

By Jan Schultz

The Imperial Republican

It's a strong likelihood Chase County Schools will offer a junior high cross country program this fall.

At the June 11 school board meeting, Activities Director Troy Hauxwell had positive response from the board and superintendent to his suggestion that it be considered as another sport for seventh and eighth grade students.

Hauxwell was approached about the possibility by Jonathan Beverly, who offered to serve as a volunteer coach.

Hauxwell said junior high cross country would offer another option to students who are not participating in other sports in the fall.

"It would be a chance for them to get a taste of what it's like in high school cross country," Hauxwell said.

And, it would give the sport the exposure other high school sports now get on the junior high level, such as football, volleyball, basketball and wrestling, he added.

Four to five 2013-14 junior high students have indicated an interest, he said. He thought it would be mostly boys participating this fall, but the program would be open to girls, as well.

Hauxwell told board members there would be minimal cost to the school, with the exception of possible entry fees.

Junior high runners would wear track uniforms and, since the meets are held with high school meets, there wouldn't be additional travel costs as they'd ride with the high school runners, he said.

Normally, the junior high meets are held after the high school runners are done, as their results are being tabulated and medals awarded.

McCook and Gothenburg already offer a junior high division at their meets, "and we would add one to ours" in Imperial, Hauxwell said.

He is going to do some checking on possible other meets CCS attends or others that have a junior high division.

Junior high courses usually cover one mile, but some are two miles, he added, with separate boys' and girls' races.