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Presentation Outline – 2009 ASCD Annual Conference – Orlando, FL – March 14, 2009

“Why Aren’t We Teaching Speaking Skills To Our Kids?”

DESCRIPTION FOR CONFERENCE PROGRAM: OUR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES NEED TO KNOW HOW TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY LONG BEFORE THEY GRADUATE IF THEY ARE TO SUCCEED IN THE WORKFORCE OR IN HIGHER EDUCATION. VERBAL COMMUNICATION IS A SORELY NEEDED PART OF OUR LANGUAGE ARTS.

PRESENTATION SUMMARY: ARE YOUR MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS GETTING READY FOR THE REAL WORLD? MORE IMPORTANTLY, ARE WE GETTING THEM READY? NOT JUST WITH THE SUBJECTS WE TEACH OR THE TESTS WE SHOWER UPON THEM, BUT BY GIVING THEM REAL LIFE SKILLS THAT ARE NOT TAUGHT IN MOST CLASSROOMS.

GOOD COMMUNICATION ABILITIES ARE AMONG THE MOST IMPORTANT LIFE SKILLS CRITICAL TO ACHIEVING SUCCESS IN ANY FIELD AND IN EVERY ASPECT OF OUR LIVES – ACADEMICALLY, PROFESSIONALLY, AND SOCIALLY. IT REALLY IS DOG-EAT-SHARK OUT THERE, AND IF THESE KIDS CAN’T REPRESENT THEMSELVES EFFECTIVELY, ASK THE QUESTIONS THEY NEED TO HAVE ANSWERS TO, OR INTERACT APPROPRIATELY WITH OTHERS, THEY WILL BE UNDER-PREPARED AND DISTINCTLY DISADVANTAGED AS THEY LEAVE HIGH SCHOOL AND GO TO WORK, COLLEGE, OR TRADE SCHOOL IN AN INCREASINGLY COMPETITIVE WORLD.

THEY NEED TO KNOW HOW TO INTRODUCE THEMSELVES PROPERLY, HOW TO MAKE MEANINGFUL EYE CONTACT, HOW TO START AND MAINTAIN CONVERSATIONS, HOW TO INTERACT WITH ALL KINDS OF INDIVIDUALS, HOW TO GIVE A SUCCESSFUL INTERVIEW, AND HOW TO STAND UP AND ADDRESS A LIVE AUDIENCE WITH CONFIDENCE AND RESPECT. IN SHORT, THEY NEED TO KNOW HOW TO USE THEIR ORAL COMMUNICATIONS ABILITIES TO GET WHERE THEY WANT TO GO AND TO BECOME WHO THEY WANT TO BE.

HUNDREDS OF STUDENTS IN OUR SCHOOLS DESPERATELY NEED THE BASIC COMMUNICATIONS SKILLS THAT SOMEHOW WE EXPECT THEM TO PICK UP MAGICALLY FROM SOMEWHERE. WHERE? ON THE PLAYGROUND? IN THE STREETS? AT HOME? IN SCHOOL? DON’T COUNT ON IT. THIS TRAINING SHOULD BE A REQUIRED ELEMENT OF COLLEGE AND WORKFORCE PREPARATION, DEVELOPMENT, AND READINESS!

THIS SESSION WILL DEMONSTRATE THE IMPORTANCE OF ESTABLISHING A SOUND FOUNDATION THAT BUILDS UPON ITSELF AND REINFORCES ITSELF WITH EVERY SUBSEQUENT LESSON. IT IS VITAL THAT IN THE OFTEN SCARY REALM OF PUBLIC SPEAKING WE MOVE STEP-BY-STEP FROM TALKING ABOUT EASY SUBJECTS AND THINGS WE KNOW ABOUT TO SUBJECTS THAT REQUIRE ORIGINAL THOUGHT, INTROSPECTION, AND SPONTANEITY. THIS AREA OF THE LANGUAGE ARTS IS BEST TAUGHT FACE-TO-FACE IN A VERY INFORMAL, OFTEN LIGHT-HEARTED, BUT HIGHLY INTERACTIVE MANNER. THE SPEAKER WILL MODEL THE MANNER OF DELIVERY USED TO ACHIEVE PROVEN, POSITIVE RESULTS.

AREAS WE WILL COVER – AND THAT WILL INVOLVE AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION – INCLUDE:

- OVERCOMING FEAR • BODY LANGUAGE • INTRODUCTIONS • EXPANDING VOCABULARY • “ELEVATOR SPEECHES”**
- COMMUNICATION ETIQUETTE AND COURTESIES • HOW TO ASK FOR WHAT YOU WANT • THE INTERVIEW • USING HUMOR**
- SPEECH CONSTRUCTION AND DELIVERY • THE ART OF LISTENING • NETWORKING**

THE BASIS FOR THIS SESSION WILL BE THE POWERCOMMUNICATORS® CURRICULUM. THIS IS A RESEARCH-BASED PROGRAM THAT HAS WORKED WITH NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND STUDENTS IN MD, DC, VA, NJ, AND PA FOR THE LAST 5 YEARS. IT IS ALIGNED WITH STANDARDS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE LANGUAGE ARTS. OUTCOMES INCLUDE BETTER ATTENDANCE, GRADES, AND BEHAVIOR, AS WELL AS IMPROVEMENTS IN CONFIDENCE AND SELF-ESTEEM. TRAINING SESSIONS ARE LIMITED TO EIGHT TO TWELVE (8-12) STUDENTS; ALLOW THREE TO FIVE (3-5) SPEAKING OPPORTUNITIES PER STUDENT PER SESSION; AND ARE VIDEOTAPED TO GAUGE STUDENTS’ STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, AND PROGRESS.