MIDDLE SCHOOL ATHLETIC ADMINISTRATORS FORUM WORKSHOP #21
Jill Borchers
• Gillette, Wyoming
• 19th year at Twin Spruce Junior High School
• (7th, 8th, & 9th graders)
• Special Education Teacher, Department Head, Assistant High School Cross Country Coach, Events Coordinator, Fill in Administrator/Athletic Director
• Registered Middle School Athletic Administrator
• 3rd National Athletic Directors Conference
Unique situation:

- 6th graders are at the elementary schools in our district, but they can participate in cross country, wrestling, track, and swimming at the junior high level.

- 9th graders are at the junior high level, but they participate at the high school level in cross country, swimming, wrestling, and track.
Brent Jones, CAA
• Andover, Kansas
• 23 years in Education – 17 years as AD
• Currently serve on KSHSAA BOD as MS Rep
• Kansas Certification Coordinator, LTI Instructor
• Currently at Andover Middle School
  • Grades 6-8
  • 660 students
  • 7th/8th participate in athletics/activities, 65% participate in athletics
• Fall: FB, VB, GT, CC
• Winter: BBB, GBB, WR
• Spring: Track, BT
• 7th National Conference
Question/Topic #1

• What strategies do you utilize to balance multiple responsibilities on multiple roles?

• Assistant Principal or Principal, plus athletic director

• Teacher and/or coach, plus athletic director

• Other district or building duties—counselor, testing, coordinator, etc., plus athletic director
Discussion on question/topic #1

• Head principal and two assistant principals.
• One of the assistant principals is also the activities director
• Two events coordinators to help with home activities
• Staff signs up for four crowd control duties each year
• Two to four staff members at each duty, depending on what it is
• Activity secretary that helps with scheduling, rosters, reminders of duties, tournaments, hospitality rooms etc.
• Coaches help scheduling, input on tournament schedules, and home events
Principal and myself (Assistant Principal/AD)
• Begin my day with making sure that if there is an activity that night, it is ready outside of facilities in case I get busy as Assistant Principal
• I spend most of my day as Assistant Principal and spread out my AD work throughout the day if no activity.
• I make sure that I make time for my family every night
• I make sure that I make time to workout myself
• Lastly, I always have my laptop with me in case I need to work from home
Question/topic #2
• Do you receive assistance with event supervision?

• How do you go about relieving some of this role through scheduling, event supervisors, administrative help, or other?
Discussion on question/topic #2

• Have help by events coordinators, crowd control staff, activity secretary

• Other two principals will attend the concerts and plays, and help with other events when needed

• Look at the calendar each month and split up the duties

• Have events coordinators attend scheduling meetings if needed
My contract is for both positions. I receive no compensation for night duties. I do get mileage when on the road. I do pay staff to do event supervision as we are a two person administration and may have nights when we have to be at 3 or 4 events.
Question/topic #3

• What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of being a member of a middle school/junior high conference or league?
Discussion on question/topic #3

- **Advantages:** started at younger age, experience, be part of a team, play smaller schools around our district, two junior highs so more students can participate

- **Disadvantages:** 6th grade at elementary school, they get out later, how far we travel, missing school, too many games and not enough practice, two junior highs so rivalry between teams/schools
Advantage:
- Being in a league is helpful in the fact that we do all of our scheduling as a group and do not have to go out of conference to find competitions. Our league is 22 schools with 2 coming on board in 2015-16. Longest drive is 1.5 hours for AMS.
- The league also sets its schedules so that I can then work on activities calendar for AMS.

Disadvantage:
- In some sports, we do not get to play the other MS in Andover in some sports as we are different sizes and in different divisions within the Pioneer League.
- Takes away the option of going outside and seeing someone different than in your league.
Question/topic #4

• From where do your revenues come? District, high school, fund raising, corporate sponsors, student fees, pay to play, or other.

• What do you believe to be the best combination for financial stability?
Discussion on question/topic #4

• School/district budget
• Each sport has a budget
• Uniform rotation
• Provide bussing
• Limited amount of money to feed athletes—so much for breakfast, lunch, and/or dinner.
• Has to be certain mileage.
• Some fund raising through selling of team t-shirts, etc.
Given a district budget to divide as I see needed. Each sports has X amount of money to spend. Amount is determined by what I see as their needs. Football gets the biggest.

- Uniform is on a 5/6 year rotation and a part of my district budget is set aside each year for uniforms.
- Transportation does not come out of my budget.
- Extra Duty pay does come out of my budget.
- We provide no meals for students. Our sports parents provide meals for the students right after school before they play or go on the road.
- We have a Pay to Participate fee. Students pay a one time fee each year not matter how many sports they participate in. That money goes to the district office.
- We sell season passes. The two HS’s and two MS’s get to keep the money if the passes are bought in their building. It goes into my building activity fund for me to use for officials, entry fees and training supplies.
Question/topic #5

• Do you cut at the middle school/junior high level?

• Share the good and bad side of a cut or no-cut philosophy?
Discussion on question/topic #5

• No cutting in cross country, wrestling, swimming or track
• Football is divided up into two teams—blue and gold—make teams even
• Volleyball and basketball—A or B team at school, C team through our recreation center
• Intramural teams—hang posters around school and put in daily announcements
• We do have a cut policy at AMS. We cut in VB, BB and Tennis.
• Our league only has A and B games for 7th and 8th grades
• We keep 20 players in VB and BB per grade level

• Good side to cut policy:
  • It makes our teams manageable in VB, BB Tennis
  • Only have to purchase uniforms in 24 counts

• Bad side to cut policy:
  • Kids need to be involved within the school
  • At MS, the players come in from a non-cut philosophy in little league and may not be able to continue a sport they like
  • Students mature/grow during MS and by being cut, they may become discouraged and quit the sport.
Question/topic #6

• How are youth sport programs affecting your school programs?

• Do you work cooperatively with clubs, community recreation departments, etc. in terms of sharing athletes, use of facilities, acquiring coaches, and other?
Discussion on question/topic #6

• High number of youth programs and traveling teams
• Some coaches from these teams will volunteer to help at the school level
• Throughout our districts school gyms are used all the time
• School district and county built a recreation center together— it includes an indoor track and tennis courts
We work with our community recreation department in letting them use district facilities for no cost when available. We do let outside organizations use facilities, but they have to apply for facility use and costs can be tacked on to them for using the facilities. We have different levels of costs.

We do fight some youth activities like MAYB, USVBA and Kids Wrestling. We have some students that choose to not participate for the school and go with outside organizations. They get a lot more game/match opportunities with outside organizations than they do with us.

We do not use outside organization coaches for our Middle School. I find that their philosophy is much different than our AMS philosophy. We do have to use non-teachers in our coaching roles.
Question/topic #7

• Do you have an education-based athletic philosophy of the sport program being an extension of the regular classroom, or are your programs considered a feeder system for high school athletics?

• What is your role in setting this standard?
Discussion on question/topic #7

• Academics come first.
• Eligibility rule– C or above in classes, or can practice but not compete until grade(s) are up
• 9th graders feed into high school programs in cross country, wrestling, swimming, track, and soccer at
• Discussion on adding other sports– football and basketball
• High school coaches will help middle school/junior coaches with their programs; sit in on interviews at times.
Like Twin Spruce, Academics come first at AMS. We have student/athletes.

Eligibility rule - in Kansas, students are required to pass 5 subjects each semester. AMS makes students pass 5 subjects each 9 weeks. We have 8 period day but use a double block for Language Arts. Therefore, our students have to pass 5 out of 7 to be eligible.

Our coaches work with the HS coaches but still maintain a Middle School philosophy. We do not have a win at all cost mentality and on our B teams, everyone must play but not equal.
Question/topic #8
• Share your efforts to retain teacher-coaches, and what processes you utilize to assure quality non-teaching coaching personnel?
Discussion on question/topic #8

• Hire teachers within our building to be coaches
• Hire within the district, consider secondary teachers first due to times schools get out—elementary gets out 50 minutes later
• Hire non-teachers if they have experience and are best for the position
• Retired teachers might continue coaching
• We try to hire our coaches from within the building. Next we go to other buildings in the district. Last resort is outside coaches.

• Coaches do not coach for the money, they coach for the love of the sport and the students

• I do believe that you need to praise your coaches and when possible, give them a clothing item and honor them during National Activities week. I have done treat bags, candy and popcorn balls. All little things but it shows that you care about them for what they are doing for the students.
Question/topic #9

• How do you coordinate sharing of high school facilities?
Discussion on question/topic #9
• Scheduling meetings
• Communication through email
• Events calendars
• School website that lists activities
• Shared facilities are scheduled by one of the HS AD’s.
• HS gets first to use the district facilities first.
• The four secondary AD’s, elementary/secondary vocal/band teachers and HS activities directors meet in early May and schedule the different buildings and facilities.
• The district uses Dynacal for all activities and it is located on the District Website.
• The HS’s get to have sports calendars that they hand out during the year.
Information from three articles:

• *Middle Level Sports: Recommendations for Reform*  http://www.nassp.org

• *Trends and Issues in Middle-Level Sports*  http://www.naesp.org

• *What Role for Middle School Sports?*  http://www.aasa.org/School AdministratorArticle
Middle-level athletic programs can be intramural, interscholastic, or a combination of both

Questions/Problems:

• What age groups and grade levels should participate?

• Which sports should be offered at this level?

• Should the sports offered be inclusive with no-cutting or focus only on the talented athletes?

• What can be done to make middle-level sports programs as safe as possible?
• Many coaches and parents believe sports should be available to all students despite their age and/or developmental stage.
• Middle school sports need to be safe and developmentally responsive to the needs/interests of that age group.
• Middle school sports should promote self-esteem, social skills, physical skills, build character, enhance personality development, prepare participants for the high school level, and be fun! However, this needs to be done at their level. Some young athletes aren’t psychologically ready for the pressures of winning and the cutting of players. This can have a negative effect on them.
• No-cutting if possible—most gifted athletes often get chosen while the ones just developing their athletic abilities are being cut
• Establish rules and teams that will ensure a wide degree of participants
• High burnout at a younger age if athletes aren’t having fun, getting hurt, or being cut
• High burnout rate if athletes spending too much time on one sport
• Try different sports at the middle-school level
• Establish activities that reflect the developmental needs and interests of this age group
• Higher qualified coaches that have training in working with the middle school age group
• Have a middle-school sports philosophy
• Focus on positive behaviors, attitudes, and actions
• Don’t over train at a young age as that can lead to injuries and permanent disability from that sport
• Proper technique to avoid injuries- younger athletes are susceptible to injury because of the softness in their growing bones and tightness of their ligaments, tendons, and muscles
• Proper supervision at practices and games
• District wide decision on what sports should be played at the middle school level
• Academics first, athletics second- protect instructional time
• Establish eligibility policies
• Funding available for middle-level sports
Middle school sports can be rewarding for students. The message given to these young adolescents and their parents should be that sports participation has many benefits, goals, and expectations that are directly related to their involvement at the middle school level rather than on the possibility of becoming a college or professional athlete. At times coaches and parents put too much pressure on kids at a young age—especially the pressure of being the best and winning.