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What can American education learn from Finland?

Announcing the new documentary, “The Finland Phenomenon: Inside the World’s Most Surprising School System”

(BOSTON, MA – April 14, 2011) Finland’s education system has consistently ranked among the best in the world for more than a decade, making it the envy of every education reformer. The puzzle is, why Finland? Acclaimed documentary filmmaker, Bob Compton, along with Harvard researcher, Dr. Tony Wagner, decided to find out. The result of their research is captured in a new film, ***“The Finland Phenomenon: Inside the World’s Most Surprising School System”***, which will premiere in Boston on May 5, 2011 at the Stata Center at Massachusetts’ Institute of Technology in sponsorship with Social Venture Partners (SVP) Boston. Following the screening, a discussion will be led by an esteemed group of panelists, including Massachusetts Secretary of Education, Paul Reville.

In the 60 minute film, Dr. Wagner will guide the viewer through an inside look at the world’s finest secondary education system. A life-long educator and author of the best-selling book ***“The Global Achievement Gap,”*** Dr. Wagner is uniquely qualified to explore and explain Finland’s success. From within classrooms and through interviews with students, teachers, parents, administrators and government officials, Dr. Wagner, SVP Boston Partner, reveals the surprising factors accounting for Finland’s rank as the #1 education system in the world.

“I have been an educator and education researcher for over 30 years” said Harvard’s Dr. Wagner. “and what I learned in Finland was truly astonishing. Finland’s process of educating their children is nearly opposite of America’s current approach, and it’s an approach that we can really learn from.”

The film was produced by acclaimed film maker, Bob Compton, who is best known for his education documentary, “Two Million Minutes – A Global Examination.” That film followed six students from the U.S., India and China to see how they prioritized their four years or “two

million minutes” of high school. What the film demonstrated is what test results have proven for years that the Asian students are academically years ahead of their American peers.

“After 5 years of producing global education documentaries, I believe America has more to learn from Finland than any other country I’ve documented, including India and China,” says Compton. “Finland is a post-industrial success story; rising to the global education challenge without the benefit of the booming industries of Asia. Finland has created a unique education system that gives individuals bright career options while raising the standard of living throughout their economy.”

After the screening, an hour-long discussion/Q&A with leading education experts will ensue. Dr. Tony Wagner will moderate the discussion with panelists **Paul Reville** (Massachusetts Secretary of Education), and **Robert B. Schwartz** (Academic Dean of the Harvard Graduate School of Education).

The event is invitation only.

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About Bob Compton and *Two Million Minutes*

Bob Compton is an entrepreneur and venture capitalist who has invested in numerous companies over the past twenty years. He became a documentary filmmaker after traveling the world and realizing a passion for American education reform. His first film, *Two Million Minutes*, takes an in-depth look at secondary education in the United States as compared with India and China and examines the implications this may have on the U.S. position in the global economy during the 21st century. For more information about this film and others, please visit www.2mminutes.com.

About Dr. Tony Wagner

Tony Wagner is the Innovation Education Fellow at the Technology & Entrepreneurship Center at Harvard. For the past decade, he was co-director of the Change Leadership Group at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. He is a life-long educator – a high school teacher, K-8 principal and university professor. Tony has published four books, including *The Global Achievement Gap: Why Even Our Best Schools Don't Teach the New Survival Skills Our Children Need* - and *What We Can do About it*. Tony earned an M.A.T. and an Ed.D. at the Harvard University Graduate School of Education.

About Social Venture Partners Boston

SVP is a diverse community of leaders investing our time and money in innovative local nonprofits in the fields of education, workforce development, and financial self-sufficiency. Through our rigorous investment approach and collective giving, we sharpen our individual philanthropy and have an impact much greater than we would on our own.