

Ed Young
KOKANEE ELEMENTARY
Goal Setting Outline
1998-99

I. Culture and Leadership

On a crisp autumn day a few years ago, three busloads of executives from Volkswagen of America pulled up to a dusty farm in Solvang, California. The most common comment from the executives that morning was "What the hell are we doing here?"

This group was led into a large barn onto a circular catwalk surrounding a pen. A few minutes later, Monty Roberts, a 62 year old horse trainer, came into the pen. As the VW people watched, enthralled, Roberts took a young, unbroken horse and got it to accept a saddle, bridle and rider without inflicting the slightest pain.

Growing up around horses, I know that introducing a horse to a rider is a difficult job, often taking weeks or months. In a few cases it can lead to breaking the animal's spirit.

What does all of this have to do with Volkswagen but more importantly what does this have to do with culture and leadership in a school?

At Volkswagen the organization was a mess, morale was low, and production was only at a tenth of what was sold a few decades earlier. Clive Warrilow, the new CEO needed to make a change. The old by the book hierarchical system no longer worked. Instead of trying to break the executives to the VW saddle and bridle, he let them approach their tasks in their individual ways. A dealer who misses sales targets was not reprimanded. He or she is asked what could have been done differently. The object was to make him or her think and learn, not simply to follow orders. VW's new Beetle is a prime example. It was proposed by rebel designers in California. Because VW has learned to listen to it's people, it bought the idea. Warrilow's learn-don't teach approach has already made an impact. VW has come back resoundingly.

Roberts' training method demonstrates the importance of relationships and trust in an organization. Effective leadership rests on feelings of trust between leader and follower. Many of the programs at Kokanee are non-traditional and would not exist if the teachers at Kokanee were not empowered to try new things and to think outside of the box in a risk free environment. Roberts says that "No teacher can push information into an unwilling brain. There's no such thing as teaching. Only learning." This philosophy fits what we are doing in the area of standards as well as how a positive school culture can be created.

At the end of the demonstration the trainer turned to the executives and said: "The object of the teacher is to create an environment in which the student can learn." I feel that we have created such an environment at Kokanee.

II. Strategic Plan Implementation

1 Establish High Standards

- * Implementation of new math adoption to support state math standards
Total school involvement
- * Continue to work toward the building goal of having all 3rd graders reading to standard by 1999 as measured by the Houghton-Mifflin Benchmark test
Total school involvement
- * Continue focus in certificated staff evaluation cycle on standards alignment and quality assessment
- * Develop a new student discipline policy with a focus on respectful and responsible behavior

2 Focus on Student Learning

- * Implement District Assessment Plan and support with building assessments
- * Continue and increase use of performance tasks and scoring guides
Encourage staff to contribute to collecting and sharing samples, scoring guides, and anchor papers with each other
- * Building goal (All third graders will read to standard by 1999 as measured by the Houghton-Mifflin Benchmark test)

3 Increase Public Involvement in Decision Making

- * Parents are included on the advisory board and all committees.
- * Decision Making matrix to be shared with staff and community

#4 Provide High Quality Support Systems

- * Decision Making matrix to be shared with staff and community
- * 100% of staff will offer some opportunity for parent involvement

5 Collaborate with Community Resources

- * Continue to explore and share strategies to ensure community and agency supports to families needed for student success are accessed effectively. The school nurse has been compiling resources to be shared with staff and parents