

We, a group of Hunterdon Central staff, have written this letter to voice our concerns related to interruptions to instructional time, equity and transparency.

In just the first few months of school, our students have missed significant instructional time as a result of the administration of mandated state testing, including Start Strong, PSAT and Linkit. Instructional time has also been lost due to activity blocks, such as the homecoming pep rally and other school wide activities. We recognize and understand that this loss of instructional time is necessary due to state mandates or to foster a sense of community among all students. We do, however, remain deeply concerned about the Covid-related learning losses that many of our students are experiencing.

So, imagine our frustration when passes were given to **selected** students, on October 27th, to leave our classes at 1:30 to participate in the school sponsored drag show. Instead of our students being engaged in academic time, they were applying makeup and changing into their drag costumes. This was a loss of over 30 minutes of instructional time for these students.

The second issue that we would like to acknowledge is one of equity. On the day of the drag show, October 27th, Dr. Moore responded to an alleged act of racism at a soccer game that had occurred the previous day. He notified, in his letter to the community, that he was "temporarily limiting spectatorship at Hunterdon Central athletic events to families of participants on the field or the court." We would like to understand Dr. Moore's rationale for not allowing fellow students, alumni, neighbors and other community members at athletic events that day, which included the Volleyball senior night, but allowed spectators to observe and facilitate the school sponsored drag show on the same date. One of the invited spectators for the drag show was Phoebe Mantrappe, a professional drag queen. From our perspective, it does not seem fair and equitable that Hunterdon Central students were not able to celebrate with their peers, but a professional drag queen, from outside the Hunterdon Central community, was allowed. Furthermore, based on the chatter that we have heard amongst the students in our classrooms, Dr. Moore's decision has created significant confusion, division and resentment between students.

Finally, with regards to transparency, we are hoping Dr. Moore and the Board can help us understand the rationale why only selected staff were invited to attend the drag show. Why were not all staff invited to attend? This does not model inclusivity and further creates a divided school community. In addition, we wonder if parents were notified that their students would be missing over 30 minutes of instructional time to prepare for the drag show? Finally, we are curious if the professional drag queen was financially compensated or did he volunteer his services and expertise to assist and guide our students?

We hope that greater transparency will allow us to understand why spectators and visitors were allowed to attend *some*, but not all, school sponsored events on October 27th. We hope, at some point during our tenure at Hunterdon Central, that Dr. Moore's decisions will be based on what is fair and equitable to **all** members of our school community.