

George Washington Community School Profile

George Washington Community School, 2215 W. Washington St., Indianapolis, serves 789 near-Westside students in grades 7-12. Student demographics illustrate a naturally diverse ethnicity with 41% Caucasian, 24% African-American, 30% Latino, and 5% multi-racial. Students come to Washington from contiguous historic Haughville, Hawthorne, Stringtown and West Indy neighborhoods. This year, students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch totaled 91%.

To ensure that students get the necessary conditions for learning, more than 50 local organizations and community leaders partner with Washington as a “full-service community school” to provide an array of onsite support services. Such services include tutoring, mentoring, after-school, health, mental health, youth leadership, physical fitness, adult English as a Second Language, cultural, college prep, community service, civic engagement, scholarship, public recreation, parent enrichment, and violence-prevention programs.

Coordinated and mission-focused, the collaborative supports are designed to reach academic goals that culminate with high school graduation and post-secondary learning. Recognized by the Washington, D.C.-based Coalition for Community Schools with its inaugural National Community School Award in 2006 and by the KnowledgeWorks Foundation of Cincinnati, Ohio, in 2004 as “one of the nation’s best examples of a school as center of community,” George Washington is deeply committed to improving student learning and youth development opportunities.

In 2005 it became one of six school communities invited to participate in a Learning Communities Initiative sponsored by Scholarship America and Indianapolis-based USA Funds to help students graduate from high school prepared for post-secondary education. Washington Community School’s first graduating class in 2006 achieved the district’s highest graduation rate, with 81% going into post-secondary education. The 80 students also amassed more than \$1 million in scholarships and financial aid. By 2009, 100% of the graduates were accepted into post-secondary education, an unprecedented feat considered impressive because the U.S. Census suggests only about 5% of residents age 25 or older living in the neighborhoods that send their children to Washington have even attended college.

In 2008, the Indianapolis Public Schools celebrated the completion of a \$27 million renovation that featured all new HVAC, windows, enlarged classrooms, lockers, computer and science laboratories.

The same fall, on behalf of the school’s collaborating partners, nearby Mary Rigg Neighborhood Center received a \$2.4 million award over the next five years in the nation’s first full-service community school funding by the U.S. Congress through the U.S. Department of Education – out of a \$4.9 million total awarded to 10 school communities nationwide. The funding expands after-school, parent engagement and community programs in addition to providing further needed services to help students and families secure the necessary conditions for learning. This fall, partnering Fit for Life from the Department of Physical Education at IUPUI expanded hours in Washington’s new Wellness Center to provide community fitness opportunities weekdays, 4-7 p.m., and more than 145 adults participate at an annual cost of \$20.

Over the past eight years, Washington has hosted visitors from more than 25 states and five foreign countries – including the education minister of Israel. Parents, service providers, students and community leaders remind educators of Washington’s primary mission each month in their community advisory committee meeting, however, and that mission is to educate the children of the near-Westside and to get them into some form of post-secondary education.

For more information, contact:

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