

*Dr. Kevin Fleming
 Visits Chehalis
 School District*



Dr. Kevin Fleming: (Re)Defining the Goal of Education

With more than two decades working in education, including as founder and CEO of [Catapult](#), which offers career focused master classes, you might think Dr. Kevin Fleming would call himself an educator. But instead, he considers himself an economist and an aspiring futurist.

In Fleming's opinion, equipping the next generation of American workers is going to take some forward thinking and a willingness to redefine the goal of education. When he speaks about careers with students, his emphasis is less on GPAs and transcripts and more about the Japanese word Ikigai - which translates to, as Fleming puts it, "the reason you get up in the morning."

"What if our goal was not just to get a transcript or a grade? What if our goal was for every student to find their Ikigai? How different would our school look? How different would our classrooms look?" Fleming said.

A Message That Complements Chehalis' Efforts

Fleming was the featured speaker at a free parent education opportunity held Dec. 5 at Chehalis Middle School. His visit to Chehalis was sponsored by the Chehalis School District's [Cornerstone](#) program through grant funding from the [Washington Student Achievement Council](#).

"I am very thankful to have had the opportunity to introduce Chehalis to Dr. Fleming. I am confident that his knowledge and advice resonates with our community. I am hopeful that others will take the time to watch one of his videos or read a book. I have already heard from a few parents in attendance that they wish they would have heard his message when they were in school," said Rick Goble, Chehalis School District Executive Director of Student Achievement.

During his visit, Fleming visited the Cornerstone program, housed in the Olympic building. Cornerstone is a new program through the Chehalis [Student Achievement Initiative](#) focused on families with ages pre-K through 8th. It offers assistance such as basic necessities, scholarships for parents to complete their GED or other career training and preschool scholarships, all aimed at allowing families to focus on preparing their children for success when they reach public school.

Talking with students about life purpose and career pathways is something Fleming believes should start happening when children are very young. He wrote a children's book called *"There's a Hat for That"* that speaks about the subject of talents and passions and how they can translate to many different career paths. During his visit to Cornerstone, Fleming signed copies of *"There's a Hat for That"* for the Cornerstone program's reading area.

"I loved the way he informed parents and teaching staff of ways to support students as they explore the many career pathways and opportunities available to them. Hearing him talk about aligning your passions and skills to find a way to make an impact in the world was truly inspiring," said DeeDee Judd of Cornerstone.

"Parents and students came up to me after the event and were encouraged by his presentation. They were eager to look into his online tools that he shared with us. They were excited to start planning for their future," added Cecilia Jimenez of Cornerstone.

In addition to this presentation, Fleming's visit also included a meeting with teachers from W.F. West's Career and Technical Education department.

Growing Wise Consumers

For Fleming, the change in perspective was born out of his very own experience in higher education and career paths. After high school, he went to college and discovered he enjoyed philosophy. He earned a degree in philosophy but upon graduating college, found few job prospects.

"I quickly learned there's a big difference between education and theoretical knowledge and real-world application," Fleming said.

Fleming ended up spending 16 years in college because he kept going back to get more degrees, hoping each would help him make a higher income but said the debt he incurred was higher than the benefit. Fleming noted that at one point, his student loan debt repayment was \$642 per month but his monthly paycheck was not enough to cover the cost of basic necessities such as rent along with his college debt. Fleming began researching correlations between college degrees and employee earnings and noted a recent shift that for first time in American history, people with Master's degrees are expected to make a lower median incomes than those with Bachelor's degrees. Fleming doesn't reject college degrees but instead encourages students to research all avenues to gain the skills they need for the job they want and not see college as the only route.

"Education is a business and it's our job as parents to help our kids become good consumers of this business they're going to invest in," Fleming said.

Instead of first figuring out which college they want to attend and then picking a major, Fleming contends students should first figure out what they enjoy and are good at and what they don't enjoy and are not so good at. Figuring this out can help them unlock the next step toward choosing their first career path. Realizing that the average high school graduate today is expected to have at least 12 jobs before they are 40, Fleming said more young people need to hear that choosing a career is not about locking yourself in for life but thinking in terms of what your choice is for your first or second career and what skills you might need for that step in your journey.

"It's not 'what do you want to do?' but 'what do you want to do first?'" Fleming said.



4 Skills/4 Steps

Fleming's presentation to the Chehalis audience emphasized what he calls the 4 Skills and 4 Steps that can lead students to have success in choosing a career path. A full video about this subject can be found under the Students category in Kevin Fleming's [Video Library](#). This and all videos are available to watch for free.

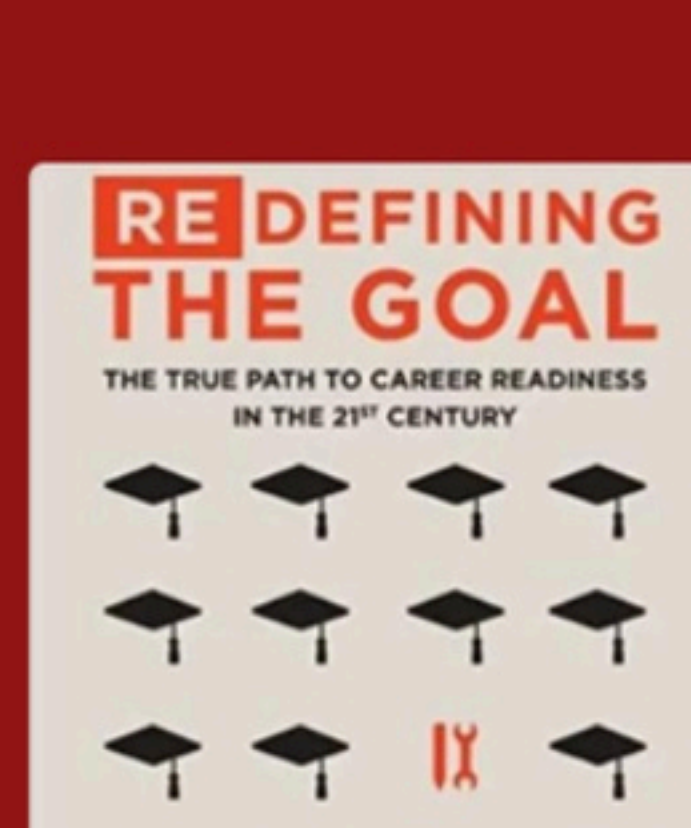
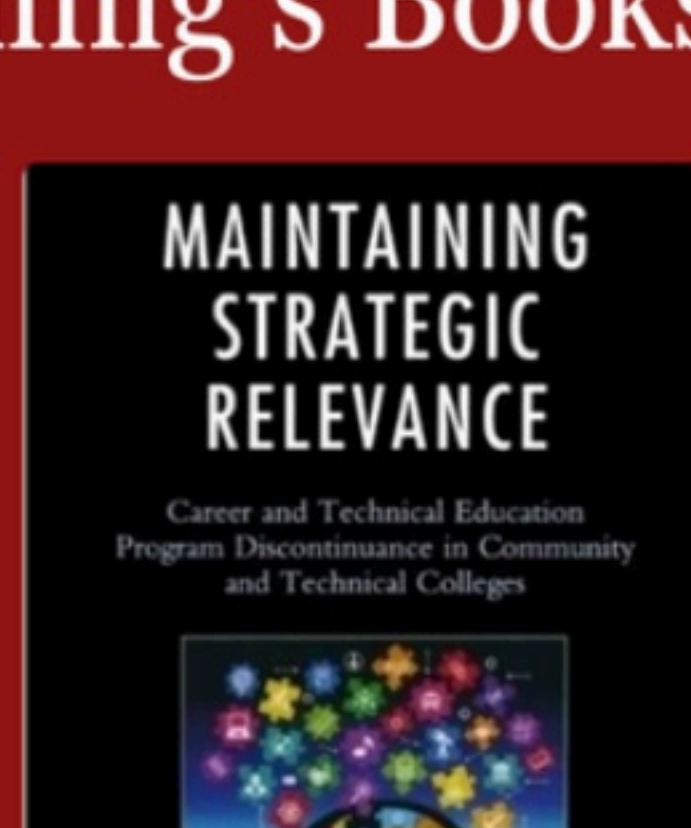
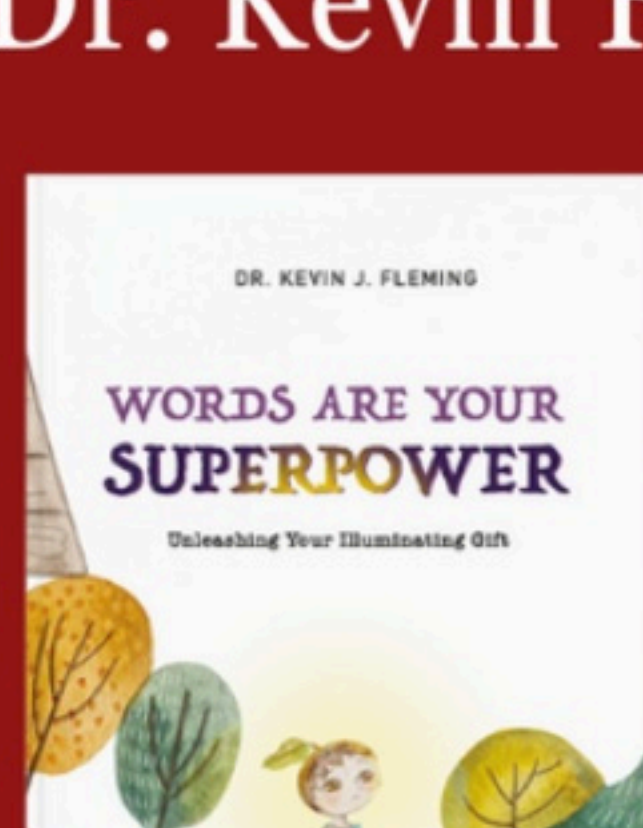
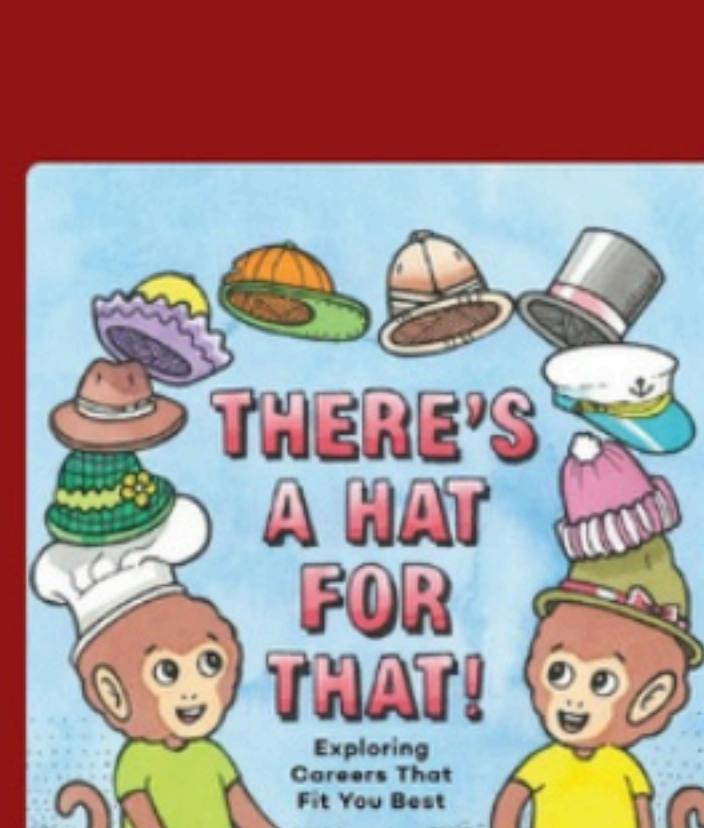
The 4 Skills Every Student Needs

1. Academic Knowledge
2. Life Skills
3. Technical Skills
4. Employability skills

The 4 Steps to Getting Those Skills

1. Self Awareness - Do you know what you love to do and what you're good at?
2. Career Exploration - Do you know what you are good at that you can get paid to do? What are industries/occupations that are high priorities or emerging?
3. Career Planning - Do you know how to gain the skills you need to pursue this career? Informational interviews with people in the field are highly recommended.
4. Education and Training Plan - Instead of listing course you need to take, list skills and knowledge you need and how you can get them.

Dr. Kevin Fleming's Books



Learn More at [Kevinjflaming.com/books](https://www.kevinjflaming.com/books)

Kevin Fleming's Recommendations for Parents & Students

At Fleming's Website <https://www.kevinjflaming.com/> parents can access a number of resources, many of them offered free of charge. Free resources include:

- Downloadable *"Preparing for Life After High School"* lesson plans
- Newsletters and a sign-up to receive his newsletters
- Educational videos
- An informative blog

More Resources Fleming Suggests Checking Out:

- Check out the [Credential Engine](#) site where you can research the 1.076 million available credentials and 59,690 credential providers in the United States
- Check out the book *"StrengthsFinder 2.0"* which can help young people identify potential career paths
- Research College in the Classroom offerings. Take advantage of the opportunity to earn even a few college credits for free before graduating high school

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