



<http://www.savi.org>

For Immediate Release:

May 19, 2004

George Washington School and IUPUI Début Community Technology Center

INDIANAPOLIS – As part of Finale Family Night at George Washington Community School, Indianapolis Public Schools (IPS), The Polis Center at IUPUI, a part of the Indiana University School of Liberal Arts, today will debut the Community Technology Center at the westside community school.

The Community Technology Center program, funded by the Polis Center with grant monies from the U.S. Department of Commerce and U.S. Department of Education, includes 21 wireless laptop computers for use by Washington students during school hours. The laptops will also be available for community use during certain adult computer learning classes.

Programming integral to the computers in the mobile lab will give users direct access to the University's Social Assets and Vulnerability Indicators (SAVI) database, which is maintained by The Polis Center. Community members attending the Finale Family Night will be able to access specific health-related information from the database during the debut beginning at 6 p.m. at the school, 2215 W. Washington St.

By using SAVI's interactive, web-based application, Washington students can use their computers to obtain graphic and tabular information from more than 40 federal, state and local sources. Information available includes census demographics, crime statistics, housing, education, vital statistics, welfare and community assets.

Project Manager, Paula Parker-Sawyers, Associate Director at the Polis, indicated that "the partnership with George Washington Community School was a natural choice given the strong commitment of IUPUI to the school and to civic engagement as a teaching and learning tool for IUPUI students and faculty".

The major purpose of the Community Technology Center at Washington Community School is twofold: first, to improve student performance by the integration of math, science and language skills into classrooms assignments based on the database; and second, to engage community residents in community problem-solving efforts through the use of relevant data and technology.

Establishing the computer center will also strengthen George Washington's role in the application of technology to community development among neighborhood families.

Organizers are hopeful that once students develop the skills to navigate SAVI, they in turn can pass those skills along to their parents and other adults in the community.

The computers will provide a unique access to SAVI that will allow Washington students to do research using technology based on their own neighborhood, said Jim Grim, community school coordinator.

During the summer Washington teachers will receive training in incorporating SAVI data into their classroom curricula, Grim said.

“In the fall, all our high school teachers, whether they teach the sciences or math, will teach students using this research,” he said. SAVI is undergoing re-configuration to make the programming more user friendly, Grim and others said.

“SAVI is a very, very good teaching tool,” said Polis spokesperson Amy Wozniak. The George Washington computer technology center is a model Polis hopes to replicate at other schools, she said.

The Community Technology Center program is one of 19 support services IUPUI operates at George Washington as one of the school’s 46 community partners.

Last December Polis received a \$321,893 grant from the Department of Education to establish the technology center. The monies were authorized through the No Child Left Behind Act designed to promote the creation or expansion of centers serving certain urban and rural communities.