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THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF EXCELLENCE

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Cotton Center ISD Mission Statement

“Our mission is to graduate all students with skills and values to successfully compete as life-long learners.”

E.L.K.S.
Excellence
in
Learning
Knowledge
and
Skills

The Law of Eminent Success

“No team ever attained eminent success simply by doing what was required; it is the amount and excellence that is above and beyond the required that determines the greatness of ultimate distinction.”

This was the quote I placed on my walls in the Spur athletic dressing room. I wanted students to realize that excellence was more than just doing a job. It involved more than just doing a good job. To accomplish excellence, they had to apply the law of eminent success.

There are some significant qualities that are critical in accomplishing this law. The first, most important aspect is understanding what success is. Winning and losing does not define success but rather effort and attitude. In John Maxwell's *Your Road Map for Success*, he explains that people often have common misconceptions about success. Probably the most common misunderstanding is wealth. Too many students want to measure their life by the amount of money they make. But the secret to success is for man to be satisfied with never being satisfied with where he is.

In trying to become a man of excellence, one will become a man of success. Excellence causes the individual to go beyond what they normally would.

The second concept in the law of eminent success

deals with going above and beyond the required. Anybody qualified for a job can do the required. Above the required allows us to discover our potential. The only way of discovering the limits of the possible is to venture a little way past them into the impossible.

The thermometer of excellence has one setting called the required. Once one hits past the required, they move into excellence. To remain under the required keeps us in mediocrity. Always gage performance on the boiling point of excellence. Anything less than the boiling point still has a way to go.

When a person strives for excellence, it's about quantitative and qualitative measures. It's about amount and excellence. Do we go beyond the required in a manner that promotes our best? Do we do more than we have to, and do we do it better than we have to? That's the difference between those who strive for excellence and those who are satisfied with mediocrity.

When I first came to Cotton Center, I noticed a worn path in the grass. My superintendent made the comment that it was a particular individual's trail. This person would cut across the grass between school buildings to cut down on the amount of walk time. When my attention was drawn to the path, I made a personal commitment. In my mind I said, "I will attempt to never walk on the grass again, and I will intentionally walk on the

sidewalk—even if students do not.”

Now this may not have been the most admirable quality to bring to a school, but I believe it exhibits something important. Regardless of what one does, there must be a commitment to do it better, not for the sake of others, but for the sake of excellence. And there needs to be an inclusion of novelty. It needs to be something that has never been tried before. Effort and originality.

The secret of success is to be satisfied with never being satisfied with where one is. This is true excellence—holding oneself to the highest standard in order to attain the highest possible destiny. We cannot be satisfied with the hand life has dealt us. We must strive for ultimate distinction. And we cannot reach greatness by talking about it; we have to live it.

Right now we are implementing our school improvement plan. Rated as academically unacceptable, we had to develop some strategies for improvement. Why? We cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are. In fact, the meaning of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again while expecting a different outcome.

I like to try different things. I'm not married to any one strategy. But I am sold on excellence. I believe in going above and beyond the required in both amount and excellence. And this will lead to ultimate distinction.