

Press Release

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Patrick County Education Foundation Tapped To Receive \$30,000 in One-Time State Funding

The Patrick County Education Foundation was recently notified by the outgoing Virginia Secretary of Education Peter Blake that the Foundation will receive \$30,000 in one-time state funding for its College Access program. These funds were authorized by former Governor Mark Warner as part of his proposal to the 2005 General Assembly to appropriate \$1 million to expand postsecondary educational opportunities in Southside Virginia. According to Secretary Blake, that proposal was supported by the General Assembly, affirming the importance of education to the economic and social development of the region.

In his letter to the Foundation, Secretary Blake thanked the Foundation for its “outstanding work...to expand educational opportunity in Patrick County. Many people in the county have worked tirelessly to build the Foundation and it is well positioned to reach new heights.”

Secretary Blake noted that these funds are being appropriated to support the Foundation’s efforts in expanding opportunities for college attendance among the county’s youth. “We are confident the Foundation will use these additional funds to help address some of the educational challenges in the region.”

Foundation Executive Director Gerald L. Hughes, Jr. expressed his appreciation for the appropriations. “We are extremely pleased that Governor Warner, Secretary Blake, and members of

the General Assembly are making these funds available to the Foundation. We are confident that we are a good fit for these funds because the work we do aligns closely with Governor Warner's vision of education as integral to the economic success of the region.

Governor Warner visited Foundation offices in June 2005 to learn more about the organization and its three educational initiatives—College Access, GED Promotion and Workforce Training. While here, Governor Warner congratulated the Foundation for its determined efforts to raise education levels and heighten the prominence of education in Patrick County. "I would love to see this enthusiasm and energy taken forward (into other communities)," Warner remarked. "Why can't we have 10 of these Patrick County models in Virginia?" ("Governor Praises Patrick's Foundation," *Martinsville Bulletin*, 17 June 2005).

According to Foundation Executive Director Hughes, the \$30,000 in state funds will be used to further expand and enhance the Foundation's College Access services. Currently the Foundation's College Access program provides a wide range of activities and services designed to enable more county young people to continue their education after high school. "We have two staff members who spend 100% of their time working with students and parents, encouraging college attendance and assisting with preparations to make that dream achievable. Additionally, since 2001, the Foundation has committed over \$400,000 in Last Dollar Scholarships to Patrick County High School seniors so that finances do not stand in the way of postsecondary attendance. Our need for funding to support these services is significant. This \$30,000 will enable us to continue to provide the programs and services our young people need to make certain that they have every opportunity to pursue postsecondary education. In the world of tomorrow, education after high school will be more important than ever before. We are gratified that Governor Warner and Secretary Blake see the value of what is happening here in Patrick and want to see it continued here and replicated in other communities as well."

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