

The Fund for Washington Latin

Raising the Bar for the 21st Century



Dear Friend,

Since the late 19th century, immigrants from every corner of the world have—often at great risk and sacrifice—fled their countries and cultures to find freedom and opportunity in America's cities. One of the powerful magnets of our nation's growth has been our superior system of free public schools. Here, families with nothing in their pockets but hope could find good schools with high standards, great literature, strict discipline and deep respect for the curiosity, creativity and moral imagination of their sons and daughters. Believe it or not, during much of the 20th century, families from Virginia and Maryland actually moved to Washington, D.C. so that their children could be educated in the District's fine public schools!

That was then. Today, America's public schools—particularly in the urban centers—are failing to prepare our nation's youth for either informed citizenship or leadership in the increasingly competitive global economy. Moreover, this well documented educational meltdown does not exist because we are not spending enough money or because the vast majority of our teachers are not dedicated professionals. We are—and they are. The problem is systemic. As Colin Powell observed, "In America, failing schools are trapped in fossilized bureaucracies."

That is beginning to change. Thanks to bold civic leadership, Washington, D.C. now has the most well crafted charter school laws in the country. Here in The Federal City, we can now build a school that is publicly funded, but privately governed—a school that is free from those "fossilized bureaucracies" that have all but destroyed public education throughout the United States. Here, right under the gaze of the nation's policy makers, we can now "raise the bar" of excellence and create a new template for the public school of the 21st century.

That's what The Fund for Washington Latin is all about. It is about establishing a new kind of American public school—one that is worthy of the most gifted students and yet available to all. To succeed, we need eighty-six individuals to become "founders" of The Washington Latin School. The challenge we have accepted is straightforward. It is to establish the best public school in the United States—and to do it here in the Nation's Capital. Will you join us?

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Robinson Ahlstrom'. The signature is stylized and fluid, with a large initial 'T' and 'R'.

T. Robinson Ahlstrom, Head Master

Washington Latin

Raising the Bar for the 21st Century

- ▣ A Charter School - Publicly Funded/Private Governed
- ▣ A Classical Literature-Based Curriculum
- ▣ A School Culture Grounded in the Fourteen “Public Virtues”
- ▣ Small, Socratic “Harkness” Classrooms
- ▣ An Advanced Program of Logic and Rhetoric
- ▣ Technology Designed In—Not Added On
- ▣ Challenging Programs of Wellness and Sport
- ▣ Teaching Through Visual & Performing Arts
- ▣ Research Based Approaches to Education & Evaluation
- ▣ Preparation for Servant-Leadership
- ▣ A Network of Community Partners
- ▣ A Special Partnership with Parents

The Public Virtues of Washington Latin

The motto of The Washington Latin School is *Virtus Sola Nobilitat*, which, rendered in English, means, "Virtue alone ennobles." Just as young George Washington reflected on his own character and consciously fashioned it during his youth, each young scholar at Washington Latin will be invited to reflect daily on the fourteen Public Virtues that effectively constitute the School's *Standards and Etiquette*.

- ▣ I. *Pietas*.. Reverence
- ▣ II. *Integritas*...Integrity
- ▣ III. *Veritas*...Truth
- ▣ IV. *Assiduitas*...Industry
- ▣ V. *Simplicitas*...Simplicity
- ▣ VI. *Aequitas*...Equity (Justice or Fairness)
- ▣ VII. *Fidelitas*...Loyalty
- ▣ VIII. *Civitas*...Citizenship
- ▣ IX. *Audacia*...Courage
- ▣ X. *Perseverantia*...Perseverance
- ▣ XI. *Clementia*...Mercy
- ▣ XII. *Humilitas*...Humility
- ▣ XIII. *Liberalitas*...Liberality
- ▣ XIV. *Temperantia*...Moderation (Self-Control)

The Fund for Washington Latin

Eighty-six gifts totaling \$1.3 million dollars raised by February 22, 2007

- ▣ One lead gift of \$250,000

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- ▣ Five gifts of \$100,000

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- ▣ Ten gifts of \$25,000

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- ▣ Twenty gifts of \$10,000

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- ▣ Fifty gifts of \$2,000

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-Members of the **Founder's Club** who give between \$2,000 and \$25,000 will receive a handsome alabaster bust of George Washington with personalized brass nameplate identifying them as "Founder."
-Members of the **Head Master's Club** who give or raise between \$25,000 and \$100,000 will also receive the personalized bust of Washington along with an invitation to attend the Annual Educator's Leadership Council—an executive conference with one of America's top educational reformers. (Hotel accommodations will be provided.)
-Along with the privileges of membership in the Head Master's Club, **Benefactors** who give or raise \$100,000 or more will receive a fine quality framed oil painting of George Washington with appropriate solid brass acknowledgement.
-The School is creating other legacy opportunities for major donors. Gifts of \$500,000 or more will be permanently recognized in the naming of halls, classrooms and other physical venues at the new school.

Questions & Answers....

Q. What is a "Latin School?"

A. It is a school rooted in the study of classical language and classical civilization.

Q. Why Study Latin?

A. The Latin language opens both the world of classical antiquity and the great works of Cicero, Virgil, Seneca, Marcus Aurelius and the Roman Republican tradition. It also helps greatly in understanding Math, Science, English and every modern Romance language.

Q. Why study Classical Civilization?

A. Without an understanding of Greece and Rome, the mythology, philosophy, art, architecture, literature and political thought of Western Civilization cannot be appreciated.

Q. What do you mean by "Socratic Teaching and Learning?"

A. The Socratic method is one that asks questions—especially the enduring questions such as, "Who am I? Why am I here? What is the meaning of my life? It is rooted in the Delphic Oracle, "Know thyself."

Q. Why establish a new *kind* of public school?

A. America's system public education has helped to create an egalitarian engine and a material meritocracy unlike anything the world has seen—but it is no longer doing the job. Today, one quarter of the entire adult population of the United States is unable to perform the basic literacy related tasks required by a typical job, and this is at a time when eight out of the ten fastest growing jobs necessitate either a college education or other extended post-secondary training. We are simply not competitive.

More Questions & Answers...

Q. Why not just start another private school?

A. America's public K-12 schools educate 48 million students every day—90% of our children. If we lose the public schools, we lose our kids, our country, our culture and our competitive edge. The Washington Latin School will be new *kind* of public school. It will be academically rigorous, morally informed and pedagogically sound. It will be worthy of the brightest students and available to all.

Q. Why charter a school in the District of Columbia?

A. The District is one of the most troubled school systems in the United States, but—thanks to Congress—it has the best charter laws in the country. Low tide is the best tide for launching a boat and Washington is the place to build a school that will help to raise the bar for America's public schools in the 21st Century.

Q. If Washington Latin will receive public funds, why do you have to raise money?

A. The Washington Latin School has just won its public charter. The School will need to raise approximately \$600,000 between now and autumn of '06 when public funds begin to flow. Even after that, Washington Latin will be a public/private partnership that sets a new standard for excellence in education.

Q. Will Washington Latin be a diverse community?

A. Yes. Washington Latin's governing boards, faculty and staff will reflect the rich ethnic and cultural diversity of The Federal City—and the Nation. The student body, which is being actively recruited from all eight of the District's wards, already represents an economic diversity that is remarkable for any school, public or private. "Latin" is what every American public school should be—worthy of the best students, yet available to all.

One More Important Question...

Q. How can I be involved?

A. The Washington Latin School is actively seeking:

- Young women and men of good character who are eager to learn and willing to work.
- Parents who are partners in our task.
- Instructors who are lifelong learners called and gifted to teach—and prepared to match precept with example.
- The financial support and active involvement of any and all who believe in the power of ideas and the infinite promise of youth.

Right now, as we prepare to open the school in the fall of '06, we need:

- Qualified Washingtonians to lend their time and talent to the School.
- Distinguished Americans to serve as Visitors of the School.
- Eighty-six *Founding Partners* who invest in The Fund for Washington Latin.
- A Law Firm or Corporation to become the School's Lead Partner.
- Foundations that are committed to funding *real* educational reform in the United States.
- A building to be purchased and made ready for the School's first classroom building.

The Washington Latin School
Washington's Classical Public School

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