



## **Usha Martin Education & Solutions forays into School Management**

**Kolkata, 17<sup>th</sup> December 2009:** Nation building through learning – Usha Martin Education & Solutions Limited (UMESL), forays into providing standardized end-to-end solutions and school management services to enable the creation of a national network of high quality English medium K-12 schools with a focus on non-metro towns and cities of India.

By March 2010, UMESL plans to enable at least 15 select schools from West Bengal, Jharkhand and Bihar with its end-to-end state-of-the-art solutions and school management services. For this, UMESL has partnered with several people in identified areas and will soon launch its enabling services. The target is to have around 200 schools within our network in the next 7 years. Pearson, the global education and media company, will partner with UMESL as the primary service provider for instructional support, including curriculum and content, assessment, teacher training and support, and enterprise and learning management systems.

The UMESL decision to enable schools in non-metro towns and cities finds roots in the results of a needs assessment market survey indicating that the parents of children in non-metros are far too often starved of choice in searching for high quality English medium schools for their children.

The aim of the network is to bring consistently high quality education within the reach of a large cross-section of the population. To achieve quality, key features of the UMESL education delivery model include childcentric learning through acclaimed and effective pedagogic methods, researched curriculum, standardized lesson-plan based teaching, ICT-enabled classrooms, continuous in-service teacher training and strict and process-driven quality control mechanisms.

The venture is a differentiating collaboration between two global businesses, Usha Martin group and Pearson Education, India.

The Usha Martin group, a Rs. 4700 crore conglomerate with interests in wire ropes, steel, communication software, mobile value added services, infrastructure development and media, also brings with it the experience of successfully running graduate and post-graduate management and IT training programmes at UMESL's Usha Martin Academy training institutes, coupled with infrastructure development capability through Usha Breco and Usha Breco Realty and extensive experience in communication technology anchored in Ushacomm.

With Pearson, a world leader in education publishing, the UMESL enabled schools will have the advantage of accessing their rich digital and non-digital K12 contents like books, worksheets, assessment tools and resources for teachers as well as their state-of-the-art ERP software for school systems.

“Pearson’s widely trusted and respected publishing programs offer the most comprehensive range of educational content, in all subjects from Kindergarten through higher education and on into professional life. We are very excited to be working with UMESL to help bring quality education to Indian communities and students.” comments Mr. Vivek Govil, CEO, Pearson Education, India.

Experts in school systems management and educationists with wide national and international experience

have conceptualized the curriculum and school systems design being offered by UMESL. Consequently learnings and achievements of top school systems across the globe are reflected in the curriculum and systems being offered by UMESL.

“Our approach is first and foremost childcentric – building on what children can do, rather than focusing on what they cannot do. So baseline assessments of each child will be conducted to assess every element of their learning readiness. The curriculum has been designed keeping in mind multiple intelligence development which will foster holistic education and support children’s cognitive, emotional, social and creative development. In effect, we are trying to focus on core elements of education and what it truly stands for. This, we think, will make students ready to face the future confidently and successfully,” states Dr. Saugata Banerjee, Director, UMESL.

UMESL enabled and managed schools will be friendly environments in which the parent the and school are partners in the child’s education forming a circle inside which they grow strong and enjoy learning. In the process, the school will develop independent learners with questioning minds to prepare them for life in a changing world.

The UMESL teaching method includes discussion, problem solving and activity-based learning that stimulate physical, mental and spiritual development. Activity rooms to promote open learning, vibrant displays celebrating children’s work, digitally enabled classrooms, class corner libraries and classrooms filled with learning resources features prominently in the UMESL enabled schools. In effect, as Dr. Saugata Banerjee says, “At UMESL managed and enabled schools we measure quality by what goes on in the class. Ultimately, it is teaching and learning that counts and it is on this that we invest our greatest energy and resource; the physical infrastructure of the school is designed to produce an environment that is conducive to the child’s learning.”

This emphasis on quality and core values in education is reflected in the selection and shaping of staff culture. As part of UMESL services model, experienced Principals and Teachers with potential of building great learning classrooms are carefully selected for the schools. Upon joining, Principals are enrolled into the “Usha Martin School Leadership Program”. This program is designed to support and guide Principals in leading and managing high performing, happy schools. Internationally designed lesson plans to support teachers across the network and adapted to match the CBSE curriculum is yet another differentiating feature of UMESL school services model.

Moreover, the culture and practice of regular in-service training for teachers, in the UMESL enabled schools, provides a great learning opportunity for teachers to develop themselves and get trained in the latest teaching methodologies.

In a similar vein, the quality assurance strategy also looks at consistency of School Performance through the application of self-review and inspection framework.

Last but not least, being sensitive to the issue of school fees emerging as real stress-inducers for parents, UMESL enabled schools will bring forth transparency in this regard by strictly following the principle of no hidden or “capitation” fees. UMESL enabled school network will have fee ranging from Rs.750 to Rs.1250 per month with the exact fee depending on the location of the school and which class a child is in.

Overall, the launch of school management services by UMESL in association with Pearson, addresses the need of the hour for nation-building by enabling high quality yet accessible value-for-money school education across India.

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