

## Communities In Schools

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### Situation

Communities In Schools (CIS) is an organization that works with public and charter schools across the country to reduce and/or prevent student dropouts. With programs in 2,900 schools in 26 states and the District of Columbia, the organization has a tremendous need for marketing communications assets, templated presentations, on-site collateral, reports, and many other critical documents. CIS enlisted TDC to develop these materials to support its programs and ensure that school communities with at-risk students have the tools they needed.

### Project Management

Since the beginning of our partnership in 2019, we've designed a wide range of communications tools to help CIS advance its mission and impact, and meet ongoing commitments to its schools. From comprehensive resource guides and case studies to affiliate logos and infographics, TDC has played an integral role in creating and/or enhancing pieces used to help students build positive relationships and habits that enable them to reach their full potential. In addition, our efficient and responsive project management framework has enabled us to consistently meet project timelines while accommodating multiple rounds of client edits and feedback, and continuous proofing and refinement processes.

### The Work

Below is a comprehensive list of the assignments that TDC has helped deliver, refine, or develop in partnership with CIS.

#### DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion)

- Quick Start Guide
- Resource Guide
- PowerPoint Template
- Assorted Templates
- Addendum Document

#### SSI (Student Supports Institute)

- PowerPoint Templates
- Registration Kiosk Slide
- App Assets
- Promenade Mirror Clings
- Montego Archway
- Name Badge
- Meter Board
- Registration Desk Art
- Wellness Sign

#### Additional Assets

- Templates for National & Individual Posters/Signs
- Print & Digital Case Study (Ramp Up)
- Updated 29 State Profile Infographics
- Animated Banner Ads
- Affiliate Logos (110 Updates)

- affiliate logos
- trade show graphics



Communities  
In Schools®

Hidalgo County



Communities  
In Schools®

Michigan

# 2020 Student Supports Institute



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**2020 Student  
Supports Institute**  
*Theme: School Climate*

**FirstName  
LastName**  
Company/Affiliate Name



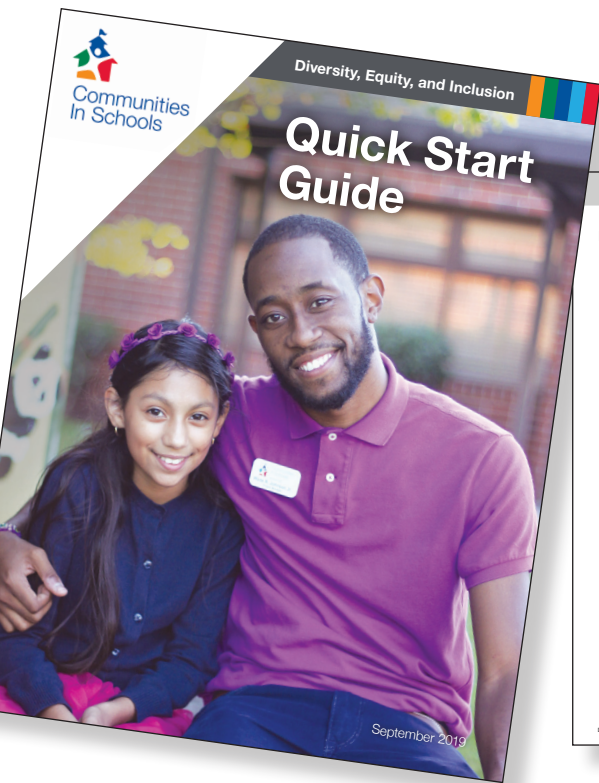
**In schools to  
restore stability.**



**In schools to  
give hope.**



- dei quick start guide
- dei resource guide



### Meet the CIS Diversity, Equity & Inclusion PLANNING COMMITTEE

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Director, Social Change

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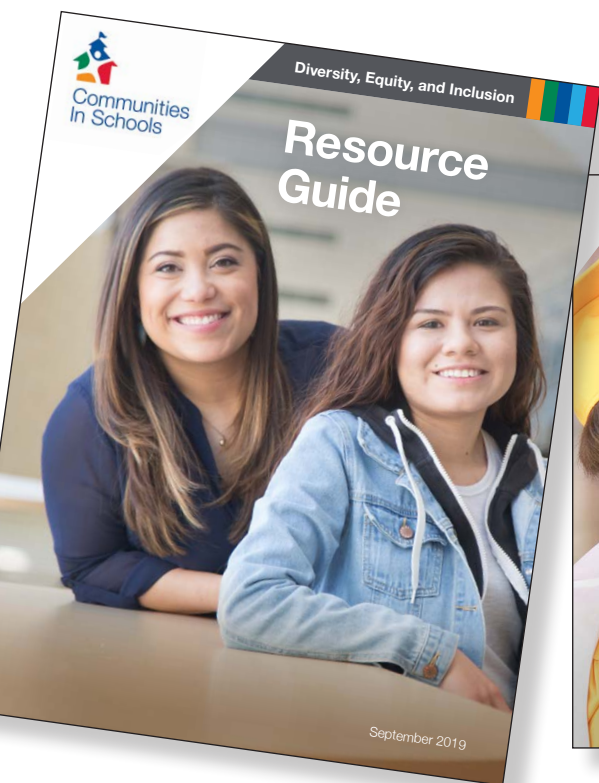
**MEGAN DEMARCO**  
National Office, Arlington  
Senior Director, Social Change

### How We Got Here

In 2018, we established a collaborative process for our network to engage in the development of a strategic diversity, equity, and inclusion roadmap. While there is no ideal endpoint to our journey of growing, learning, and evolving as the world continues to change, the following roadmap helps us set goals and milestones through 2022, and articulates the actions we must collectively take on our journey towards positive change.

Year 1 2019	Year 2 2020	Year 3 2021	Year 4 2022	Year 5 2023	Year 8 2026
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft framework and roadmap</li> <li>• Stakeholder engagement and strategy development</li> <li>• Create common language and "Call to Action"</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create and implement stakeholder engagement strategy</li> <li>• Define success and establish baseline data</li> <li>• Develop DEI Resource Guide 1.0</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue stakeholder engagement</li> <li>• Conduct and analyze data to monitor &amp; assess/adjust progress</li> <li>• Identify the desired changes in student outcomes</li> <li>• Pilot and refine DEI Resource Guide 1.0 and associated resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Begin to see improvement in student outcomes</li> <li>• Implement continuous improvement loop: Collect and analyze data to monitor &amp; assess/adjust progress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand staff members leverage skills and resources</li> <li>• Continue implementing continuous improvement loop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student outcomes improve</li> </ul>

**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Roadmap**  
By the end of 2022, the CIS national office, state offices, and affiliates will have the practices, policies, and people to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in support of success for all students.



**"A journey is called that because you cannot know what you will discover on the journey, what you will find, nor what you find will do to you."**

James Baldwin

### Chapter One: Awareness

Explore the resources below to find out more about how implicit bias works, test your implicit biases, evaluate equity in the organization, and make a strategic plan for change.

- **Understanding Our New Racial Reality Starts with the Unconscious** (Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley)  
*Why:* Provides an argument for why trying to address racism purely at a conscious level alone won't move us forward, and highlights a new step-by-step approach to recognize and reduce implicit bias
- **How to Stop the Racism in You** (Greater Good Science Center at UC Berkeley)  
*Why:* The new science of bias suggests that we all carry prejudices within ourselves—and we all have the tools to keep them in check
- **Implicit Association Tests** (Project Implicit)  
*Why:* Measures attitudes and beliefs that people may be unwilling or unable to report
- **Awake to Work to Build a Race Equity Culture** (Project Hope)  
*Why:* Provides an argument for why trying to address racism purely at a conscious level alone won't move us forward, and highlights a new step-by-step approach to recognize and reduce implicit bias
- **Strategic Planning for Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity** (J.C. Berkeley)  
*Why:* Resource for change and implementation providing clear steps, proposed timelines, and tools such as an information-gathering and data guide and a self-assessment tool

**Working together in Richmond**  
Communities In Schools of Richmond realized that it needed to be more reflective of the communities and students it served. To address this gap, the organization focused on helping staff better integrate and blend together through quality conversations that raised awareness for implicit bias. "There is large African-American student representation in Richmond," says Harold Fitzer, president and CEO at CIS of Richmond. "Making space for these conversations can often be difficult. Each person has to come to terms with their own implicit bias and how that bias can impact behaviors, perception, and actions. The diversity we have among our staff is an opportunity to address a range of experiences that enriches the support we provide to students." Activities such as mindfulness groups, picnics, team building, peer walks, and bicycle rides help foster a sense of inclusion while creating opportunities for experiences that build trust. "Our turnover rate is lower and it's one of the key outcomes of our work around inclusion," adds Fitzer. "Our current staff frequently rate their own efforts to work for us, and we're seeing a big increase in incoming applications. People are looking to see what you do."

**Harold Fitzer**  
CEO of Richmond

- dei addendum document
- dei powerpoint template



**Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

**DEI Implementation Team Members**

<p><b>Network</b></p> <p><b>Asha (Bell) Robinson</b> Director of Integrated Student Supports (Chicago, IL)</p> <p><b>Amber Rowe Mosely</b> Site Coordinator (Federal Way, WA)</p> <p><b>Andrea Diaz</b> Site Coordinator (San Antonio, TX)</p> <p><b>Angela Beavers</b> HR Director (Charlotte, NC)</p> <p><b>Artavia Cohen</b> Sr. Cx. Student Innovation (Kalamazoo, MI)</p> <p><b>Daily (Dalaris) Amaro</b> Site Coordinator (Lafayette, LA)</p>	<p><b>Erin Nunley</b> Student Support Coach (Denville, NJ)</p> <p><b>Nadia Hernandez</b> Parent Educator &amp; alumna (Carteret, NJ)</p> <p><b>Nevia Deryard</b> DE Embedded Operations (North Carolina)</p> <p><b>Pete Wianschul</b> Executive Director (San Jose, TX)</p> <p><b>Rachel Vargas</b> Field Mgr (San Antonio, TX)</p> <p><b>Tommy Walls, Jr.</b> Executive Director (High Point, NC)</p>	<p><b>National Board</b></p> <p><b>Isiah Pickens</b> Board Member</p> <p><b>National Office</b></p> <p><b>Down Godwin</b> Vice President, Human Capital and Office Administration</p> <p><b>Ernestine Peterson</b> Sr. Technical Specialist</p> <p><b>Elizabeth Meira</b> Sr. Director, Organization Health and Performance</p> <p><b>Karissa Nelson</b> Program Manager, Learning and Development</p> <p><b>Sarah Dawsonport</b> Principal for Organizational Health Performance</p>	<p><b>Steven McCullough</b> Chief Operating &amp; Equity Officer</p> <p><b>Tahy Ahmad</b> Specialist, Institutional Relations</p> <p><b>Consultants</b></p> <p><b>Corine Omand</b> Diversity, Equity &amp; Inclusion Consultant</p> <p><b>Cynthia Silva Parker</b> Interaction Institute for Social Change, Diversity, Equity &amp; Inclusion Consultant</p> <p><b>Margie Lytton</b> Interaction Institute for Social Change, Diversity, Equity &amp; Inclusion Consultant</p>
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Launching your Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Process: A Companion to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Quick Start Guide

**Bring Champions Together and Launch Your Process**

**Engage Additional Early Adopters**

Your Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategy Team members are your earliest champions for the process. At this stage, you'll also want to engage others who are already working on diversity, equity, and inclusion, regardless of where they sit in the formal hierarchy of your organization or other organizations or companies. Bring them together to engage with your cause for change and learn about what each is doing. Create an ongoing learning community where they can share practices, support one another and strategize about how to move the work forward in your organization and across your community.

**Make an Authentic Invitation!**

Borrowing from the fields of community organizing and fundraising, we know that people respond to authentic invitations from folks they trust. The same principle applies to engaging champions in working together around diversity, equity, and inclusion. You're inviting people to be part of a rewarding and sometimes challenging process of creating a more positive future for your organization and your community.

To open the community to an alternative future, start with the invitation conversation. Since all the other conversations lead to one another, sequence is not as that critical. It's important to understand that some are more difficult than others, especially in communities where people are just beginning to engage with one another. Certain conversations are high-risk and require a greater level of trust among people than others do have meaning. A good meeting design begins with less-demanding ones and ends with the more-difficult ones.

1 For more on making authentic invitations and "no conversations that matter," see ["The Diversity of Progress"](#) by Peter Block.

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Launching your Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Process: A Companion to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Quick Start Guide



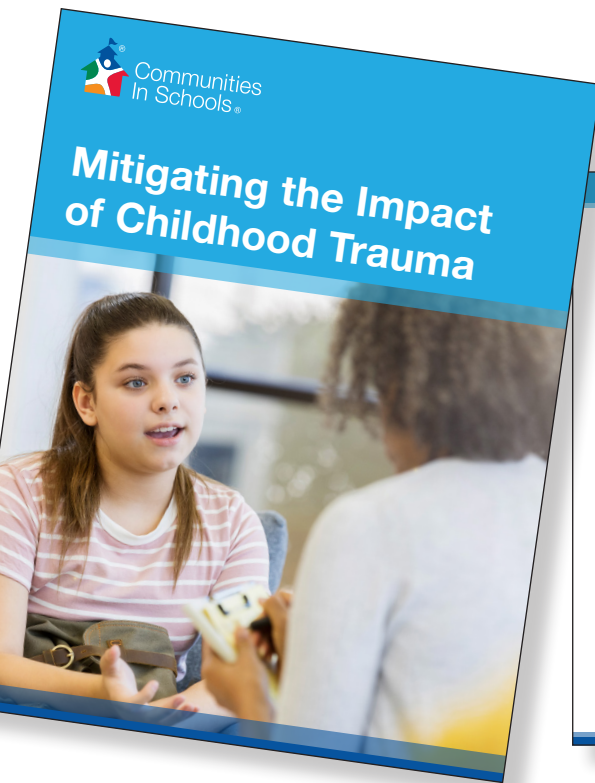
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion—Section Title

### General Rules

- Content box has been set to not cover the Communities In Schools logo on the bottom right. **Care must be taken to ensure that the logo is not covered inadvertently.**
- PowerPoint presentation should only contain **brief highlights**. The audience should focus on a speaker and not on reading lengthy bullet points.
- Be sure to use "First Initial Caps" in slide titles.
- End punctuation for bullets can be used or not used; **be consistent.**



- trauma document
- policy document



Mitigating the Impact of Childhood Trauma

### Prevalence of Trauma Causing ACEs

Regardless of income level, most people have experienced an adverse childhood experience. According to a CDC Florida analysis of the 2011-12 National Survey of Children's Health, approximately 59 percent of American adolescents had experienced at least one adverse childhood experience, and nearly one in 10 had an ACE score of four or higher. The CDC-Kaiser Permanente study and subsequent surveys show that most people in the U.S. have at least one ACE and that people with four ACEs have a huge risk of adult onset of chronic health problems such as heart disease, cancer, diabetes, suicide, and alcoholism.<sup>6</sup>

Many forms of childhood trauma, particularly interpersonal violence, occur in private circumstances and only are observed by others.<sup>7</sup> This fact, coupled with the high rate of prevalence of ACEs among children, makes the case for interacting with all students through a trauma-informed lens.

There is the belief that the number of children affected by ACEs will increase during the pandemic. The number of ACEs is also likely to increase for children already exposed to them. When family situations become too stressed, it is typical for welfare agencies to get involved. A Government Accountability Office (GAO) report states that in addition to child-welfare agencies, school staff and members of the school community can play a key part in recognizing and responding to children who have experienced trauma. In a separate 2017 report on child wellbeing, GAO reported that health and human service agencies are not the only entities needed to address child wellbeing and suggested that community stakeholders work together to determine what resources are needed for the children in their community. A trauma-informed school, characterized by an understanding and a commitment of teachers and staff to an awareness of how trauma affects students, is an example of a coordinated approach to trauma. With students learning outside of school buildings during the pandemic, there is less in-person contact, and connecting with students. Building trusting relationships when schools start—whether virtually or in person—becomes more important for those most vulnerable and distanced from the supports that were more readily accessible when school buildings were open.

### How Common Are ACEs?

ACE Study	Percentage
ZERO ACEs	26%
ONE ACE	26%
TWO ACEs	26%
THREE OR MORE	19%
FOUR OR MORE	12%

Figure 1: Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Kaiser Permanente, The ACE Study: Research on the Effects of Adverse Childhood Experiences. Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2010.

6. Kessler RC, McLaughlin MA, Greenberg ME, et al. (2010). Prevalence, consequences, and risk factors for exposure to traumatic events and PTSD among US and European adolescents. *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 23(1), 10-24.

7. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2014). *Child Abuse and Neglect: A National Curriculum for Child Welfare Workers*. Washington, DC: SAMHSA.

Mitigating the Impact of Childhood Trauma

### Impact of ACEs Over a Lifetime

ACEs exacerbate chronic diseases, most mental illnesses, and are at the root of most violence.<sup>8</sup> According to the National Institutes of Health, a large and growing body of research indicates that toxic stress during childhood can harm the most basic levels of the nervous, endocrine, and immune systems.<sup>9</sup> Absent of efforts to reduce or prevent toxic stress, individuals exposed to toxic stress are at increased risk of becoming involved in crime and violence, using alcohol or drugs, and engaging in other health-risk behaviors. They are susceptible to disease, illness, and mental health challenges over their lifetime. Children growing up with toxic stress may have difficulty forming healthy and stable relationships. They may also have unstable work histories as adults and struggle with finances, family, job, and depression throughout life—the effects of which can be passed on to their own children.<sup>10</sup>

### ACEs and Integrated Student Supports

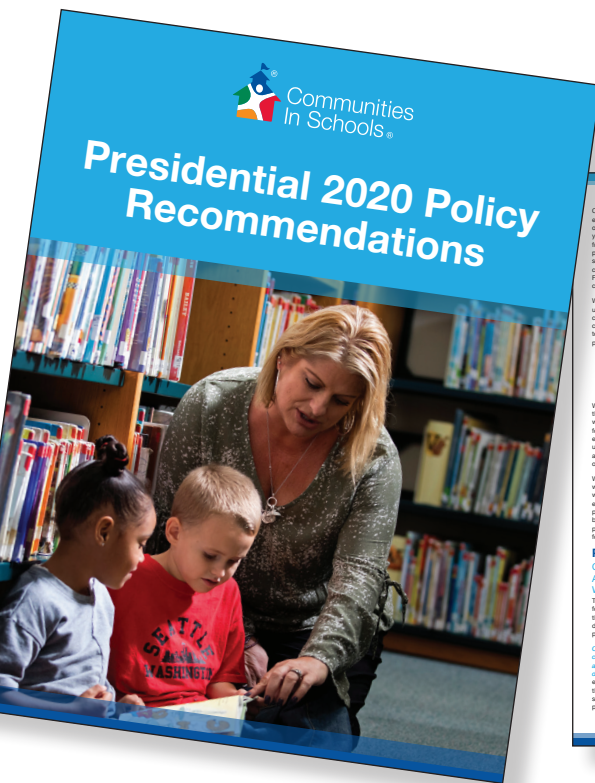
Integrated student supports, which address both academic and non-academic needs of students, has great potential in preventing ACEs from becoming a lifelong challenge for students. Site coordinators are there to serve as a buffer to stressors by creating a safe space and connecting students to all necessary supports.<sup>11</sup>

Figure 2: "The ACE Pyramid", Atlanta, Georgia: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Division of Violence Prevention, May 2014. Adapted from the original on 16 January 2016.

8. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2010). *Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences: Learning the Best Available Evidence*. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

9. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2924272/>

10. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2010). *Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences: Learning the Best Available Evidence*. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.



Communities In Schools' (CIS®) is a national organization that ensures all students have what they need to stay in school and one step to a brighter future. As an organization with over 40 years of experience empowering young people to realize their full potential, CIS® knows that every child holds tremendous promise. Working inside more than 2,500 school and community sites across the country, we connect youth to caring adults and community resources designed to help them succeed in life. For the nearly 150 million students we serve annually, these connections have the power to change their life trajectory.

We are deeply committed to using public policy as a vehicle to unlock student potential. Our policy platform is about driving change through young people, their schools, and their communities. Building on our extensive history and commitment to youth, Communities In Schools® advocates for the following policy principles that provide students with:

1. A one-on-one relationship with a caring adult
2. A safe place to learn and grow
3. A healthy start and a healthy future
4. A marketable skill to use upon graduation
5. A chance to give back to peers and community

We aim to create better outcomes and empower students to be the next generation of leaders. We believe in a ripple effect, and we know how life can change communities. To set the stage for student success, we advocate for legislative change that ensures equity as a through-line in all public policymaking. We urge the 2020 presidential candidates to invest in education and related programs that support the health and well-being of young people.

We also know that it matters how public funds are spent and we encourage policymakers to invest in what works. To that end, we support the use of data and evidence in policymaking and encourage lawmakers to prioritize funding for evidence-based programs and promising practices, including evidence-based programs and promising practices, that can improve outcomes for students while being good stewards of public dollars.

### Policy Principle 1

#### Closing The Relationship Gap: A One-On-One Relationship With A Caring Adult

Trusting, caring, and supportive relationships with adults are foundational to childhood development. Research shows that youth from marginalized communities often have developmental relationships, which are essential in helping young people overcome the obstacles, challenges, and barriers they face.

Communities In Schools® recognizes the 2020 presidential candidates to support policies that create, reinforce, and strengthen opportunities that create, reinforce, and strengthen relationships with caring adults. We support evidence-based approaches. We integrated student supports, that are grounded in youth development research and the science of brain development. To that end, we encourage policymakers to invest in high-quality in-service professional development related to trauma-informed care, the elements of a developmental relationship, and social-emotional skill building. We also know that federal policymakers can play an important role in supporting, encouraging, and funding strategies that bring caring adults into schools. Therefore, we encourage the use of evidence-based family engagement strategies and initiatives to ensure the school is a welcoming community for caregivers of all backgrounds.

### Policy Principle 2

#### Improving School Climate: A Safe Place To Learn And Grow

Research shows that attending a school with a positive climate contributes to the well-being of students and improves academic outcomes and graduation rates. Yet, for many students, school is not a welcoming place. While efforts to improve school safety and implement restorative justice practices are underway in schools nationwide, more can be done to ensure success and bring these efforts to scale. This is especially important for school staff, who often need professional development to help them understand the reason for students' behavior. Staff should be provided with the appropriate tools to effectively use discipline to improve school climate, and ultimately, the connectedness of their students to the school.

As such, Communities In Schools® urges all 2020 presidential candidates to invest in the hiring and professional development of school-based staff who can foster a supportive learning environment by managing critical skills like the planning and integration of programming and resources, while building the knowledge and the skills necessary to identify signs of trauma and mental health needs. It is also critical that policymakers fund student mental health supports, including through Medicaid in schools, and other initiatives to address the impact that trauma has on students.

### Policy Principle 3

#### Promoting Healthy Equity: A Healthy Start And A Healthy Future

Children cannot concentrate on schoolwork if they are hungry, cold, in need of medical or dental care, or have trouble seeing. They deserve a healthy start in life, which means access to health care, vision and dental exams, healthy foods, mental health services, safe and stable housing, and physical education programs. It also means ensuring that they have access to early learning and development services that promote school readiness.

Schools can have an important role in identifying and meeting the health and learning development needs of students and families. Communities In Schools® urges all candidates to support policies that encourage the coordination and integration of school-based services that keep students physically and mentally healthy and that prepare them to start school ready to learn. We support strong investments in the social safety net and in the basic health and human services that are essential for every child, including improvements to existing ratios of school psychologists, school social workers, and school counselors. We also support strong investments in early childhood learning opportunities.

### Policy Principle 4

#### Fostering College And Career Readiness: A Marketable Skill To Use Upon Graduation

Young people deserve to graduate from high school prepared to achieve their individual aspirations, whether they choose to attend college, enlist in military service, or enter the workforce. Employers, college admissions counselors, and military recruiters want candidates who have the necessary technical skills, academic aptitude, and interpersonal skills to be successful. Wherever path students choose, schools must equally prepare them for the jobs of the future.

Communities In Schools® encourages the 2020 presidential candidates to support job training, college exploration and persistence, and workforce learning opportunities for all students. Through apprenticeships, internships, programs that support college persistence and completion in both two- and four-year degree programs, and high-quality career and technical education programs, schools should ensure that students can build the skills they need for success after graduation. Through these programs, we will also build the social capital needed to help them successfully navigate their future path on their own. We encourage policymakers to improve access to college and career exploration programs in earlier grades so that all students can start high school with a plan and the skills needed for the future. In addition, we encourage the integration of social, emotional, and academic instruction in schools so that students can learn the interpersonal skills needed for success after graduation.

### Policy Principle 5

#### Promoting Civic Engagement: A Chance To Give Back To Peers And Community

Research demonstrates the extensive benefits that individuals gain from volunteering—from increased self-esteem, to new skills and capabilities, to improvements in physical and mental health, to developing social capital and building connections with peers.

Communities In Schools® requests the 2020 presidential candidates to support policies that encourage volunteering, help young people get outside the house to serve others, and boost civic engagement. We also encourage policymakers to create opportunities for students, both in and out of school, to access high-quality civics education with participatory experiences. Finally, we advocate for strong investments in national service programs, which compensate members for special projects and empower young people with critical skills they can use in a career.

For more information please contact **Tracy Miller, Vice President of Policy at Communities In Schools®, at Miller@CISnet.org.**






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- wellness poster
- ap poster templates

## Welcome to the Wellness Room

This space is specially designed to help you take a breath, reconnect, and decompress in the middle of your busy conference day.

In the Wellness Room, we encourage you to:

-  Reconnect to the moment
-  Pick up a mindfulness card to try a quick guided activity
-  Limit use of cell phones/technology (please, no phone calls!)
-  Keep noise levels low
-  Take a moment for self-care



## ANAIS

I struggled with my body image and low self-confidence before meeting a caring adult in my school who supported me. Now, I have more confidence than ever.



FIND OUT WHAT I'M MADE OF.



To explore my story using augmented reality, scan the QR code with your camera to download the Communities In Schools app. Then, use the app to scan my portrait.

Learn more at [YourAffiliateURL.org](#)



## NASJE

I used to struggle with my self-esteem and would get involved in altercations at school. But that was before I found a caring adult who empowered me and boosted my self-confidence.




FIND OUT WHAT I'M MADE OF.



To explore my story using augmented reality, scan the QR code with your camera to download the Communities In Schools app. Then, use the app to scan my portrait.


Learn more at [YourAffiliateURL.org](#)





Communities  
In Schools®

**Help support students  
during school closures.**



We empower all  
students to succeed. [Learn How](#)



Communities  
In Schools®

**In schools.  
In communities.  
In times of crisis.**



We empower all  
students to succeed. [Learn How](#)



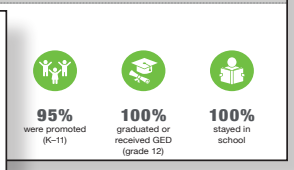
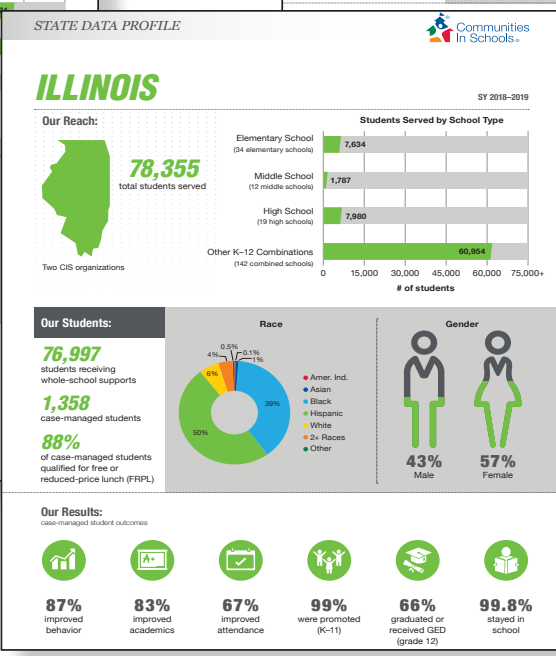
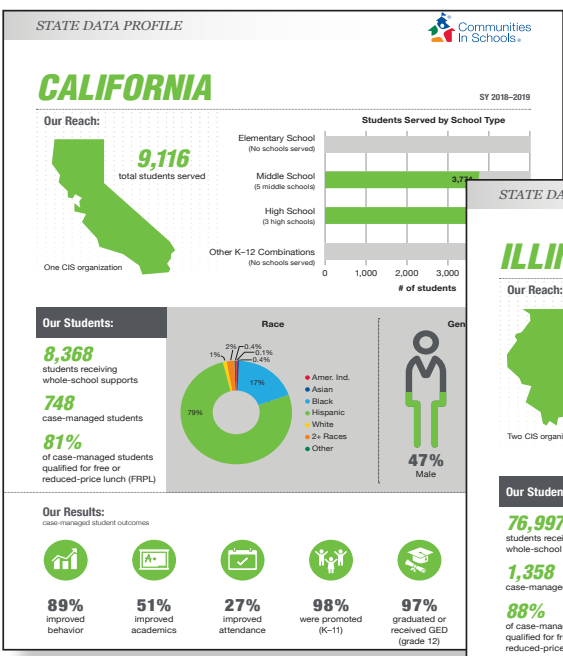
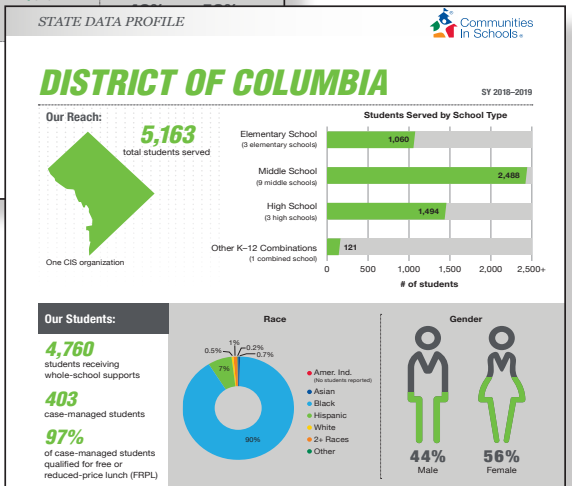
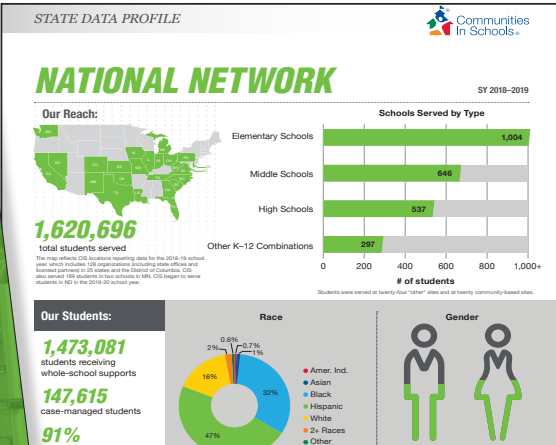
Communities  
In Schools®

**Help support students  
during school closures.**



Communities  
In Schools®

**In times of crisis, we empower  
all students to succeed.**





- case study
- case study banner ads

**PARTNERSHIP SPOTLIGHT**

# Ramping Up in Rural Schools

**Tackling Diverse Student Needs in East Grand Forks Public Schools**

A small rural farming community known for its annual fishing tournaments and farmers markets, East Grand Forks sits just across the state line from North Dakota in the northeast corner of Minnesota. Like many rural communities, its population seems rather homogenous on the surface—communities, mostly of working class, white families. East Grand Forks, comprised mostly of many Minnesota counties experiencing an influx of refugees, is one of many Minnesota counties experiencing an influx of refugees who have resettled within its borders. In the last year, thousands of refugees have resettled in the state from countries that include Somalia, Iran, Iraq and El Salvador.

For East Grand Forks Public Schools—a small school district serving about 1,900 students across four schools—this growing community brought new challenges as they sought to better serve and support its children and families. Working closely with local governing entities, the district identified coordinated programs and services to help bridge the gaps experienced by families from various cultures and ethnicities.

Realizing that these students faced different academic and non-academic barriers than their predominantly white peers, they knew that they also needed to find ways to help their school staff identify and remove the barriers keeping the students from succeeding. They also wanted to help staff better connect and build relationships with students and families from a growing diversity of countries, cultures and linguistic backgrounds.

*"We didn't have anybody in the district who spoke the common language of our students' families, resulting in communication barriers between the district, schools, students, and families."*

*Suzanya Driscol, Director of Teaching and Learning, East Grand Forks Public Schools*

**Community Profile**

- 9% English Learner<sup>1</sup>
- 16% Special Education<sup>1</sup>
- 34% Free/Reduced Price Meals
- 55% of citizens are without post-secondary degrees<sup>2</sup>

**Academic Performance<sup>1</sup>**  
On average, only 51% of students are meeting standards in math, reading and science.

- 52% Math
- 54% Reading
- 49% Science

**RampUp for student success**

**Communities In Schools**

1 Minnesota Report Card, 2020, Minnesota Report Card. [online] Available at: <https://reporcard.mn.gov/myreportcard/>:n099000000\_groupType=district\_id=30 [Accessed 9 April 2020].

2 Worldpopulationreview.com, 2020. [online] Available at: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/east-grand-forks-mn-population/> [Accessed 9 April 2020].

## A Personal Touch to Professional Development

Rather than offering a one-size-fits-all approach, Communities In Schools<sup>®</sup> partnered with the school district to identify ways to leverage resources and relationships with local organizations. Before any training was delivered, a district assessment was conducted to better understand the East Grand Forks community, socioeconomic issues, and existing support systems. These findings were integrated into the RampUp for Student Success course modules to ensure that school staff were trained on relevant and practical solutions that could be easily implemented. RampUp for Student Success facilitators were also selected to best match the needs of the East Grand Forks community, with backgrounds ranging from current Communities In Schools<sup>®</sup> program directors to public school administrators.

Together, they led East Grand Forks district administrators and educators through in-person trainings and online coursework that empowered school teams to build their own integrated support solutions for their campuses. Courses were delivered to leaders from across the district including administrators, counseling teams, a literacy specialist, and a bilingual cultural liaison.

East Grand Forks administrators began applying their learnings from the courses immediately. In addition to RampUp for Student Success facilitators providing implementation support after the completion of each course, the district also hired an Achievement and Integration Coordinator to oversee their efforts to deliver integrated student supports across the district.

Though they are still in the early stages of implementation, results are already coming to bear as they are beginning to see the fruits of improved communication between staff, students and families. According to a recently released survey of high school students, significantly more students feel connected to the school community and that they have someone they can talk to. Today, the district is decidedly more confident in its ability to address the diverse needs of its student body.

## Partnership Overview:

- District Needs:** East Grand Forks selected Communities In Schools<sup>®</sup> as its partner to help them address new challenges of serving a small but growing immigrant and refugee community.
- Description of Services:** Through the RampUp for Student Success professional development series, school staff received hands-on training tailored to specific district needs and implementation support as they began to use the tools and coursework.
- RampUp for Student Success has helped East Grand Forks Public Schools adopt a systematic, whole-child approach to support its students, with accountability and transparency at the core.
- Course Topics:**
  - Assessing School Needs and Creating a Strategic Plan
  - Implementing Integrated Student Supports for the Individual
  - Forming and Managing Effective Community Partnerships
  - Using Data to Identify and Track Non-Academic Needs
- Funding Sources:** Minnesota Department of Education; Achievement and Integration Program

## School Leader Perspective: Solidifying Our Team

We were always working as a team, but RampUp for Student Success really solidified our ability to respond to a wider range of academic and non-academic student needs.

As an example, we recently had a student in need of special education services who was in the care of a guardian without the legal custody needed to make decisions on the student's behalf. In order to connect this student to the services he needed, our referral team—which consisted of our school principal, teacher, social worker, and myself—partnered with social services to obtain the required signature from the student's legal incarcerated parent and helped ensure the student's guardian could be granted legal custody.

RampUp for Student Success had a significant impact on our ability to strengthen our referral process and create greater accountability for supporting students in ways that we may not have previously been able to. After the training, everything clicked into place and we were able to work together much more efficiently and quickly to connect students to the supports and services they need.

With the increasing recognition that punishment, such as suspensions, can have negative impacts on students, educators are seeking new, positive approaches to discipline. Dr. Kevin Lesary, Senior Principal of Research and Evaluation for Communities In Schools<sup>®</sup>, explains these new approaches and how CIS<sup>™</sup> contributes to their success.

**Chad Grassel**  
Assistant Principal,  
New Heights Elementary  
East Grand Forks  
Public Schools

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