

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my wholehearted support for the proposal to establish an all-weather running track at the Imbler School District. As a graduate of Imbler High School, I was a busy 3-sport athlete who excelled at track and field. I went on to compete at a collegiate level for two years following graduation. Although my natural ability shined in high school, having a proper training environment would have heightened my fitness, technique, and reduced the many injuries I faced, an opportunity I wish for future student athletes and those in pursuit of college sports opportunities.

High school sports positively shaped me into who I am today. Sports brought out leadership, confidence, and teamwork skills that I would not have developed otherwise. While these skills were developed through multiple sports and running on the current gravel track around the football field, the inclusion of a standard track would help reduce the potential for injury, training barriers for athletes, and generate additional interest from students not already involved in track and field. Rural students and communities should be given the same experiences and opportunities for athletic success as those just a town away.

In my senior year of high school, I went on to set the 1a district and Imbler school records in the women's long jump, records I still hold today. I successfully won the 1a State Championships in the 100-meter dash and placed in two other events at the State meet. I largely owe this success to the dedicated coaching staff who tailored unique workouts and used their creativity and research to utilize the sparse equipment offered at Imbler High School. The track and field program at Imbler has been a thriving program for many years with limited recognition and continues to prove its success.

To further prepare us and show their dedication to the program, once a week our coaches would take us 20 minutes to Eastern Oregon University to access their rubberized running track so we could experience a proper and standardized track facility and be given the opportunity to utilize our sport specific running spikes. These were the days I looked forward to most. By providing a dedicated track and field facility, Imbler will be able to offer students this opportunity without the extra cost of fuel, time, and extended travel to engage in regular training and competitions.

Not only would it benefit students of all sports for training and conditioning, but it would also be an asset for the entire community. A track would be utilized by teachers and students for PE classes, parents, and community members with limited options for outdoor exercise away from shoulder-less gravel roads and a fast-moving highway running directly through town.

The investment of a track and field facility will undoubtedly have a positive impact on the community and students' lives. I'm excited about the potential this facility holds for the students of Imbler and the broader community.

Sincerely,

Stephanie (Anthony) VanLeuven