



## **Communities In Schools Leading a Nationwide Response to America's Dropout Crisis**

### **The Problem**

- By many estimates, one-third to one-quarter of young Americans are not graduating from high school or not graduating with their peers. Only half of African-American, Hispanic and Native American students graduate on time.
- With globalization and the decline in jobs that pay good wages and require relatively low literacy, problem solving and technical skills, only about 43 percent of high school dropouts find gainful employment.
- Both individuals and our society as a whole suffer, as dropouts earn less (if they are employed at all) and are more likely to apply for government assistance, to be arrested and to have health problems.

### **The Opportunity**

- To give every young person the chance to 'choose success' – graduating from high school with the skills necessary to go on to advanced education or training or to seek a meaningful, living-wage job.

### **The Role and Impact of Communities In Schools**

Communities In Schools (CIS) is the fifth largest network in the country serving at-risk youth, and the largest one working both in and outside the classroom. Since 1977, CIS has championed the connection of needed community resources with schools to help young people successfully learn, stay in school, and prepare for life. Locally, CIS serves as a bridge between schools and businesses, faith groups and nonprofit agencies, identifying and mobilizing local resources to provide a range of services – mentoring, tutoring, health care, summer and after-school programs, family counseling, service learning and more – based on the particular needs in each community. CIS state offices, with strategic support from CIS' national leadership, ensure that local CIS affiliates exhibit consistently high quality initiatives, measure impact through regular tracking and evaluation, and share best practices. The national CIS network now includes:

- Affiliates in more than 3,250 urban, suburban and rural schools, which serve nearly 1.2 million students in 27 states and the District of Columbia;
- Partnerships with approximately 16,000 national, state and community organizations;
- More than 53,000 volunteers whose contributions enable CIS to keep its paid staff to a minimum; and

*-more-*

#### **Communities In Schools National Office**

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- Demonstrated improvement by CIS-tracked students in academic performance (80 percent), grade promotion (82 percent), graduation rates (78 percent), and post-graduation success (76 percent went on to higher education or training) – even though CIS students are typically among the most vulnerable.

### **Taking Success to a Higher Level**

CIS has been recognized by some of the country's most respected philanthropic organizations, include the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Atlantic Philanthropies and the Aspen Institute.

To help realize its vision, CIS identified six strategic goals designed to increase the network's impact:

1. Concentrate network efforts on building highly functional state structures.
2. Support network to meet Total Quality System (TQS), thereby serving more students in each site more effectively.
3. Lead network evidence-based strategy for proven practices and continuous improvement.
4. Increase efforts on brand building and internal communications.
5. Significantly increase financial support of the CIS network.
6. Promote and support the CIS "movement" while building a more cohesive network.

The CIS national office is both the architect and implementation guide for these strategic efforts, in a role that coalesces, strengthens and directs the network's resources for maximum benefit to the young people, families and communities served by CIS.

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