

## Westfield High School Coaching Staff Petitions the Board of Education

Editor's note: This letter of October 29, 2014 was submitted to the Westfield Board of Education.

Dear Board of Education,  
The tenured members of the athletic coaching staff of Westfield High School are sending this letter after a two-and-a-half-hour meeting with the Westfield Education Association on Wednesday, October 29, in response to the Board of Education meeting that took place on October 21 at Roosevelt School. Many of us attended this meeting to support our colleague, Joe Marino, who was not re-hired to coach the girls' varsity basketball team, as he had for the last 15 years.

We hoped to find answers to questions that were shared by many others. We were told that since it was a personnel matter, the reasons behind the decision could not be discussed, despite the fact that Joe Marino gave his consent to bring them to light. We were also told that we did not have all the facts. If that is the case, we can only comment on the facts as we know them, and we believe the following facts to be true.

Joe Marino has been a loyal employee in the Westfield Public School for 28 years.

In that time, he has coached various levels of football, baseball, and girls basketball.

In his role of the girls basketball coach, he had inherited a struggling team, and developed it into a championship program.

Each summer, Joe has volunteered to spend time training and teaching his girls, and has attended summer leagues with them.

Based on his evaluations, he was recommended for reappointment by the supervisor of athletics and the superintendent.

At this meeting, approximately 15 speakers, including administrators, both current and former coaches, former athletes, residents, parents, and teachers defended Joe Marino's character and coaching abilities.

Sixteen members of the current basketball team felt strongly enough about their coach to stand up and publicly request that you re-think your decision.

One member of the public spoke against Joe Marino, and read a letter by someone who was not in attendance, and is no longer a resident of Westfield, stating that his daughter felt belittled by Marino and did not have a positive experience under his leadership.

The Board assured us that this was not a personal decision. Based on the reactions of those in attendance, it seemed to us that there is far more support for Joe Marino than there is against. Certainly, the team members who spoke on their coach's behalf, those who interact with him every day, did not seem to feel belittled by him and seem to enjoy playing for him. As such, we have not been convinced that this decision was anything but personal.

As coaches, our positions are listed as



### Holiday Schedules

Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day are all Thursday this year. The *Leader/Times* will operate close to normal these weeks, closing Wednesdays at noon. The newspapers will be delivered by the post offices on Friday. Please assist us by being timely with your submissions during these periods.

extra-curricular. We see our jobs as an extension of the education the students receive throughout the school day. Clearly, this is not the way the board sees it. Any teacher whose performance does not meet expectations is made aware of the specific area(s) of deficiency, given support by the direct supervisor, and provided with an opportunity to rectify the situation.

In this case, the results of Joe Marino's evaluations, which included two rubrics, one completed by the Supervisor of Athletics, Sandra Mamary, and the other by members of the team, were strong enough to gain the support, and ultimately, the recommendation of both Ms. Mamary and the superintendent, Dr. Dolan. If the board had concerns about his coaching, did they take the time to let him know where he was not meeting expectations? Did they provide him with an opportunity to rectify the situation?

Item 9 of the Board's Code of Ethics states, "I will support and protect school personnel in proper performance of their duties." Where is the support and protection in this case?

Much of what was discussed during our coaches' meeting focused on the timing of your decision, which was reached just over one month prior to the start of the winter sports season. We are concerned for the girls who head into what could be the finest season in the program's history with an unfamiliar coach. Had this decision been reached earlier, the girls could have spent their off-season training with their new leader, and more time could have been taken to find a suitable replacement. With the system that is currently in place, coaches evaluations include the time they commit to their programs in the off-season.

While most of us choose to work with our athletes over the summer, we question how we could be held accountable for this time that extends beyond our contracts. More importantly, in light of this situation, we fear that we will give up our summers to prepare a team that we will never have an opportunity to coach, as Mr. Marino just did.

In an ideal world, we would hope you would reverse your decision, inform Coach Marino of the areas in which improvement is needed, and give him the opportunity to do so. As professionals who go above and beyond our contractual obligations, we truly aim to do the best we can for our student-athletes. We know we will not be able to satisfy everybody's wants and we will make mistakes. We simply request that before dismissing us from our jobs, you clearly communicate where we are falling below the board's standards, and provide us with an opportunity to improve.

Thomas Hornish  
on behalf of the  
Westfield High School Athletic  
Coaching Staff

## Letters to the Editor

### Garwood Officials Thank Voters and Pledge Their Best Effort for All

It is our absolute honor and privilege to have just been elected to serve as mayor and on the council for the great Borough of Garwood. We were pleased to see so many people come out to vote Tuesday and cast their votes of confidence for us.

As we promised during our campaign, we pledge to work hard to represent all the residents of Garwood — those that voted for us, those that did not, and those that didn't make it out to the polls. We will represent the homeowners and the renters, those that have just moved in, and those that have lived here their whole lives. We promised to listen to your concerns and seek viable solutions. We will not go back on our word. With your help, we will do our very best to make Garwood better, stronger and more vibrant.

We look forward to continuing our conversations with the residents be-

cause better communication betters the community. Please contact us anytime. We are committed to being accessible and keeping the lines of communication open. You can reach Charles at (908) 789-0508 or CLombardo@garwood.org, Lou at (908) 233-1657 or LPetruzzelli@garwood.org, and Sara at (908) 377-7890 or STodisco@garwood.org. We will listen and do our best to provide solid answers to your concerns.

We sincerely thank you for the opportunity to continue the work we've started, and look forward to facing the borough's challenges together. We are experienced, committed, active and dedicated, and we will work toward a brighter future for Garwood. Thank you!

Mayor-Elect Charles Lombardo  
Councilman Louis Petruzzelli  
Councilwoman Sara Todisco

### Poll Says 50 Percent of Residents Want to Move Out of New Jersey

TRENTON — Following the release of Monmouth University/Asbury Park Press poll this week that indicates 50 percent of New Jersey residents want to move out of the state and for those most likely to move, 54 percent of respondents list taxes and costs as their top reason for wanting to leave, Assembly Republican Leader Jon Bramnick issued the following statement:

"For seven consecutive years, polling has shown that half of our residents want to leave the state while

Democrats have controlled the Legislature. While Democrats continue to call for higher taxes, Republicans in the Legislature have been the only consistent voice fighting to make our state more affordable.

Far too many New Jersey residents have been forced to leave our state because of high taxes and a high cost of living. Republicans are ready on day one to give our residents the tax relief they deserve."

Asm. Jon Bramnick  
Westfield

### Michael Bielen Thanks Westfield Community for BOE Support

Dear Friends and Neighbors, I would like to thank everyone for their support during my campaign for a seat on the Westfield Board of Education. While we received more than 2,000 votes, we came up a few votes short from being elected. I truly appreciate all the positive feedback both during and after the campaign.

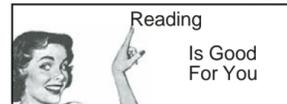
Even though we came up short this year, the Westfield Board of Education is in good hands. Mark Friedman with his technology and financial background, Chris Langhart with his

public policy background and Peggy Oster with her finance and PTSO experience will all serve the BOE, our students, parents teachers and administrators well over the next three years.

I'd also like to thank David Sexton for running this year. As I highlighted in my last letter, I went "all in." We need to make a total commitment to a course of action we believe in. I strongly believe in public service and giving back to our community and will continue to work on behalf of all residents and taxpayers who all call Westfield home.

Thank you again for your support.

Michael Bielen  
Westfield



## Politics, 'Second Oldest Profession Is Striking Resemblance To The First'

Post election is a good time to consider why eminent people say negative things about politics.

Henry A. Kissinger: "Ninety percent of the politicians give the other 10 percent a bad reputation."

Charles de Gaulle: "Politics is too serious a matter to be left to politicians."

Harry S. Truman: "If you want a friend in Washington get a dog."

Gilbert and Sullivan: "I always voted at my party's call, and I never thought of thinking for myself at all." ("Iolanthe")

Napoleon: "In politics stupidity is not a handicap."

Theodore Roosevelt: "A typical vice of American politics is the avoidance of saying anything real on real issues."

Benjamin Disraeli: "There is no act of treachery or meanness of which a political party is not capable; for in politics there is no honor."

Will Rogers: "If you ever injected truth into politics you have no politics."

Thomas Jefferson: "Politics is such a torment that I advise anyone I love not to mix with it."

William Howard Taft: "Politics makes me sick."

Hubert H. Humphrey: "To err is human. To blame someone else is politics."

Machiavelli: "Politics have no relation to morals."

George W. Bush: "I crawled out of the swamp (politics), and I'm not crawling back into it."

Bernard Baruch: "Vote for the man who promises least; he'll be the least disappointing."

Charles Dudley Warner: "Politics makes strange bedfellows."

Jerry Lewis: "I have some very personal feelings about politics, but I don't get into it because I do comedy already."

Ronald R. Reagan: "It has been said that politics is the second oldest profession. I have learned it bears a striking resemblance to the first."

Theodore H. White: "The flood of money that gushes into politics today is a corruption of democracy."

Marshall McLuhan: "Politics will eventually be replaced by imagery. The politician will be all too happy to abdicate in favor of his image because the image will be much more powerful than he could ever be."

Were these people right or were they wrong? Or was there any truth in what they had to say about politics?

At our peril we dismiss these questions for there is very considerable troubling evidence that politics and the public's interest do not comport whether on the local, state, or national level.

That what the public wants, the public does not get.

That political promises mean nothing other than getting elected.

That people who do not have the skill to manage or run anything of substance choose instead to run for office.

That the best qualified people fear running for political office.

That the object of politics is personal aggrandizement of some sort.

That the politician would rather be wrong and get elected than right and not get elected.

Democracy and politics do not mix when politics is all about political advantage and not all about the wishes of the people as a whole.

Democracy comes from the ancient Greek "demokratia" which means "rule of the people." It does not mean rule of the politicians! It means the instructions of the people and not the wishes of the politicians!

Stephen Schoeman  
Westfield




**Nabig Sakr**      **Carmen Cascao**

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