assistant Superintendent Charles McHarg met with a number of individuals including parents, students, coaches, and medical professionals, to discuss the allegations put forth in Dr. Mathiesen’s complaint. The District met with the Kranicks in or about May 1993 to discuss these concerns. The District’s investigation concluded in May 1993 and Superintendent MacFadden relayed the District’s written conclusions to Dr. Mathiesen in addition to an in-person discussion of the same.

The District did not find it necessary to take formal action with respect to Art or Linda Kranick based upon its investigation; however, Superintendent MacFadden requested, in writing, that the Kranicks submit an annual coaching outline to Athletic Director Waldron for upcoming seasons in order to memorialize certain guidelines on training, amongst other matters applicable to the District’s runners. In pertinent part, Superintendent MacFadden also requested the Kranicks provide Athletic Director Waldron with advance notice before implementing any “new” training techniques. Specifically, the Superintendent’s letter provides, “I am asking at this time, as a result of our discussion and in order to avert further problems, you submit annually for each team a general outline of your coaching plans to Ray Waldron. In addition, if you intend to institute new

coaching techniques, you should advise the Director of them in advance.” It is unclear whether and how the District followed up on this plan. When questioned about coaching plans, Linda Kranick had no recollection of being asked to complete such a plan or being asked to advise the Athletic Director of new coaching techniques. She remarked that information communicated by the Superintendent to the Athletic Director was not always passed to her or her husband.

From January through March 1994, the District received a series of letters from Camille and William Karl – the parents of former runners at the District. These letters generally noted similar allegations to Dr. Mathiesen’s complaint – including concerns about overtraining and dispensing vitamins. In response, District Assistant Superintendent Charles McHarg indicated the District had recently completed its investigation into the track and field program and had found no evidence to support or sustain the Karls’ claims. Notably, the Karls later requested, and were afforded the opportunity to speak with the Board of Education at an executive session following the conclusion of the District’s investigation, as discussed below.

Although the District’s investigation found no evidence of wrongdoing, on April 21, 1994, it issued Art Kranick a [REDACTED] memo that included four directives: prohibiting supplying/dispensing supplements or vitamins without parental consent, submitting weekly plans for practices, not instituting any new training techniques without prior approval from Athletic Director Waldron, and coordinating notice to parents regarding supplements or medication with the school nurse.

In approximately April 1994, the District became aware that Dr. Mathiesen had sent a letter to the New York State Public High School Athletic Association (“NYSPHSAA”) to lodge a formal complaint against the District’s athletic department and the Kranicks. These complaints concerned the issues of dispensing vitamin B-12 and overtraining (in-line with his prior complaint to the

District). At the same time, Dr. Mathiesen sent a letter to the District requesting a meeting with the Board of Education to discuss the District's track and field program following the conclusion of its investigation.

Both the Karls and Dr. Mathiesen were afforded the opportunity to speak with the Board of Education (following their requests) at separate executive sessions in May and June 1994, respectively. Both the Karls and Dr. Mathiesen received written responses from the District's Board of Education indicating that the District had found no evidence of wrongdoing but would implement certain coaching initiatives given the concerns raised. Specifically, the District indicated that it was educating its coaches on the use of vitamins and supplements and that an internal oversight process had been established for the purposes of mitigating future issues with the team.²⁶

During this time (Spring 1994), the District hired an outside consultant, Dr. Eugene Long, to conduct a study of the track and field program²⁷. Dr. Long's report was issued in July 1994 and found that the program was generally positive, but that its shortcomings were "correctable and equally obvious". Dr. Long provided the District with fourteen (14) suggestions for implementing guidelines relating to the restriction of athlete's time and issues of overtraining, etc. It is unclear what, if any, follow-up the District took regarding Dr. Long's report. The suggestions listed in Dr. Long's report include:

²⁶ In April 1994, the Karls filed an appeal with the Commissioner of Education following the District's decision not to terminate the Kranicks. The Appeal was ultimately dismissed in December 1994. Additionally, the Kranicks filed a defamation lawsuit against the Karls in October 1994, demanding \$27,000,000 in damages. All but one of the fourteen causes of action were dismissed through summary judgment. This defamation suit eventually settled in 1998, with the Kranicks receiving a payment of \$67,500 from the Karls.

²⁷ Dr. Long's resume at the time included, among other experiences: Coach of mens & womens track and cross country, Hamilton College, 1953-1991; NCAA Track & Field committee – 1986-1991; president (varying years) New York State Track & Field Association; Chairperson–New York State Women's Collegiate Athletic Association Track and Field Committee; Technical expert for A.I.A.W. Womens Track & Field; and Olympic trainer for Track & Field Cali, Columbia.

1. “Strive for equity between the mens to womens programs [sic]. (Why is womens participation much larger than mens?)
2. Train the body and the mind for peak performance and avoid any other superficial enhancement.
3. Agree to an appropriate number of practice sessions per season. (Too much practice time.)
4. Agree to time restraints on practice session. (Work on intensity versus duration principle/practices are too long.)
5. Agree on length of sport seasons fall/winter/spring and minimize or eliminate overlap of seasons. (Too much involvement all year long!)
6. Determine the appropriate number of playing dates per season. (League, invitational, council championship, sectional and non-school total. (Too much stress competition.)
7. Calculate the total number of school days missed by coaches and athletes and establish a fair limit.
8. Apparently you know school time is 7:45 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. Determine an appropriate co-curricular time. Define the time restraints and live with the limits. (Practices should be shortened.)
9. Discourage seven days-a-week programs, but don’t attempt to administer regulating Sunday and summer programs. Discourage making rules that cannot be enforced
10. Determine the feasibility of combining mens & womens cross country [sic].
11. Student athletes and coaches need time away from each other. Traditionally this is referred to as a vacation. Find a way to fit this important principle into your Long Distance Running Program. (Coaches & athletes see too much of each other).
12. Work to find better communications between coaches and parents, teachers, other students, the community and the media. Establish a positive public relations program.
13. Keep all these guidelines consistent for all varsity & J.V. in season sports.
14. The school system might take a look at its organizational “chain of command.” It was difficult for me to understand that school principals have no responsibility to supervision of varsity sports in their jurisdiction. This seems to encourage an uncontrolled independence by coaches and opportunities for the ‘tail to wag the dog.’”

(Report of Dr. Eugene M. Long – July 15, 1994).

On October 25, 1994, Athletic Director Waldron met with Art Kranick to discuss complaints made by 8th/9th graders on his team regarding running on the weekends. Specifically, Art Kranick was alleged to have asked these students about their weekend running progress and told them not to engage in certain outside non-running activities. As a result, the District reminded

Art Kranick to abide by the school's coaching directives, and that he was not to demand athletes run on the weekends and not demand information from athletes about weekend runs. In addition, Art Kranick was reminded not to preclude runners from engaging in outside activities he believed would negatively impact their running (for example, horseback riding).²⁸

In January 1995, Athletic Director Waldron issued Art and Linda Kranick a letter [REDACTED] [REDACTED] after he observed runners jogging on West Avenue in low visibility conditions. Athletic Director Waldron's letter noted that indoor track practices should take place on campus for the remainder of the 1994-1995 season. Beyond this letter, Athletic Director Waldron also had a discussion with Art Kranick regarding this incident in the hopes of avoiding future issues with athletes running in inclement weather or dangerous conditions. While no outside complaints were brought as a result of this incident and Athletic Director Waldron appears to be the only recorded witness with respect to this particular sighting, at least one parent complained during this time frame about the girls being required to run in inclement weather, extreme temperatures and even blizzards.

In approximately 1999, the District received a complaint from the parents of [REDACTED] participated on the track and field team from approximately 1996 to 1999. [REDACTED]'s parents alleged the Kranicks precluded her from running in certain events and was pressured to train through injuries (in order to participate at Nationals), amongst other allegations. [REDACTED]'s parents met with the then Athletic Director Robert Stulmaker to discuss these concerns. Athletic Director Stulmaker recalls the contentious nature of this meeting and notes that the Kranicks believed [REDACTED] was acting in an insubordinate manner, not following team rules, and struggling academically. Athletic Director Stulmaker recalls that [REDACTED]'s parents began arguing at the

²⁸ The District created a memorandum regarding this dialog and discussion with Art Kranick, however, it is unclear whether this was provided to him.

meeting (apparently regarding her academic eligibility) and that the meeting concluded shortly thereafter. There is no evidence that these allegations were substantiated, and there is no record of the District taking formal action with respect to Art or Linda Kranick based upon the [REDACTED] allegations.

3. 2000s

Based upon review of District files it appears that in October 2004 the District received a complaint from a former Athletic Director and running coach at another high school. That coach stated, in pertinent part, that Art Kranick raised his voice and/or used profanities towards one of his athletes (of the other school) during a running meet. Athletic Director Stulmaker documented these allegations in the form of written notes. Mr. Stulmaker investigated these allegations and determined that the complaint was, in reality, centered on a disagreement existing primarily between the coaches themselves and they were able to “bury the hatchet” shortly thereafter. Accordingly, the District took no further action with respect to this complaint.

4. 2010s

In May 2012, the District met with Art Kranick and issued him a [REDACTED] memo (drafted by Athletic Director Peter Sheehan) following an investigation into allegations that he shoved a District runner, during an argument on school grounds in early February 2012. Also present at the meeting were Superintendent Dr. Janice White, Assistant Superintendent Piccirillo, Athletic Director Sheehan and Linda Kranick. The post-investigation memo reflects that Art Kranick and the student had different accounts of the February shoving incident, but that Art Kranick admitted he could have handled the situation differently. Further, Superintendent White stressed that Art Kranick’s behavior was categorically unacceptable and would jeopardize his ability to coach moving forward. The memo reflects that Art Kranick [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. Accordingly, the documents indicate that the incident was fully investigated and addressed with Art Kranick.

From February through July of 2014, the District received a series of complaints from three separate sets of parents²⁹ regarding the track and field program. These allegations were documented in part, through meeting notes created by then Superintendent Piccirillo. First, in February and March of 2014 Superintendent Piccirillo fielded complaints from Family 1, a former athlete's parents whose daughter participated in the track and field program. These complaints primarily brought forth concerns over training seven days a week, and the emotional well-being of their daughter being impacted by the actions of Linda Kranick.

In early April 2014, Superintendent Piccirillo met with Family 2 to discuss those parents' concerns regarding the track and field program. In pertinent part, Family 2 took issue with the frequency of training, the fact that Sunday runs were seemingly mandatory and that their daughter, in addition to other runners, was apparently suspended from the team for a week after requesting time off between Nationals and the start of the outdoor running season.

In early April 2014, the District also fielded complaints from Family 3 regarding overtraining, the exclusion of certain runners and the behavior of Art and Linda Kranick.

²⁹ The names of these parents will remain confidential for purposes of this report, although the investigation team and District are aware of their names. The three sets of parents are noted as Family 1, 2 and 3. It is unclear to the investigation team whether any of these parents are the anonymous parents referred to in the SAFE complaint.

Superintendent Piccirillo then met with Athletic Director Sheehan in April 2014 to discuss Family 3's allegations.

Having fielded numerous complaints in a relatively short time frame, the District set up a meeting with Art and Linda Kranick in late April 2014 to discuss the above-referenced allegations from Families 1, 2 and 3. Superintendent Piccirillo and Athletic Director Sheehan attended for the District.

Superintendent Piccirillo discussed the issues of overtraining, Sunday runs, communication with parents, improper/inappropriate behavior towards runners, as well as athlete nutrition and discipline, amongst other matters. The District discussed several expectations for the Kranicks moving forward including not running seven days a week (as mandated by pertinent regulations governing high school athletic programs), effectuating athlete discipline through Athletic Director Sheehan, implementing better communication with parents, and avoiding making comments to athletes regarding their nutrition or otherwise monitoring the same. The District also noted its expectation that the Kranicks would create a handbook for review by the District establishing guidelines for these various issues (i.e., training, discipline, communication, nutrition etc.).

Based on records provided by the District, it is believed that in mid-May 2014, Family 3 contacted the District again, alleging that Art Kranick "blew a gasket" because certain runners skipped a track meet in order to get ready for prom. Family 3 also alleged that the Kranicks were "pitting" their daughters against each other by telling the younger daughter "you are [...] better than your sister was at this age." Superintendent Piccirillo recalled asking the Kranicks to reach out to Family 3 in an apparent attempt to resolve the issue with the coaches directly.

Then, in late June 2014, the District met with Family 1 to discuss their daughters' participation in the upcoming track and field season. They reiterated their displeasure with several issues including: that Linda Kranick texted their daughter on the day of Sectionals indicating she would not be running; that their daughter was excluded or treated differently because she does not participate in Sunday runs; that runners were overtraining and running in dangerous weather conditions; and that the Kranicks were engaging in dangerous training techniques, including asking runners to jump onto a moving treadmill thereby causing injury. Additionally, Family 1 relayed that the Kranicks do not respond to their texts or calls as instructed by Superintendent Piccirillo.

In July 2014, Family 1 called Superintendent Piccirillo to bring forth concerns once again over the track and field program. In pertinent part, Family 1 alleged that during a confrontation with the Kranicks, the coaches referred to their daughter as one of the "mean girls" on the team. Further, Family 1 alleged that their daughter was told she could not run in the "Summer Rec Program" following this confrontation with the Kranicks, evidencing her perception of their vindictive nature. Family 1 then spoke with the Summer Rec Program's Director who thereafter spoke with the Kranicks. Following the call with the Summer Rec Program Director, the Kranicks apparently rescinded their statements regarding Family 1's daughter and/or her participation in the Summer Rec Program. The call concluded with Family 1 seeking an opportunity to speak with the District's Board of Education. Superintendent Piccirillo indicated that parents should contact him directly so that he could communicate with the Board to set up an executive session (if it was ultimately appropriate to do so based on the level of parental interest).

In July 2014, Superintendent Piccirillo again met with the Kranicks to discuss the above-referenced allegations and to ascertain progress with the handbook they agreed to develop

establishing relevant guidelines for the District's review. Superintendent Piccirillo also addressed his concern with the Kranicks not responding to Family 3.

That same month, Superintendent Piccirillo met with the District's Board of Education to relay the concerns brought to the District's attention from February through July of 2014. Notably, Superintendent Piccirillo considered not reappointing the Kranicks to their coaching positions for the 2014-2015 season, based on the ongoing nature of allegations against the track and field program. Ultimately, the District determined that it would provide parents, as well as the Kranicks, with the opportunity to further address the complaints from this period in an executive session, if they elected to do so. There is no record of any subsequent executive session(s). It should also be noted that the District did not take any steps to remove the Kranicks from their coaching positions at this time.

Several years later in 2019, parents Steve Anthes and Jen Wilcox reached out to the new Athletic Director Nicholas McPartland regarding their observations and concerns about their daughter who had been running for the Kranicks for a few years. The allegations were similar to other parents' complaints such as overtraining causing injury, placement of inserts in sneakers without parental consent, poor communication with the Kranicks and what they described as "weigh ins" before and after practice. They recall at least one other track family meeting with the Athletic Director at this time regarding similar concerns. The couple recall Athletic Director McPartland was kind and listened to their concerns. He mentioned to them that their concerns would be investigated and "if there is truth to them then things would be made right." They got the impression from him that since the track and field program was well known, it would be hard to change things. Beyond the conversation, there was a limited exchange of emails pertaining mostly to Art Kranick's use of orthotics in runners' sneakers. There does not appear to have been

substantive follow-up from the initial meeting regarding the other complaints. The District did not produce any documentation to support steps taken with or about the Kranicks following the meeting.

5. 2020s

In the beginning of September 2020, former District Board of Education member Steve Grandin sent a letter to Superintendent Patton and Athletic Director McPartland to relay that he had been made aware of complaints by community members regarding the track and field program. Specifically, Mr. Grandin said he heard reports that the District's runners were observed practicing (running) with the coaches around the Saratoga area during the COVID-19 pandemic and using the high school track facility well before the season's official September 21 start date. Athletic Director McPartland and Superintendent Patton responded to Mr. Grandin by indicating that the District would be reaching out to him and potentially others to gather relevant information about these allegations. Ultimately, it was revealed that the individuals running on the high school track were not District runners. Further, the Kranicks were out of town during the time they were alleged to have been practicing with runners prior to the beginning of the high school track and field season. Accordingly, this finding was relayed to Mr. Grandin and the District took no disciplinary measures against the track and field program based on these unfounded allegations.

(d) District response/actions

Despite the inability to interview all named and anonymous complainant athletes and parents, the District's files taken together with the interviews provide insight into alleged problematic conduct by the coaches and the District's responses. Some of the more significant and frequent complaints are excessive training, which included running 7 days a week with no "off days" and no natural breaks between track seasons, and resultant overuse injuries to runners and

the Kranicks mismanagement of runners' injuries. These particular complaints spanned the decades and were acknowledged by the District on various occasions. The District found these allegations concerning and asked the Kranicks to develop coaching plans in the early to mid-1990s and then again in 2014. While these recommendations were appropriate and would have likely allowed for greater monitoring of the running program and perhaps a shift in thinking regarding the frequency and intensity of training, the investigation team did not receive evidence demonstrating that the Kranicks were held accountable for developing such plans or that the plans were completed and submitted each season in accordance with the District's recommendations. Linda Kranick shared that their coaching philosophy evolved as "times changed" and that they reevaluated their emphasis on Sunday runs; however, it is unclear if that change is attributable to the District's actions in the early to mid-1990s or in 2014 or the development of coaching plans.

The District was also made aware of the Kranicks' persistent use of Vitamin B-12 with runners and their recommendation that runners take Vitamin B-12 without first obtaining parental consent. Based upon Linda Kranick's interview as well as the records disclosed by the District, this concern was thoroughly addressed in or about the mid-1990s. Thereafter, the Kranicks conformed their practices by obtaining parental consent for the administration of any vitamin or supplement. In addition, the Kranicks, while still making the recommendation for vitamins and replenishment of essential nutrients, shifted responsibility to the runners.

While some interviewed alleged the Kranicks exerted undue influence and control over runners' diets, it does not appear that the District found these allegations credible at the time since there is very little documentation. When interviewed, Linda Kranick spoke about the importance of "reloading" from calories burned during runs and how she and Art would encourage the runners,

especially the girls, to take in simple carbs that are easily absorbed. According to Linda Kranick, they emphasized the importance of nutrition, caring for one's body and weight training in the sport of running. Their advice and instruction to the runners appears to have been consistent, made in good faith and does not amount to problematic conduct.

The District addressed training in dangerous conditions, Art Kranick's use of homemade orthotics in runners' sneakers and how to best (better) communicate with athletes and parents in the mid-1990s and again in 2014. It appears these matters were adequately discussed with the Kranicks, but the District left the management (or the correction) of these matters to the Kranicks in their discretion.

OBSERVATIONS

This report is part of the Board's effort to understand past events, for the purpose of assessing and improving the District's procedures and responsiveness to reported conduct in its athletic programs in the future, as it deems necessary. As recognized by the SAFE complaint regarding baseball and other coaches, the District addressed matters of concern with coaches when it was made aware of them and/or when witnessed by others. In some cases, the District's actions led to the end of coaching appointments. The specific allegations in the SAFE complaint included some former athletes and parents taking issue with the District's findings and decision making regarding the allegations it investigated. The athletes and parents, however, do not make the decisions for administration of the District, nor would students (current or former) and parents be privy to all considerations in an investigation or actions permitted to be taken toward District employees/coaches. However, some complaints did allege improper conduct on the part of less than three (3) of the District's athletic coaches, as well as conduct that was inappropriate but far less severe.

While the teaching, learning and coaching practices – especially among youth – have changed substantially over the last 30 years, this investigation was not intended to assess the way coaches were instructing or training their athletes. Rather, the investigation team reviewed, if and when concerns were brought to the District’s attention and whether the District looked into those concerns and/or addressed them. Of the five (5) subject athletic programs, the District timely and appropriately responded upon learning of the student’s or parent’s allegations in Girls' Lacrosse, Girls Soccer and Boys Basketball. In each of those sports, upon learning of the alleged incidents and coaching misconduct, the District investigated and took remedial action, as it deemed necessary. With regard to Girls’ Basketball, neither the District nor the Coach were aware of the student’s complaint at the time and did not have the opportunity to assess the nature of the claim or investigate. With regard to Cross Country and Track and Field, when the District was made aware of complaints or allegations it investigated those in most, but not all, circumstances. With several of those complaints or allegations, evidence reviewed by the investigation team suggests that the District’s review did not go far enough and/or the manner in which the District addressed the complaints or allegations lacked follow up or oversight of directives given.

CONCLUSION

While even one instance of improper conduct by a District employee or coach is too many, in several of the incidents reported there were others who took the contrary view and praised the District’s coaches referenced in the SAFE complaint, especially that of the Kranicks for their successes and positive contributions. While the District received complaints regarding student athletes across multiple years concerning alleged improper conduct of the Kranicks, the District continued their annual appointment as coaches, even after they had no rights under the CBA to those appointments due to their retirements from teaching.

While no additional formal report is anticipated, the investigation team suggests the District's current Board and administration review all of the information in this report and use it to critically assess its current policies and procedures regarding the hiring, training and retention of coaches. The investigation team anticipates the District will continue its discussions to provide guidance to its ongoing assessment for students, employees, coaches and the school community. The investigation team trusts that the administration intends to take all appropriate steps to fully investigate all matters brought to their attention as well as protect against any harmful conduct or any form of misconduct in the future.