

LEADERSHIP EXPERT CALLS FOR MAJOR EMPHASIS ON 10 VITAL SKILLS DURING MIDDLE SCHOOL & HIGH SCHOOL

Could Comprehensive Life & Leadership Skills Training for Teens Be the Cost-Effective Key to Reversing America's Drop in World Education Rankings?

STONY BROOK, New York / June 30 - - *The Leadership Capital Group LLC* (LCG), a privately-held management consulting firm on Long Island thinks it has a big part of the answer to Finland's emergence as the world's #1 leader in secondary education: *A Fortune 500 leadership skills process in every middle school and high school in America.*

"A lot of people are concerned about the latest study by the *Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development* (OECD/PISA) showing American secondary students continuing to slip in international comparisons", said Dr. Frank Ashby, CEO of *The Leadership Capital Group LLC*, at a recent business meeting at SUNY Stony Brook. "It wasn't so long ago that an American education was the envy of the world."

Dr. Ashby is a best-selling author of leadership books and processes used by hundreds of Fortune 500 companies, and a former member of the ACE Commission on Educational Credit and Credentials in Washington D.C. "We don't need to spend a fortune getting things back on track", he says, "but we do need to start looking at some things very differently."

First on Dr. Ashby's list of things in need of some careful re-thinking is the definition of an American liberal education. "We need to broaden the scope of what we do in middle school and high school" says Ashby, "and bring greater *balance* to the acquiring of critical knowledge and the acquiring of critical life skills. Too much of what we're emphasizing now just isn't important enough anymore, and needs to be replaced by learning opportunities with much greater real-world value."

A recent survey by LCG found that over 90% of parents with one or more college-bound teenager(s) agreed that a quality process dedicated to building higher levels of *self-confidence and self-esteem, strong communications skills, strong interpersonal skills* and strong *leadership capabilities* would be a powerful addition to their local school curriculums. "It does seem strange to us that the world's biggest and best companies invest millions of dollars every year in comprehensive leadership development training", says LCG senior associate, Dr. Arthur R. Pell, "yet American secondary schools do very little by comparison." Dr. Pell is the author of over forty business books, including the revised editions of several leadership classics.

According to *The American Society for Training & Development* (ASTD) American business invests about \$12 billion a year in leadership skills training for high-potential managers and executives with an average age of *thirty-six*. "I'm thrilled by the size of the investment", says Dr. Ashby, but not the timing. We need to drive the average age down by *twenty* years. The time to start aggressively building these skills is during the *teen years* when habits are still developing, important life decisions have yet to be made, and enough time is available to do the job right. In top corporate settings the focus is always on creating the right *balance* between knowledge and skill. And that's *precisely* the approach we need to take with teens in middle school and high school."

To show just how easy and inexpensive the switch to a more balanced approach could be, *LCG* accepted a challenge from parents in 2006 to build its new *Great Expectations Program for High-Potential Teenagers* and then make it available to accredited middle schools and high schools for a tiny fraction of its corporate prices. "Our goal from the outset was to build the best, most powerful leadership process for teenagers *ever*, then figure out a way to price it within the reach of every family and school district in America", says Dr. Ashby. "And we believe we've succeeded."

Great Expectations is the first multi-year leadership process for secondary school students based on Fortune 500 content and methodology. Intended as a college-level elective or extracurricular activity, the process develops 10 critically-important life and leadership skills in a 24-session core program, then builds upon each via a unique reinforcement phase that lasts from the start of middle school to the end of high school. “To us, it’s the most potent addition to American education in decades, says Dr. Ashby. “Yet what’s really important here is that kids with a desire to grow get access to an experience like this as early as possible. If schools prefer to design their own curriculums, that’s fine. We just want them to start doing for American teenagers what American business has been doing for managers and executives for decades.”

Great Expectations takes time-tested content and training techniques from LCG’s Fortune 500 processes, then shows qualified school faculty members how to deliver it with ease and precision on school premises. “Our *weave designs* cost up to a million dollars to write and test”, says Dr. Ashby, “but the results speak for themselves.” Great Expectations contains about 10-times the contact hours of its nearest competitor and about 20-times more than the average of all publicly-available leadership processes. “Like a quality education, quality skill-building takes time”, says Dr. Ashby, “We need to get beyond short ‘courses’ to quality, multi-year processes that deliver measurable results in five areas: *satisfaction, learning, application, impact* and *return-on-investment*. With Great Expectations we do the design, schools do the delivery and kids in Grades 7-12 get a world-class leadership process comparable to anything at any Fortune 500 company in the world today, *twenty years* earlier in life and for *pennies* on the dollar.”

Taxpayers invest an average of \$11,200 per year in every public middle school and high school student in America, or about \$67,200 per student during the six years of secondary school. “We think it’s significant that for as little as \$50 more per year every serious-minded teen at a participating school can now also have *six years* of Great Expectations”, says Dr. Ashby.

More about *The Great Expectations Program for High-Potential Teenagers* can be found at the process website, www.greatexpectationsforteens.com.

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HELPFUL INFORMATION

- *A Nation Accountable*, the 2008 report by the U.S. Department of Education that concludes American education is at greater risk today than it was in 1983 when *A Nation at Risk* was first published. (www.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/accountable)
- The *Programme for International Student Assessment* report by *The Organization of Economic Cooperation & Development* (OECD/PISA) showing American secondary students faring poorly in international comparisons. (www.pisa.oecd.org)
- *The ROI Institute*, the world’s leading authority on return-on-investment measurement systems, including those used to estimate the ROI generated by leadership training programs. (www.roiinstitute.net)
- *The Great Expectations Program for High-Potential Teenagers* website, www.greatexpectationsforteens.com, for information about Frank Ashby, Arthur Pell and the Great Expectations process.