



Stockton's Hughes Center Receives \$10,000 Grant from Verizon to Encourage Civics Training

For Immediate Release; with photo attached/caption below

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Galloway Township, NJ -The William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy has received a \$10,000 grant from the Verizon Foundation to train social studies teachers to use web-based tools to increase the civic knowledge of students in grades K-12.

"Our Democracy works best when we have an interested, informed and responsive citizenry," said Ambassador William J. Hughes, the former ambassador to Panama and a 20-year congressman for whom the center is named. "Putting basic civics back into our classrooms and encouraging students to better understand and appreciate the Democratic process is a good start. I want to salute Verizon for its commitment to this worthy goal."

The program is a partnership between the Hughes Center and Stockton College's Southern Regional Institute & Educational Technology Training Center (SRI&ETTC).

The goal of iCivics at Stockton is to provide social studies teachers with training to use the educational activities of iCivics.org in their classrooms. The SRI&ETTC, which offers professional development courses to preK-12 teachers and other education professionals, will organize and conduct training sessions in a fully equipped facility with classrooms and computer labs. The SRI&ETTC has an educational network and a consortium of 80 organizations, of which 68 are school districts throughout southern New Jersey. This encompasses 200 schools, over 7,500 teachers, and more than 100,000 preK-12 pupils.

iCivics.org, a web site founded and led by retired U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, contains lessons and games that teach young people how government works and to encourage them to get involved in the public sector.

The Verizon Foundation grant will help pay for the costs of instruction as well as assessing the results. The training sessions will be free of charge, to encourage wide participation.

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“Verizon is helping to transform the way teachers teach by supporting initiatives that use technology to increase student achievement,” said Jennifer P. Young, director of External Affairs for Verizon. “This grant will give educators the training they need to make the most of the tools that today’s technology can bring to the classroom. In the end, students will reap the benefits of programs like this that expand the educational opportunities available for them.”

The Hughes Center will publicize the initiative to the public and to statewide policy makers. Both the Hughes Center and SRI&ETTC will contribute in-kind services to help the program succeed.

“We are grateful to our partners at the Hughes Center and for the generosity of the Verizon Foundation, who’ve helped us to make this opportunity available for teachers in southern New Jersey,” said Dean Claudine Keenan, of Stockton’s School of Education.

The SRI&ETTC expects to train 200 teachers during a total of six full-day workshops: two each for teachers from high schools, middle schools and elementary schools. Each workshop will begin with training on the use of the iCivics website followed by a session on how to integrate civics and this website into classroom lessons. School districts in the consortium will be notified when registration is open.

“We plan to build a cadre of teachers that will be able to take the information back to their districts and lead efforts to integrate civics into the social studies curriculum,” said Patricia Weeks, director of the SRI&ETTC in the School of Education.

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Photo caption:

From left at a presentation of the \$10,000 grant from the Verizon Foundation to the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy are: Daniel J. Douglas, director of the center, Jennifer P. Young, director of Verizon’s External Affairs, Ambassador William J. Hughes, for whom the center at Stockton is named, and Sharon Schulman, CEO of External Affairs and Institutional Research at Stockton.