



**ASHBURNHAM \* WESTMINSTER  
FOUNDATION for ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE**

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Ashburnham, Massachusetts 01430

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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Ashburnham Westminister Education Foundation Enhances Opportunities for Local Students**

ASHBURNHAM/WESTMINSTER, MA (October 5, 2009) — The Ashburnham Westminister Foundation for Academic Excellence has been established to promote educational excellence in the Ashburnham Westminister Regional School District. The Foundation will provide private financial support for exemplary educational projects and programs that benefit public school educators and students in the two communities.

Planning for the Foundation has been ongoing for several months with a goal of being operational by the beginning of the 2009 – 2010 school year. It is governed by a volunteer group of dedicated citizens from Ashburnham and Westminister committed to fostering the educational experiences of district students.

“This is an exciting initiative that will enhance education for our current students and for future generations,” said Christopher Wells, who helped champion the creation of the Foundation and is the Vice President as well as Chairman of the Fundraising Committee.

Wells further indicated that a comprehensive mailing, slated for early October, will officially announce the Foundation to the citizens, businesses, and organizations in Ashburnham and Westminister as well as provide membership, sponsorship, and donation opportunities.

Ashburnham Westminister Regional School District Superintendent Michael Zapantis, stated “Having worked with private education foundations in the past, I appreciate what a valuable asset they are to the teachers and students in the public school systems.”

Co-founder and Foundation President Ronald Hurd noted, “Our goal is to enhance each student’s capacity for success and fulfillment in school, in the community, and in life. It will be exciting to work directly with the district’s teachers as they endeavor to provide exciting experiences for their students.”

The Foundation will hold a Founders’ Celebration on November 19<sup>th</sup> at the Fitchburg Art Museum. The Foundation has opened its first round of grants and encourages the district’s teachers to apply for grants before the deadline of October 30<sup>th</sup>. All applications not funded in this first round of grants will be placed on a Wish List. Ron Hurd noted that the Wish List is a way for anyone to get involved with what is happening in the classroom. “We have included plans to create a Wish List based on input from our teachers. We envision a day when anyone can go to this Wish List and make a directed donation to be used exclusively to pay for a specific Wish List request that strengthens academic excellence.”

Board members include Kenneth Caron, David Christianson, Beth D’Onfro, Michael Greenwood, Ronald Hurd, Jennifer Shenk, Christopher Wells, Jennifer Wells and Michael Zapantis.

More information is available at [www.ashwestfoundation.org](http://www.ashwestfoundation.org). Gifts can be sent care of Ashburnham Westminister Foundation for Academic Excellence, 11 Oakmont Drive, Ashburnham, MA 01430.

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