

WHY WAS SEÑOR KUHL SO COOL?



Dr. Scott Seaman
Executive Director, AWSP

We can all look back on our lives and name our favorite teacher, coach or principal. And, we can go even deeper and describe what made that person so special, so unique, and so impactful. You've heard my clear bias towards the impact of incredible principals, but I owe the reason I entered into the field of education to a teacher...who was really cool — Señor Kuhl, to be exact.

I can remember like it was yesterday, the first day I walked into his class. You could feel his energy and enthusiasm. You could sense his authenticity, passion for teaching, and love of his content (Spanish). Most importantly, he had an unwavering belief in the success of all kids, no exceptions.

Señor Kuhl was one of those people in my life who changed my path and trajectory. He was one of the first adults who didn't accept my excuses, lack of confidence, or lack of belief in myself. He had high expectations

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for everyone in the room, and he certainly wasn't going to let my distracting and intentional humor lower the bar for me. He just raised his game and brought even more energy.

Day in and day out, Señor Kuhl gave his best self to Olympia High School to make an impact on kids. You could expect high energy and “bell to bell” learning every day. You could expect a warm, welcoming smile, and a lesson that would keep you moving, engaged, and interacting in the content with your classmates. Señor Kuhl was a genius and was ahead of his time. No offense to Charlotte Danielson, but Señor Kuhl was a distinguished teacher before there was such a thing.

Señor Kuhl greeted kids at the door, not with just that smile, but also with a high five and big, beaming, energy-filled eyes that told you to get ready for learning. Behind that greeting at the door was a teacher who had genuine knowledge and curiosity about your life beyond his classroom walls. He knew your name, interests, and dynamics at home that were either helping or hurting your ability to be successful.

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you didn't want to be late due to fear or missing points, but rather because you didn't want to disappoint the coolest teacher you've ever encountered. He truly cared about us, and us him.

I became a teacher because of Señor Kuhl. He pulled me aside one day and told me that Spanish seemed natural to me and he was so proud of how well I was doing in his class, especially because he was fully aware of the struggles in the rest of my classes. I remember that moment and how it made me feel. Those were powerful words with a forever impact.

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I carried the lessons learned from Señor Kuhl with me into the classroom as a teacher, into the hallways as an assistant principal, into the building as a principal, and into my role in serving as your executive director. Smiles, high fives, belief in all kids, high expectations, authentic relationships, passion for education, and creating hope brought me into the profession and continue to drive me forward.

So, as you head into another year of principaling, don't ever underestimate the impact you have as the leader in your school. Your actions and interactions set the tone for an entire school community. I'm not asking you to just be cool — be like Señor Kuhl.

Just think: Who will be writing about you someday? ■



Dr. Scott Seaman joined AWSP in the fall of 2013 after serving as the principal at Tumwater High School. In July 2018, he assumed duties as Executive Director.

Humor me!

Created by **David Ford**, Retired Washington State Principal

