



March 1, 2011

THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF EXCELLENCE

Volume 1, Issue 12

## 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 Need for Values (Part 4)

There is a need for values. Make no mistake about that. Students need to be taught how to act with character, and the three values that are critical for a person's life are hard work, integrity, and teamwork.

In the last couple of articles, the scope has been about hard work and integrity, but teamwork is just as important. When thinking about this attribute, there are five characteristics that best describe this value. They are unselfishness, faith, loyal, respect, and love.

Unselfishness deals with placing the goal of the entire group in front of personal aspirations. A student's responsibility is to work to become and not to acquire. The easy path is to think me, me, me, but the truth of the matter is this. Dick Vitale once said that the glory of sport is witnessing a team perform as a single unit striving for a common goal and ultimately bringing distinction to the jersey the player represents. This is unselfishness. It is a passionate display for a dream that is beyond ones own personal interests. Who cares who gets the credit as long as the job gets done? That's the essence of unselfishness.

When it comes to teamwork, faith is believing in the other guy—the one right next to you. If an individual believes in others, then others will believe in them. Too many times, individuals are “other guy” conscious, that is, they

concentrate more on what their coworker or teammate is doing (and doing wrong, I might add) than what they themselves are doing. When one centers on their own responsibilities, believing in a teammate becomes much easier. When self evaluation ends, then criticism of others begins. To be a team player, a person must concentrate on their own efforts and support the efforts of others. Believe in others and others will believe in you.

Loyalty is the concrete that cements the blocks of unity in a team because nothing divides a team more than thinking only of themselves. This is much like the trait of unselfishness. To be loyal means to be committed to the team concept, and nothing can bring it together better than excellence. Commitment to one another insures that the job gets done.

Another critical attribute of teamwork is respect. I heard one student once say, “People got to earn my respect. And if anyone disrespects me, I'm gonna disrespect them.” This is not the type of respect that leads to teamwork. In fact, this is the type of person who seems to be only concerned with himself. This type of attitude always leads to trouble. but anybody can cause trouble. Very few ever make a difference. The type of respect that is team oriented will make a positive difference in team goals. True respect for others begins with humility. Humility takes counsel of its own weak-

nesses and never trusts its own strengths. It realizes that the bonds of adhesion that hold a team together comes from looking outside oneself and seeing each other as the key to success.

Finally, love is the glue that solidifies all relationships. Since teamwork is based on such a concept, players must have an appreciation and sense of brotherly love towards each other. When it comes to love, it never fails. I recently read a book that dealt with a football coach and his approach towards dealing with his athletes. As the students gathered around the coach, he would ask them two questions: “What's my job (meaning the job of the coaches)?” The students would respond in unison and say, “To love us.” Then the coach would ask, “What's your job (as teammates)?” And the team would respond back, “To love each other.” This coach knew that the key to successful teamwork was love because he knew that love would never fail.

Question any organization that does not promote values. I don't care how much success they have had. Success without values is simply a seasoned dish void of nutrition. It may satisfy a temporary hunger, but it will never provide the ingredients necessary for character development.

When it comes to holding oneself to the highest possible standard in order to attain one's highest personal destiny, the biggest threat is an absence of values.