

GETTING READY FOR COLLEGE & THE WORLD OF WORK? ***Better Bring Along Some Serious Leadership Skills!***



Thousands of Fortune 500 managers and executives know it. And so do the world's most prestigious private secondary schools. But a recent NACAC study led by Harvard University Admissions Dean, William Fitzsimmons, said it best:

If you want to excel in college and the world of work get yourself a rock-solid set of leadership skills in middle school and high school!

American business invests about \$30 billion a year in comprehensive leadership skills training for high-potential managers and executives, yet according to surveyed high school business teachers comparable efforts in American secondary schools are nearly non-existent. "It's so unfortunate", says Dr. Franklin C. Ashby, CEO of The Leadership Capital Group LLC in New York, and the author of several best-selling leadership books. "All the best evidence shows that kids need both a strong academic foundation and a developed set of life skills and leadership skills to thrive in college, and in life. One without the other is simply not enough."

The recent study by the *National Association for College Admission Counseling* (NACAC), led by Harvard University Dean of Admission William Fitzsimmons, startled academics when it found "non-cognitive traits" like leadership skills, student drive and student motivation were as good or *better* at predicting success in college than the venerated SAT test. "This really is very important news", says Dr. Ashby, "particularly because it's coming from leading academics."

The typical American teenager takes about 500 subject tests and quizzes during middle school and high school, plus a dozen or so mandated by *No-Child-Left-Behind*. "There's very little real evidence that SAT scores add anything extra to the understanding of academic ability", says Dr. Ashby, "or the likelihood a given teenager will do well in college. By contrast, the evidence of a direct

relationship between strong leadership skills and improved personal effectiveness, including improved coping, reasoning and problem-solving abilities, is *overwhelming*."



So which skills are the most important to college-bound teens? Organizations like The Stanford University Center for Leadership Development & Research, The Society for Human Resource Management and The American Society for Training & Development say that in addition to strong computer and writing skills, high-performers consistently demonstrate the following "Big 10":

- High Levels of **SELF-CONFIDENCE & SELF-ESTEEM** - Characterized by a noticeably strong, healthy self-image, and a belief in one's ability and value as a person.
- Strong **LEADERSHIP CAPABILITY & A STRONG MORAL CHARACTER** - Defined as an ability to organize, energize and mobilize others with integrity and reliability, to achieve some important result.
- Strong **INTERPERSONAL & SOCIAL SKILLS** - Characterized by the ability to get along with others and be recognized as a thoughtful, considerate, trustworthy individual.
- Clear, Concise **ORAL COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS** - Defined as an ability to organize and express one's thoughts in a logical, intelligent, understandable way.
- Strong **PUBLIC SPEAKING SKILLS** - Characterized by an ability to organize and express one's thoughts in a group setting of any size.
- Strong **GOAL-SETTING & GOAL-EXECUTION** Capabilities - Characterized by the demonstrating of the skills & discipline needed to identify, set and pursue meaningful goals in a host of areas.
- A Neat, Suitably Professional **APPEARANCE & DEMEANOR** - Characterized by appropriately-

styled clothing and a healthy, properly respectful self-image.

- A Genuinely **POSITIVE & ENTHUSIASTIC MENTAL ATTITUDE** - Characterized by an ability to look positively and optimistically at one's life and prospects for the future, while also maintaining high levels of energy and motivation.
- An Ability to **THRIVE UNDER PRESSURE** - Characterized by an ability to clearly visualize success, sharpen one's focus and maintain one's composure in difficult or stressful situations.
- An Ability to **AVOID THE 10 MAJOR LIFE DERAILERS** - Defined as those avoidable events and circumstances in life that derail and often threaten to destroy promising lives. (e.g. Drug Abuse, Alcohol Abuse, Trouble with the Police, etc.)

So where should a college-bound, career-oriented teen go to muscle-up? "Opportunities abound in the private sector", says Dr. Arthur R. Pell, the author of over 40 books on leadership and career planning, "but kids and parents need to understand that like a first-class education, the building of a first-class set of leadership skills takes time. It's not something accomplished in a few days, or even a few weeks or months."

A survey of 155 PTA members from across America were asked to examine the sample materials and website of 6 nationally-known teen leadership programs, and then rate each on the basis of *quality*, *comprehensiveness*, *duration*, *impact* and *price*. The following, listed in order of overall ranking, is a sampling of the results:

OVERALL RANK

- #1 **The Great Expectations Program for High-Potential Teenagers**
(www.greatexpectationsforteens.com) Rated #1 overall and in all 5 categories, this new school-delivered process designed by top Fortune 500 trainers contains 24 core sessions, plus 2 unique reinforcement phases lasting through the high school graduation of each participant. Delivered after school on school premises by school faculty. Total Contact Hours: 500-1000. Student courseware: \$695 per person, including all phases and up to seven years of training.
- #2 **The Dale Carnegie Course**
(www.dalecarnegie.com) The *grand-daddy* of them all. Offered since 1912 by Dale Carnegie

franchise owners in 77 countries, its classic spaced-learning concept is delivered in 12-weekly sessions and remains a favorite among both older students (age 16+) and working adults. Hundreds of convenient locations. Total Contact Hours: 42. Average price: \$1595-\$2195 per person.

- #3 **Congressional Student Leadership Conference** - Leadership University (www.lead-america.org) This popular, 6-day, program in Washington, DC provides a full schedule of classes, briefings, lectures and simulations to aspiring teen leaders. One of several programs lasting from 5-days to 10-days by Lead America, reservations are taken on a first-come, first-served basis throughout the year. Total Contact Hours: 40. Total Price: \$1599-\$1799 per person, plus \$99 insurance fee and travel expense to Washington, DC. Includes lodging and most meals.

- #4 **Congressional Youth Leadership Council - National Young Leaders Conference** (www.cylc.org) This popular week-long, program in Washington, DC for high-performing teenagers offers a stimulating array of meetings, lectures and day-trips designed to provide a rich sense of leadership tradition and practice. Programs scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis throughout the year. Total Contact Hours: 34. Total Price: \$1480 per person, plus travel expense to Washington, DC. Includes lodging and most meals.

- #5 **The 7 Habits of Highly-Effective Teens** (www.7habits4teens.com) This intriguing, very flexible program based on the popular book by Sean Covey, son of famed leadership expert Dr. Stephen Covey, is offered in both a 1-day facilitated format, and in a school-delivered format lasting up to a semester. Total Contact Hours: 6-22. Average price: \$795 (6 hrs) - \$1495 (22 hrs) per person. Add travel expense for programs not delivered on school premises.

- #6 **National Teen Leadership Program** (www.teenleader.org) This 3-day program at the California State University (Sacramento) was one of 38 recipients of the Sen. Barbara Boxer *Excellence in Education Awards* in 2007. Using a combination of group activities, lectures and team-building exercises, it boasts impressive growth opportunities for teens in a host of key leadership areas. Total Contact Hours: 22. Total

Price: \$325-\$399 per person, plus travel to California, lodging and some meals.

Although he admires the goals and objectives of the top competing programs, as the chief designer of the *Great Expectations* process Dr. Ashby clearly views comprehensiveness as a key indicator of quality. “The important thing is getting into a process in middle school or early in high school”, he says, “that builds and continually reinforces skills to the end of 12th grade. Short courses and workshops are not the answer. Nobody learns to play the piano like Vladimir Horowitz or play golf like Tiger Woods in a few lessons. It’s just not possible. And the same logic applies to the building of leadership skills.”

American taxpayers invest an average of \$11,200 per year in every public school student today, or about \$67,200 per student during the six years of secondary school. “The good news is that we don’t need to spend a fortune getting kids the skills they need to do well in college,” says Dr. Ashby, “or in life in general. But we do need to be much more proactive about it.” According to industry statistics the average age of those participating in comprehensive leadership development processes in America today is *thirty-six*. “We need to drive that average down by *twenty years* or more”, says Dr. Ashby, “by getting our best private-sector processes into American middle schools and high schools quickly, and at a price everybody can afford.”

Copyright ©2010
The Leadership Capital Group LLC
All Rights Reserved