



## **Communities In Schools**

### **The Nation's Leading Dropout Prevention Organization**

#### **Our Mission**

The mission of Communities In Schools is to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life.

#### **Our Work**

Every nine seconds a student drops out of school. So long as there is a crisis in American public education that causes young people to drop out at an alarming rate, Communities In Schools will lead the charge to transform our educational system and create a nation without dropouts. We work within the school system to address underlying factors that impede student success. Our network of nearly 5,000 passionate professionals coordinates or provides resources that enable all students, regardless of race or class, to succeed. We serve the most vulnerable students in the most dropout-prone school districts. We are actively engaged with policy makers, school staff, parents and business partners to ensure that Communities In Schools' services are extended to as many K-12 students as possible and that those students have access to college.

#### **Our Successful Model**

In the span of a little more than 30 years, Communities In Schools has grown from serving a handful of students in one school to serving nearly 1.3 million students in more than 3,400 schools across the country. Communities In Schools offices are located in 25 states and the District of Columbia. The national office of Communities In Schools supports state offices and local affiliates through its policy work, branding and awareness campaigns, training and technical support, and financial investments. State offices also support their local affiliates who work directly with children.

What sets Communities In Schools apart from other organizations is its model of providing a comprehensive range of community services, also known as integrated student services. This is done at very little cost – just \$192 annually per student. Communities In Schools positions a dedicated staff member – a school-based coordinator – inside partner schools. In this pivotal role, the coordinator works with school staff to identify students at risk of not graduating. He or she assesses school and student needs and establishes relationships with local businesses, social service agencies, health care providers, and parent and volunteer organizations to harness needed resources. Whether it's tutoring, eyeglasses or just a safe place to be after school, when these needs are met, students can concentrate on learning. With a largely volunteer base, Communities In Schools is cost-efficient, and the model is adaptable to urban, rural or suburban communities.

## **Our Evolution**

In the 1960s, Communities In Schools Founder Bill Milliken was a youth worker in New York City who saw the need for nontraditional schools that could help young people, like himself, who had dropped out of school. He worked with corporations to back his idea of “street academies” or nontraditional schools where students could complete their education and, in most cases, gain access to college.

In 1977, Milliken and his colleagues decided it would be more beneficial to work within the existing public school system, and Communities In Schools (then Cities In Schools) was born. The idea was to develop a safety net so that children at risk of dropping out could get the assistance they needed to stay in school. The Communities In Schools founders realized that troubled students and their families had difficulty navigating through a maze of public and private services, all located in different places and following different rules. They pioneered the idea of bringing these community resources inside a public school building, where they are accessible, coordinated and accountable.

The fledgling organization started out strong, as newly elected President Jimmy Carter, a supporter of the Communities In Schools prototype during his term as Georgia governor, identified federal funds to support the organization's expansion. In no time, Communities In Schools was serving several thousand students in three cities: Atlanta, Indianapolis and New York. Over the course of the following 30+ years, Communities In Schools honed its model of integrated student services, gaining support from educators, legislators, corporations, private foundations, federal agencies and community partners.

## Our Results

An independent, five-year evaluation of its work shows that Communities In Schools is one of a very few organizations proven to keep students in school and the *only* one to document that it increases graduation rates. The study also shows that a higher percentage of students served by Communities in Schools reach proficiency in 4<sup>th</sup>-grade and 8<sup>th</sup>-grade reading and math.

During the 2008-2009 school year, 91 percent of students monitored by Communities In Schools were promoted to the next grade, 84 percent of seniors graduated and 97 percent of students considered at-risk for dropping out remained in school. Positive results were also demonstrated for academic achievement, attendance and behavior. Sixty-six percent of students went on to some form of post-secondary education. While the outcomes themselves are impressive, they take on even greater significance in the context of the students served – many of whom would likely fall far below the national averages for student success without the intervention of Communities In Schools.

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Communities In Schools surrounds students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life. Through a school-based coordinator, Communities In Schools connects students and their families to critical community resources tailored to local needs. Working in more than 3,400 schools in the most challenged communities, in 25 states and the District of Columbia, Communities In Schools serves nearly 1.3 million young people and their families. It has become the nation's leading dropout prevention organization, and the only one proven to increase graduation rates and decrease dropout rates.