

## • Letter to the Editor

### *Goracke, BOE should reconsider firing Vogts*

#### To the editor:

It has recently been brought to my attention that Mr. Goracke, superintendent of schools, has proposed to the Sterling Board of Education that Todd Vogts is no longer needed at Sterling High School.

As the former editor-in-chief of The Cub, I was given the deep privilege of learning the ethics and fundamentals of journalism through Vogts during my four years in high school, working for the yearbook and magazine.

Vogts taught me everything I know about journalism — and I would not be where I am today without him.

I am living proof.

In the fall of 2019, I attended Wichita State University to begin my studies as a journalism major, working for the Sunflower News as a photographer and a designer.

Without the journalism classes that were offered while I was in high school, I would not have the skills necessary to be a successful journalist — or the option to be a journalist at all.

Because of my competency, I was able to achieve an editor position within the first few months of working at The Sunflower, which would not have been possible without Vogts.

I am writing this to tell you that I didn't just find a passion for journalism — I found my future.

In order to fully understand the situation at first hand, I contacted Goracke to ask a few questions regarding the decisions made by him

and the board. According to Goracke, the journalism classes would be advised by Derek Schneider and Eric Wenzel — two teachers who don't fully understand the importance of student journalism and the laws behind it. I am aware that Schneider and Wenzel are knowledgeable when it comes to page layout and graphic design, but our publications do so much more than that. The concepts of photography, advertising, AP Style, copy editing, and interviewing are also included in putting together a publication; elements that cannot be taught by the school's art and business teacher.

Another option mentioned by Goracke was to bring in a retired journalist, Ben Marshall, to come and teach the class part time for free or for little pay.

Being a retired journalist means that he would not understand the laws and ethics that make student journalism just what it is — student oriented.

With Marshall as a former publisher, he must understand that he is not in charge of what is printed and what isn't, something a retired publisher is used to determining.

Doing such things would be breaking the laws of scholastic journalism in Kansas and can lead to a huge lawsuit against the school if broken.

Sterling's journalism program has also been rather successful when competing at the Kansas Student Press Association Regional and State competitions.

In Vogts' seven years of the publications adviser, Sterling has taken home the second place sweepstakes award four times at the state competition, and since 2015, Sterling has seen four students achieve Kansas Student Journalist of the Year for the school's classification size.

The school yearbook has also won the KSPA All-Kansas award six times since 2007; a rarity seen in schools the size of Sterling.

These students work extremely hard, working nights after school and weekends to earn these prestigious awards.

The school fails to give them the recognition they deserve.

Students and faculty of Sterling High School, you should consider the fact that if Goracke and the Board of Education fail to reconsider this decision, your beloved yearbook and newspaper will die.

It may last for the next couple of years, but without someone who is passionate about student journalism and is willing to teach future students, you will graduate with nothing to remember your next four years here.

I can only hope that Sterling High School will come to their senses and realize the importance of journalism.

Without these programs, future students will lose the opportunity to find their passion such as I did.

**Morgan Anderson,**  
*Photo editor for the Sunflower News at Wichita State University*

## Forensics season begins

**MEGAN ROELFS**  
*Cub Reporter*

Since the debate season ended with four students placing at state debate, coach Betsy Dutton is hoping to use the momentum to do well in the 2020 forensics season.

"It was fantastic to have four students place," she said. "Particularly because the four who placed were among the most thorough and detailed of the students. All four of them are among the 40 who do forensics."

For Dutton, this is her 38th year of coaching forensics. This year she has the assistance of Adam Moore, who has worked at Lyons High School for two years and is in his second semester at Sterling High School.

"I have loved being here. Getting to be up in front and teaching things to people is so much harder but so much more rewarding," Moore said. "The time limit is harder because we only have 45 minutes. There, I worked four hours after school with students two times a week."

While at Lyons, Moore worked with students who did both speech and acting. Here, his focus is on speech.

"During debate season I worked with the younger kids and all of the ones who had never done debate before," Moore said. "Now with forensics, I work with all of the speech kids. At Lyons, I did more of a mix, and, basically,



*Photo by Megan Roelfs*

### **Sophomore Josiah Watney practices his forensics piece.**

I worked with everyone eventually."

Preparation for the season starts during the summer and continues all year.

"I prepare by reading all year. As soon as summer break begins, I read," Dutton said. "By December, I have a lot of new pieces for advanced students and select older pieces for novices. I then block student pieces and coach in one-on-one appointments."

Moore got involved with Sterling forensics after being contacted by Dutton.

"She reached out to me, I thought about it a lot, and she made me an offer I couldn't refuse," Moore said. "Working with Betsy has been super easy. The stressful part comes in when I have to get the tournament put together. I communicate with all the coaches, so that's when the stress comes. It's having this really big responsi-

bility that if I don't get it worked out, then it doesn't just affect our school, it doesn't affect just our students, it doesn't affect just Betsy, but it affects all these other coaches and other students from other schools who are relying on us for our tournament."

The team is made up of 40 members, and there are 13-14 meets in the overall season.

However, students can only go to eight meets each.

There have been four tournaments so far, and things have gone well according to Dutton.

"My expectations are always high for students. I expect them to trust their coaches' instincts and work hard. That usually breeds success," Dutton said. "We won state forensics last year, and our goals are always to work hard, be detailed, and perform our best."