



New IUPUI Center to Support University-Community School Partnerships

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The University of Pennsylvania (Penn) [Netter Center for Community Partnerships](#) has awarded funding to the Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis [Center for Service and Learning](#) to create a Center for University-Assisted Community Schools as part of UPenn's national replication project.

In partnership with the community and business partners, university-assisted community schools draw upon higher education to assist local schools as service support centers for youth, their families, and community members. The strategy recognizes public schools as neighborhood "hubs" where partnerships services develop collaborative solutions to local learning and youth development barriers. It is being used as an education reform strategy across the globe. The collaborative work will significantly advance the role of university-assisted community schools in national debates on education reform. "The selection committee chose IUPUI given its long history of helping to develop community schools, the depth of IUPUI's commitment to civic engagement and academically based community service, its exceptional partnership with the local community, and its significant record of providing training and technical assistance", said Joann Weeks, Associate Director of the Netter Center.

The IUPUI Center for Service and Learning has participated in activities with near-Westside public schools during the past decade. Its work with Indianapolis Public Schools' George Washington Community High School (GWCHS), 2215 W. Washington St., has gained national attention. The school earned the inaugural National Community School Award in 2006 from the Coalition for Community Schools, a program of the Washington, DC.-based Institute for Educational Leadership. IUPUI's civic engagement has also resulted in numerous campus recognitions, including the Presidential Award for Community Engagement, the Carnegie Foundation Classification for Community Engagement, the Saviors of Our City award, a listing in *Colleges with a Conscience*, and *U.S. News and World Report* recognition for service learning, which has been received annually since 2002. The U.S. Department of Education in 2010 also awarded the IUPUI Community Learning Network \$2.5 million in Full-Service Community Schools funding for its work with three elementary schools in the Martindale-Brightwood neighborhoods of the Near Eastside. That partnership serves more than 5,150 youth, their families, and community members.

Professor Robert Bringle, Executive Director of IUPUI's Center for Service and Learning noted, "The new Regional Center will build on over 15 years of work by IUPUI faculty, staff, and students who have partnered with the neighborhoods of west Indianapolis to enhance the quality of educational opportunities. It is exciting that that partnership provides a basis for George Washington Community High School to be a model for other communities and campuses in the Midwest."

The new regional center will draw upon expertise mainly from three collaborating facilitators: Jim Grim of the Mary Rigg Neighborhood Center, lead partner for the GWCHS community schools initiative; Monica Medina of the IUPUI Center for Urban and Multicultural Education and the IU School of Education; and Starla Officer of the Office of Neighborhood Partnerships in the Center for Service and Learning. These three individuals plan to assist universities and community schools in Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Kentucky and Illinois with implementation of university-assisted community schools strategies.

As one of its first activities, the Center is co-hosting a Family/School/Community Engagement Forum Nov. 7 with the Indiana Partnerships Center for 100 targeted policymakers and leaders in public education. Notable leaders from across the state and Washington, D.C. are slated to participate. It is the first of four learning opportunities to be hosted by the regional center over the next year.

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Contact:

Mansi Patel at patelm@iupui.edu or 317-278-2662