

Goodland schools get new teachers

New coach expects a lot

Chris Walters says as a teacher and a coach, he expects a lot from his students. "I think that I am definitely a disciplinary teacher," said Walters, the new high school physics and chemistry teacher and head coach of the Cowboys football team. "I expect them to be at school, pay attention in class and turn their work in on time."



Chris Walters

Walters said he also expects 100 percent from the students he coaches. "I want them to work so hard during practice that the game is easy," said the 27-year-old who moved from Dighton to Goodland in May. Walters said he expects all students, whether in the classroom or on the playing field, to give their best effort. "If they are struggling, I expect them

to come in for help," he added.

The Ness City native graduated from Fort Hays State University with a degree in physical science and has taught and coached at high schools in Meade and Dighton.

He said he moved to Goodland because it is a larger school than he has taught at before and he sees it as a challenge.

As for teaching, Walters said his goals for this year are to give students a strong-enough base in science so that they can be successful in college.

"I want them to be able to take the science they learn and apply it to real world situations," he said.

Teacher tries counseling

Nancy Farris has taught art for nine years in other cities, but this year she'll try something different as she begins an internship with Goodland High School Counselor Rhonda Williams.



Nancy Farris

Farris, 43, said she has been working on her master's degree in school counseling through Fort Hays State University. She said she's excited about going into high school counseling.

She said she taught art at a residential treatment center for abused girls in Denver several years ago. That's when she decided to be a counselor.

She will help Williams with class scheduling, career counseling and personal counseling.

Farris was born in Oakley and grew up in Winona. She went to Colby Community College for two years and to Fort Hays for another two.

She's had nine years of experience as a kindergarten through 12th grade art teacher. She has taught at Winona,

Oakley and Denver.

Farris has lived in Goodland for five years. Her husband, Gary, an Edson native, runs a grain trailer manufacturing business. They have a daughter, Laramie, 3. Farris has a son, Dan, 15, who is a sophomore in high school.

Her goal is to be successful as a counselor.

"Get to know the kids as well as I can," she said, "and be able to help them."

She said the biggest reason she wanted to be a counselor is because she likes being around kids and wants to help them succeed. She also wants to be an advocate for the students.

She hasn't worked since 1996 when she took time off for the birth of her daughter.

It was hard for her to go back to work, she said, but she's kind of used to it now. She has been working at the school for the past two and a half weeks. She said it was more of an adjustment for her daughter.

Substitute joins staff

For Travis Witman, Goodland High School is familiar territory, though this is his first time as a permanent faculty member.



T. Witman

Witman, 34, is the new social studies teacher at the high school, where he will teach American government and psychology.

He was a long-term substitute for the late Dave Pearson from 1992 to 1995 at the high school. While there, he taught junior English and was the debate and forensics coach.

"I'm looking forward to teaching," Witman said. "I can hardly wait."

Witman said he was born at Jetmore and grew up on a farm between Jetmore and Dodge City. He majored in secondary education with an emphasis on history and political science at Kansas Wesleyan University in Salina. He moved to Goodland in the spring of 1992 after he got married.

Witman worked at the Northwest Kansas Technical School for five

years. He managed the interactive television program at the Murray Center, recruited students in eastern Colorado and southwest Kansas and taught personal finance to mostly technical students as an outreach class through Colby Community College.

Witman said his goal as a teacher is to get the students more interested in American

government on all levels. He said the age group under 35 has the lowest voter registration. He hopes he can be a positive influence on the students, so they will want to take an active part in government.

"I think the staff and faculty are great and I hope I'll be a good addition," Witman said. He is married to the former Angie Holton from Goodland. The couple has a son, Holton, 5.

Witman is the assistant football coach for the seventh grade boys at Grant Junior High School and will be the assistant basketball coach for the freshmen boys' team.

Teacher wants fun science

James Oss, new Goodland High School earth science teacher, said he wants to make his class fun for students.



James Oss

Oss, 55, said going to school should be fun. He said some kids have a fear that science is boring, dull or scary. He wants students to look forward to coming to class.

"They've got nothing to fear," he said.

He said he became a science teacher because his parents let him watch the television program "Mr. Wizard" when he was growing up. He also had a good science teacher in junior high.

He recalled how his parents bought him a chemistry set for Christmas one year. He said he would use it in front of the television, but one time he spilled chemicals on the rug and ruined it. That was the end of his chemistry set, he said, adding:

"When I became a science teacher, I had the biggest chemistry set a kid could have."

Oss said he wants kids to enjoy themselves and develop a love of science. He said kids need to learn how to find answers for themselves and not rely on others, so they can manage their own lives.

Oss said someone in the school district donated a "top of the line" computerized Meade telescope, which is portable, to the high school. He and the

other science teachers plan to teach "real decent" astronomy and set up some times of night observation for the kids and their parents.

"You can't teach astronomy unless you have a telescope," he said.

Oss, originally from Michigan, has lived in Goodland since February 1999. His wife, Jaime, teaches freshman English at the high school. They have two children, Joe, a seventh grader, and Annabelle, a fifth grader.

He graduated from Assumption College High School at Windsor, Ontario, Canada. In 1974, he earned a degree in science from Ferris State University at Big Rapids, Mich. He received a master's degree in administration from Fort Hays State University in 1990.

He has taught science in Michigan, Missouri and Kansas.

He was principal at St. Xavier School in Junction City for three years and then went to work in October 1998 at Kit Carson Correctional Facility in Burlington, Colo., where he was principal of the vocational education and General Educational Development school.

Oss is also the junior class sponsor at the high school and said he is looking forward to the prom, which he wants to make a memorable event.

"I'll do anything to wear a tuxedo," he said.

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