Yesterday afternoon I had the opportunity to meet with Junction City High School Athletic Director Matt Westerhaus. Mr. Westerhaus comes from an athletic background playing collegiately and being an AD the last 19 years at JCHS. Over the course of the interview I could tell that Matt has a great passion for Junction City High School Athletics. Being an alumni of Junction City H.S. he knows where the programs have been and his vision for where they want to go. I believe Mr. Westerhaus has established a strong foundation for athletics at Junction City High School however, I do believe there are some weaknesses that need to be addressed. When I say addressed I mean through the whole school including the athletics.

I love to start with good things so I am going to start with the strengths of JCHS Athletics. First, the athletic department provide many opportunities for his coaches to go to clinics to work on the fundamentals and skills needed to be successful. They encourage coaches to visit Nike Clinics and the state offered coaches academy. The goal there is to learn and take back a few fundamental things for their teams. Secondly, at the beginning of the year he has his coach’s meet together to come up with some goals for their respective program and the athletic department. If a coach doesn’t teach he will have them take classes offered by National Federation of High School. Thirdly, the biggest strength is the evaluation process the head coaches go through. This puts the head coach in evaluation and reflection process of his whole program including his assistants, student-athletes, and overall program. I believe this is the best opportunity for the program to strengthen itself. Head coaches sit down with each player and ask questions to help strengthen their reflection process. A couple of questions asked “how do you liked being coach by me?” and “what can we do to make the sport better/fun/learning experience?”

Weaknesses in JCHS Athletic Programs appear to be more in the 2nd and 3rd dimension. The coaches have a great foundation of skills but I feel that the other two dimensions are suspect. I believe most of the coaches at JCHS do their own “thing.” Don’t get me wrong I know that coach’s care but I don’t think the student athletes know they care. The athletic department doesn’t provide anything other than the evaluation to show the coach’s “why.” I suggest that the AD sits down with his coaches and make them all aware of the “why” we coach. There should be a meeting with student athletes (maybe a student athlete task force) that help with the dialog between AD and student athletes. This would provide the AD with information in each program from a student athlete perspective. You could reach into the 2nd and 3rd dimension for this activity. The professional development provided by athletic department hasn’t been great for coaches in the 2nd and 3rd dimensions. The clinics that the athletic department provides or suggest are great however, there is nothing to hold the coach accountable when he/she attends the clinic. I feel they should provide information to all the coaches of what they learned and what was helpful. Purchasing of the 3D Dimensional Coaching is a start for young and even veteran coaches to learn the “why” in sports.

Overall, I believe JCHS provides good insights and ideas for becoming a better coach however, I feel they don’t get in depth to provide the foundation for ‘why’ we coach. Having the coaches social and brining in 3D Dimensional Coaching will bring more to the table than going to a Nike Coaches Clinic. It is about teaching kids life lessons and expanding relationships. We must do better job to find opportunities for coaches to learn more in 2nd and 3rd dimension. Matt Westerhaus is a tremendous AD who wants his coaches to be successful and is working on putting them in that position with professional development.