For my case study, I had the opportunity to interview AJ Nathan, who serves as the athletic director for Kelly Walsh High School in Casper, Wyoming. AJ has been in this position since the fall of 2016. AJ has the privilege of being the primary athletic/activity contact for a school of nearly 2000 students. As a result, he has the very difficult task of managing several sports and several coaches. After spending 3 years in this position, AJ decided to make the 3Dimensional process the model for his programs. This was done for a variety of reasons, but primarily to help head and assistant coaches find more purpose in their processes, and to ensure that all Kelly Walsh Athletes feel loved and valued, regardless of their athletic success. AJ started the process by completing the online 3D course himself, then hosted a workshop with Mitch Hull. After the Conference, AJ provided the opportunity for all KW coaches to complete the training free of cost. Throughout the interview, I was able to discuss how AJ addresses each of the 3 dimensions from the viewpoint of an athletic director.

 In the first dimension A.J reported that his primary job is to have funding available for coaches to purchase equipment, videos, books, camps, professional development, and clinics. The Wyoming Coaches Association has a clinic every summer, that has sport specific breakout sessions for all high school sports. A.J. utilizes his budget to pay for all Kelly Walsh coaches to attend. A.J. mentioned most of his communications with the head coaches about techniques, schemes, and drills, specifically, are intended to help him get the coaches rationale for why they do what they do.

When discussing the 2nd dimension, A.J. admitted that, historically, he hasn’t had much in place. He quickly pointed out, as a former coach, that as part of his coaching philosophy he was always concerned with the psychological well-being of his athletes, and when hiring coaches he has worked to hire candidates who incorporated this into their coaching. A.J. stated that continuing forward he will try to encourage coaches to coach this with more intentionality, in addition to finding other resources to help.

While addressing the third dimension, A.J. again referenced his coaching philosophy, and stated he was concerned with student-athletes striving for more out of their experiences rather than just trying to be successful in competition. He mentioned that he has always believed that student athletes should engage in service activities in their communities. Mr. Nathan also spoke of when he was first hired that he organized a book study with the head coaches at the school. He did say that moving forward coaches need to be more intentional with these activities, which is why he has paid for the 3D course for all coaches.

When asked about how he personally tries to improve himself, he referenced he is a life-long learner, and is always trying to improve. A.J. quipped that if anything, he could be accused of trying to instill too much change, too fast. A.J. is always reading inspiring books of successful coaching, to be a resource to his coaches.

Kelly Walsh is fortunate to have a leader like AJ that is committed to the 3D process. He has instituted many opportunities and strategies for coaches that should help professional growth and have an enormous impact on student athletes.