It was a valuable experience to meet with Mr. Cohen to discuss this 3Dimensional Coaching course, as well as the challenges and rewards of working as an athletic director. This also allowed me to look at athletics in the school setting from a different lens.

Based on this conversation, as well as knowledge of his successes as an athletic director and the successes of the Darlington student-athletes, I knew there were many strengths within this program. The athletic program is just one part of the lives of these students, many of whom are active on stage, in the band, in the community and in the classroom. Darlington’s holistic approach to developing young people in a variety of ways is very admirable. I liked how he wanted to take as many things from the plates of the coaches as he could to make sure they had more time and energy to focus on their athletes and their families. But Kurt did not just sit behind the scenes to make the gears turn. He made sure to have those informal conversations with the coaches as much as possible to get a better feel what they needed as far as resources and guidance. I also thought it was wonderful that he didn’t just give those coaches a written evaluation, but he made sure to give them time to look over it, then sat down with the head coach and the principal to talk about those things that I would now characterize as 2nd and 3rd dimension issues and skills. He has, and will continue to, reach out to others to continue learning and improving in his field.

And though I know his department has done wonderful things for kids, there is always room to improve and grow. Yes, those 2nd and 3rd level issues and strategies are being used informally; I would suggest a process of formalizing those. I would start by asking each head coach to submit a vision or mission statement for their sport, then as a group of head coaches use their statements to craft an overall statement(s) for the athletic department as a whole, with a focus on the physical, mental and emotional development and well-being of the student-athletes.

I would also ask each head coach to take the 3Dimensional Coaching course in the next year. Hopefully, they would recognize the power and importance of this framework and would give the same assignment to their assistant coaches. I would encourage them to include at least one 2nd or 3rd dimensional lesson into each practice plan and engage them in conversations to find out what sort of resources, trainings or speakers we could obtain to benefit their programs and athletes. Ultimately, we would build a collection of resources, a common language and an understanding of the importance of developing all dimensions of student-athletes between coaches and athletic programs. The impact on the staff, students, and community may be even greater with this framework.