PRESS RELEASE

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OFFICE OF EDUCATION INNOVATION JOINS CICF, TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY SCHOLARS PROGRAM, & GIPC IN EFFORT TO INCREASE STUDENT POST-SECONDARY PARTICIPATION

INDIANAPOLIS – The Mayor’s Office of Education Innovation (OEI), the Central Indiana Community Foundation (CICF), the Twenty-first Century Scholars program, and the Greater Indianapolis Progress Committee (GIPC) announced today their partnership in the Twenty-First Century Scholars Enrollment Challenge, an effort to increase the number of 7th and 8th grade students in Indianapolis enrolled in the Twenty-first Century Scholars program.

The Twenty-first Century Scholars program, established in 1990 by the State of Indiana, encourages low-income middle school students to prepare for post-secondary opportunities. In exchange for academic and civic accomplishments during high school, enrolled students receive post-secondary tuition assistance to attend any public college or university in the State of Indiana. The estimated 8th grade Twenty-first Century Scholars enrollment rate for Marion County is approximately 40 percent. The Twenty-first Century Scholars Enrollment Challenge goal is to enroll over 75 percent of all eligible 8th grade students into the program in 2010 and 2011.

“No student should be denied access to post-secondary opportunities because they can’t afford it,” said Karega Rausch, OEI Director. “The leadership of state, city, civic, and philanthropic leaders promoting this initiative mitigates the financial barrier for families struggling in these tough financial times.”

The Twenty-first Century Scholars Enrollment Challenge is a part of CICF’s College Readiness Initiative, funded by The Indianapolis Foundation and Lumina Foundation for Education. CICF will provide thousands of dollars in incentives to encourage county-wide enrollment prior to the June 30th 8th grade enrollment deadline. GIPC will serve as the fiscal agent for this initiative.

Each school will be given a target enrollment number to achieve prior to the end of the school year. If a school successfully meets their enrollment target, the lead representative at the school will receive a gift card of at least
$100, and up to $400. Each school will be publicly recognized for meeting their enrollment targets in a community recognition ceremony in the Fall of 2010.

“Overall, a student enrolled in the Twenty-first Century Scholars program is significantly more likely to complete high school and go on to college compared to their low-income peers,” said Roderick Wheeler, CICF Grant Officer. “This initiative provides extraordinary opportunities for our students, and it is our hope that through this partnership, more families are made aware, not only of the program itself, but of the importance of post-secondary education,” said Roderick Wheeler, CICF Grant Officer.

Parents or guardians must enroll their child(ren) between 6th and 8th grades to qualify to receive the Twenty-first Century Scholarship. Students are also required to sign a pledge that promises they will: (1) graduate from an accredited Indiana high school with a diploma and at least a 2.0 cumulative grade point average, (2) abstain from the use of alcohol, drugs or committing a crime, (3) apply for college admissions, and (4) complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) form on-time.

For more information about the Twenty-first Century Scholars Enrollment Challenge, please contact Jonika Hudson, 317.274.1592, or jvhudson@iupui.edu. You may also find additional information about the Twenty-first Century Scholars program by Clicking Here.

For more information about CICF’s College Readiness Initiative, please contact Roderick Wheeler at 317.631.6542, ext 138, or roderickw@cic.org

For more information about the Mayor’s Office of Education Innovation, call 317.327.3601

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