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**Jones Apparel Group Leads Mandarin Chinese Initiative at Lawrence Woodmere Academy through Jones New York In The Classroom**

NEW YORK (May 1, 2006) - This fall, Lawrence Woodmere Academy (LWA) announces the launch of a new Mandarin Chinese language program, made possible by a partnership with apparel giant Jones Apparel Group. Peter Boneparth, LWA Chairman of the Board of Trustees and 1976 graduate, spearheaded the new program. Boneparth is the CEO of Jones Apparel Group and founder of its Jones New York In The Classroom initiative.

"Nearly half the world's population lives in Asia and it is critical for LWA to offer courses to provide students with an opportunity to learn about the culture, traditions, and language of this population," notes Peter Boneparth. Mandarin is the most widely spoken form of Chinese. It is the official language in People's Republic China, Hong Kong and Taiwan with more than 800 million native speakers.

A key part of the LWA Mandarin Program will leverage the strength of Jones Apparel Group's Jones New York In The Classroom initiative where one of its non-profit beneficiaries, Fund for Teachers (FFT), provides direct grants to teachers for continued education. Through LWA's partnership with Jones Apparel Group, LWA faculty will participate in an Asian-specific education program that will bring Mandarin culture, language and perspectives into American classrooms. In addition, LWA students will be eligible to apply for the prestigious School Year Abroad (SYA) program in Beijing, which places them with host families for an entire academic year.

"Our goal is to provide our students with the opportunity for full immersion with Chinese language and culture. Even with the challenges of learning a language with unfamiliar pronunciation and intonation, schools with Mandarin Chinese programs have seen significant student interest and success," says LWA Headmaster Alan Bernstein. Mr. Bernstein says that LWA's program will place the school in the forefront of independent schools nationwide.

"When they asked me about introducing Mandarin Chinese," LWA foreign language chair Yolanda D'Antonio said, "I was excited about giving our students more options. And our students are already showing interest."

The LWA Mandarin Program derives its inspiration from both the Jones New York In The Classroom initiative and the Jones Fellows Program at the University of North Carolina, which sends UNC students to China for advanced studies.

"This program dovetails nicely with the Jones New York In The Classroom initiative. Anything we can do to help our teachers introduce innovation in the classroom is valuable and Mandarin Chinese is a part of that. Jones Apparel Group is very proud to be part of this," said Boneparth.

For more information on Jones New York In The Classroom, please visit [www.jnyintheclassroom.org](http://www.jnyintheclassroom.org).

*Jones New York In The Classroom is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of education in America and inspiring others, both individuals and corporations, to do the same through support of teachers and vital teacher-based programs. For more information on Jones New York In The Classroom and the non-profit organizations it has benefited, please visit [www.jnyintheclassroom.org](http://www.jnyintheclassroom.org).*