

The Office of Neighborhood Partnerships

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 Greater Indy Neighborhood Initiative
 Listening to Communities

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Check THIS Out!

Check out this IUPUI class working with the community!
[More information...](#)

Did You Know?

George Washington Community School just opened a new Wellness Center – free access all others that live and work on the Near Westside can use for \$20/year!!!

For More Information

Contact [Starla Officer](#) for more information on events or other resources sponsored by the Office of Neighborhood Partnerships.



Westside Education Taskforce

In October 1998, the IUPUI-WESCO Partnership Steering Committee organized a WESCO Education Forum. The purpose of the WESCO Education Forum was to inform near Westside community residents of the impact of a recent court order to overturn a desegregation order, which had been in place for 20 years. The desegregation order required the busing of African-American children from the inner city to township schools.

This, along with other economic factors, resulted in the decline of many of the communities located inside the [Indianapolis Public School \(IPS\)](#) district and the closing of seven public schools in the WESCO community. An important outcome of this Forum was the formation of the Westside Education Task Force (WETF).

Since its inception the WETF has also been responsible for organizing additional Education Forums, creating a [Community Education for the near Westside Vision Statement](#), coordinating Education Study Circles, conducting surveys of the educational needs and interests of residents, collaborating with IPS staff and the superintendent to improve educational opportunities in WESCO, and promoting the development of George Washington Middle School into a community school.

In the fall of 1999, the Westside Education Task Force led by the late Daniel J. Fugate, played an important role by advocating that the IPS School Board and IPS Administration re-open a public school in WESCO. Mr. Fugate had long been an advocate for bringing a school back into the community. Community meetings were sponsored by the WETF, and for the first time Westside residents met with the IPS Superintendent to voice their dreams for a neighborhood school. The WETF received a commitment from IPS that George Washington High School, one of the most visible community symbols in WESCO, would re-opened in Fall 2000 as a Middle School.

The Office of Neighborhood Partnerships played a role in the development of the new school through the creation of the George Washington School Transition Team. The Transition Team, consisting of WETF members, social service providers, neighborhood association officers and residents, and IUPUI representatives provided guidance to the Principal and IPS staff as decisions were made for the new school. The Transition Team gave the community a voice during this time and continued to push for the incorporation of the community-school model at George Washington.

Following 2000 school year the WETF supported the school's efforts to become a model community school. During the fall of 2001 the school officially changed its name to [George Washington Community School](#) (GWCS). The school received the inaugural National Community School Award in 2006. GWCS was also recognized by the Knowledge Works Foundation as "one of the nation's best examples of a school as center of community". Currently IUPUI has approximately 18 different programs and classes engaged in the school.

In addition to the engagement with the now, George Washington Community High School, the WETF also worked together with the community to advocate for the reconstruction of [Wendell Phillips School 63](#) at Mozel Sanders Park. It is now the committee vision to tailor the community school model at the elementary level.

Westside Education Taskforce meets every third Thursday at 6 p.m. at Wendell Phillips School 63.

Taskforce members include:

Brianna Sauer, IUPUI Student
 Carmen Rodriguez, Girls Inc.

Other Links of Interest

[Westside Education Taskforce](#)

[George Washington School](#)

[Community Outreach Partnership Center](#)

Diane Arnold, Hawthorne Community Center
Dionne Leslie, Christamore House
Ebony Barney, IUPUI Student
Evelyn Bushrod, Wendell Phillips School 63
Janet Starks, First Samuel Missionary Baptist Church
Jim Grim, George Washington Community School
Julie Ellison, Near Westside Community
Karen Yoder, IUPUI Dental
Keith Burke, George Washington Community School
Kim Williams, Near Westside Community
Kimberly Campbell, Indy Parks
Lana Coleman, Near Westside Community
Marc Littlefield, IUPUI Faculty
Nakia Thigpen, Near Westside Community
Nancy Mobley, Indianapolis Marion County Public Library
Nancy Young, IUPUI Dental
Pastor Peter Fenton, First Samuel Missionary Baptist Church
Renita Minor, Near Westside Community
Reverend Brian Williams, Near Westside Community
Robert Bringle, IUPUI Faculty
Robert Ware, Near Westside Community
Shanika Hatcher, First Samuel Missionary Baptist Church
Starla Officer, IUPUI Staff