

To the Minidoka School trustees,

I am requesting consideration for another paid assistant track coach. My rationale for the request is as follows.

This year our initial numbers for track and field was right at 90 students. Throughout the season these numbers declined, as they always tend to do, and we ended with 50 varsity athletes attending districts. We did have about 10 more JV kids not go to districts. It is a belief of mine that had some of those kids had more individualized time with coaches they would have stuck it out, but it is just not possible to give that kind of individual attention with the number of coaches we have. I do realize that kids come to the conclusion that track is not for them, but some, especially our younger kids, just do not realize that they will get better and eventually will be an important part of our success. A more personal connection with coaches is imperative to keep these kids in the process.

We currently have one head coach and 4 paid assistants. Compared to other schools in our district this is one position too low. Twin Falls and Canyon Ridge have one head coach and 5 paid assistants. Jerome has 2 head coaches and 2 assistants each for six total track stipends. I do not have information on Wood River and Burley. If you look at success rates there appears to be correlation.

We have been very successful in the years I have been here with the coaches we have, but we have relied heavily on volunteer coaches. We were blessed to have coaches like Brad Cooper that volunteered for 12 years and Wes Patterson that volunteered for over 18 years. We were very fortunate to have them during that time. Quality volunteers like that are very hard to come by, especially those that don't want to eventually get a paid position. Granted the driving force behind most coaches is not the money, but time should be rewarded, and young coaches need every dollar they can get.

Any addition to the track staff would be Title IX neutral as we are a co-ed sport. If we were to break into a situation like Jerome does (with separate coaching staffs) it would be impossible with the odd number of coaches we have. I personally do not see a benefit for us breaking into separate boys and girls teams at this time, but if it was a decision made in the future to do so, an even number of coaches would be necessary.

A final point is the nature of track and field. There are many different disciplines and events that must be taught. They all have unique training and drills. Currently I have a throwing coach (shot put and discus) that has 20 to 30 kids to teach both disciplines to and still keep them safe during practice. I have a jump coach that must teach 3 disciplines (high jump, long jump, and triple jump) and find time to teach each with different kids at different times. I have a pole vault coach, which is an event that requires so much time it is nearly impossible to teach any other events. Our distance coach trains kids to specialize in endurance, but also different speeds for the three distinct events of the 800, 1600, and 3200. Finally, there is myself who teaches the sprinters (both short and long which ideally should be trained differently), the relays (again both short and long or a combination) and the hurdles which is a very technical event. In my opinion, we have done an excellent job keeping up with these demands, but an extra coach would provide more coaching time with the kids.

We have made due with the resources that have been provided to us and are grateful for them. As I mentioned earlier, however, we have done so with some very qualified volunteers. Without those volunteers we have seen an impact with the lack of coaching time, especially with our younger kids. This will impact our future success in years to come. I still think track and field is an important sport in our community and school. I would appreciate your consideration in granting us another paid assistant.

Sincerely,

Steve Haugeberg
Head Coach
Minico Track and Field