Communities
In Schools

COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS NATIONAL REPORT

COMMUNITY MATTERS

FOCUS ON SCHOOL DISCIPLINE
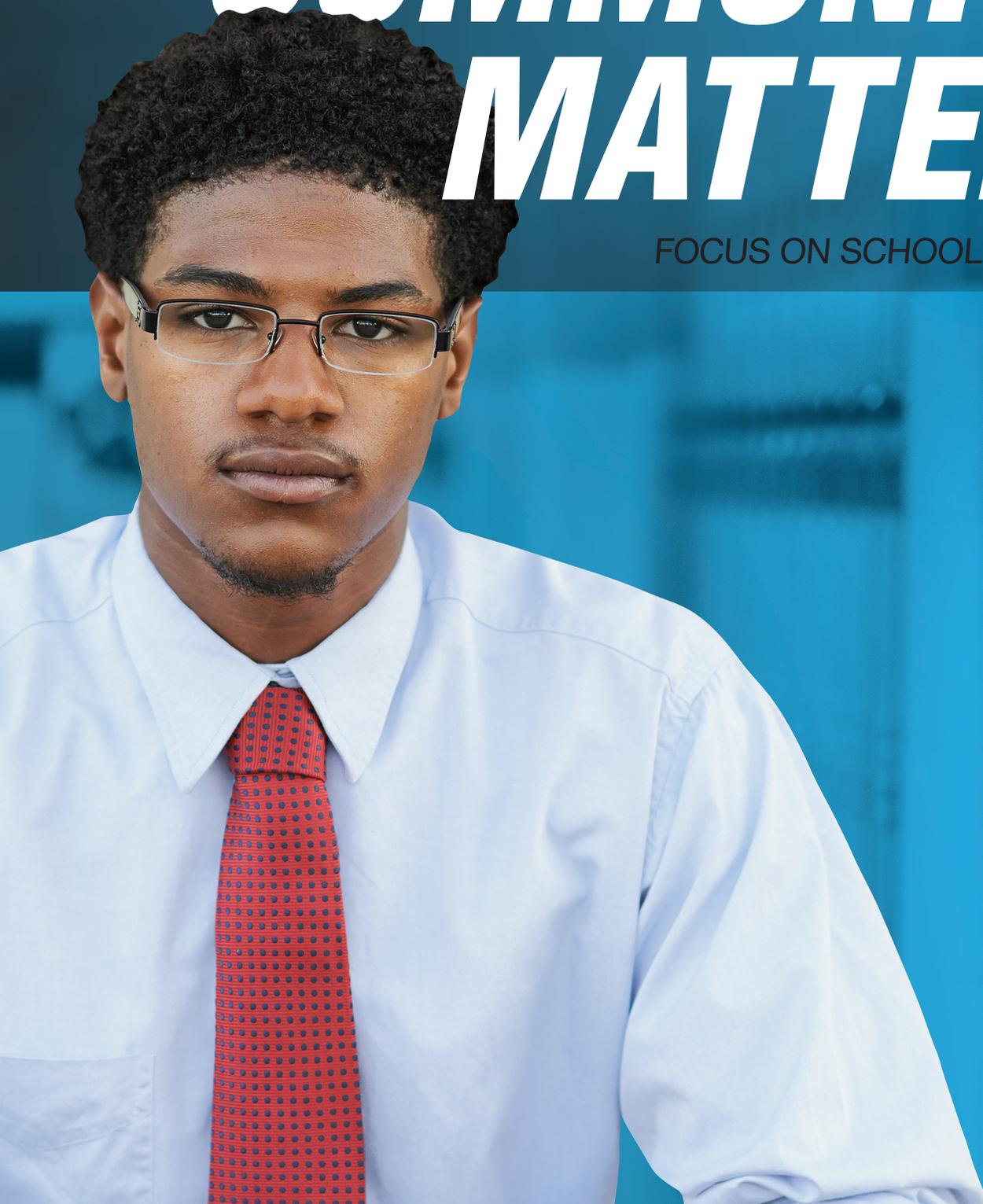
1 IN 3 STUDENTS WILL BE SUSPENDED AT SOME POINT BETWEEN KINDERGARTEN AND 12TH GRADE.*
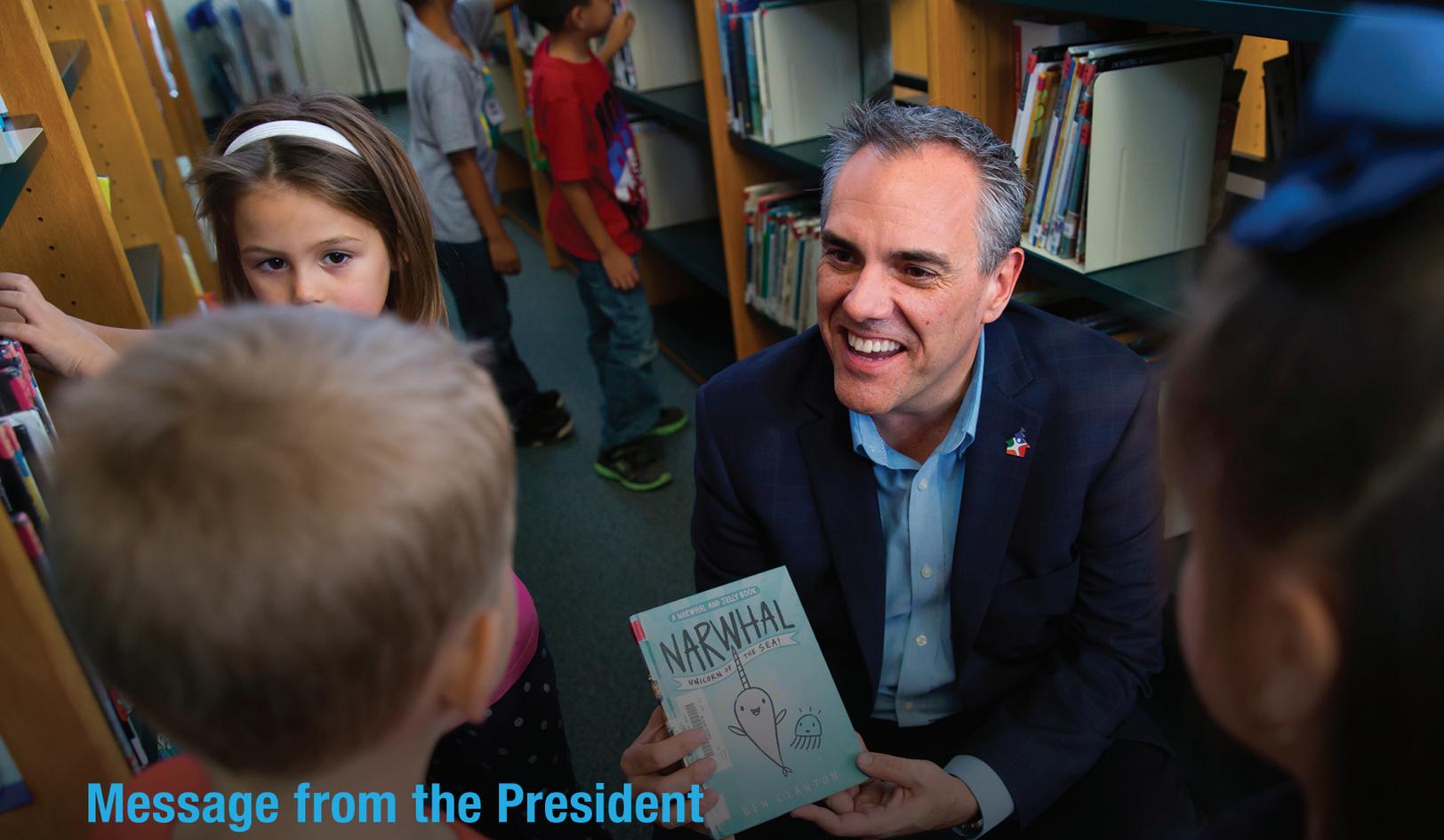
Message from the President

I remember when, in the 90's, schools began to adopt zero tolerance policies as a safeguard against disruptive and violent behavior. Today, those same strict policies are now applied to infractions such as insubordination, dress code violation, and missing class—all behaviors that can be cries for help from a student in crisis. When community members, school leaders, teachers, parents, nonprofits, and policy experts look beyond the behavior to see the whole child, we find a battery of issues better addressed by support and understanding than by zero tolerance policies.

When it comes to solutions, community matters! Restorative circles, one of the methods of alternative discipline you'll read about in this report, are a prime example. When caring adults and students sit down together and talk, they find the solutions that keep kids in class and on track to graduate.

Because of our presence inside schools, Communities In Schools has a unique opportunity to bring members of the community together to find and implement those solutions. We work alongside our partners every day to make sure students have the support and encouragement they need to stay in the classroom through graduation.

This national report presents the results of our work in 2,500 schools throughout America. With a focus on school discipline, the information on these pages serves to highlight what it means to be **#AllInForKids**.

Dale Erquiaga
President & CEO

COMMUNITY

Contents

MATTERS

SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS IMPACT NEARLY

3 Million

U.S. STUDENTS

Nearly three million U.S. students are suspended from their schools every year—with approximately half suspended more than once. One result of this discipline is the loss of an estimated 18 million days of instruction annually.[1] Why are these numbers so high?

In the early 90's, schools began adopting zero tolerance policies[2] in an attempt to keep students and teachers safe from serious student misconduct, such as violent behaviors and weapons in school. However, while these more serious forms of misconduct have declined, zero tolerance policies have expanded. These policies now address a wider-range of misconduct, including vandalism, insubordination, and even dress code violations. This expansion is driving a significant increase in suspensions, which is disproportionately impacting students of color and special education students. From pre-school through high school, these students are consistently suspended at a greater rate than their peers.

Percentage Distribution of Students Receiving One or More Out-of-School Suspensions, by Race and Sex[3]

Male Enrollment: 2% | 25% | 0.2% | 8% | 3% | 13% | 1%

Male out-of-school suspensions: 3% | 24% | 0.3% | 25% | 1% | 15% | 1%

Female Enrollment: 2% | 24% | 0.2% | 8% | 2% | 13% | 1%

Female out-of-school suspensions: 1% | 8% | 0.1% | 14% | 6% | 0.3% | 1%

Legend:
- ■ Hispanic or Latino
- ■ Asian
- ■ White
- ■ Two or more races
- ■ American Indian or Alaska Native
- ■ Black or African American
- ■ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
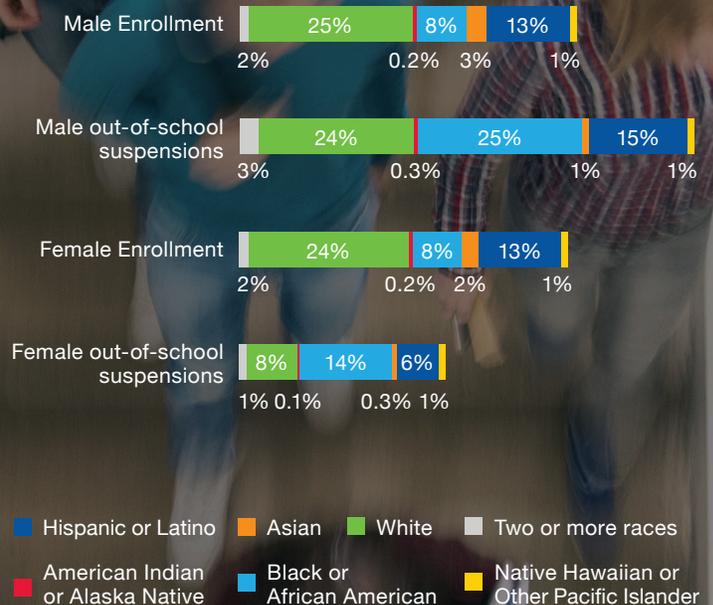
NOTE: Data may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding, male enrollment plus female enrollment equals total enrollment and male plus female out-of-school suspensions equals total suspensions.

[1]The Center for Civil Rights Remedies (2015). Are We Closing the School Discipline Gap?
[2]Shared Justice (2018). Zero-tolerance Polices and the School to Prison Piipeline.
[3]U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights Civil Rights Data Collection, 2015-2016

Understanding the Toll of Student Discipline

For students struggling to overcome poverty, crime, and trauma, inequity in discipline only widens the already-existing opportunity gap. Students who are suspended have lower grades, lower standardized test scores and are less likely to graduate than their peers. Beyond school, the impact of suspensions can result in longer-term negative life outcomes, including increased victimization, criminal involvement, underemployment, and incarceration.[1]

For students and teachers overall, the effect of frequent suspensions can be negative. Studies show that in schools with high rates of removing disruptive students from the classroom, students and teachers report feeling less safe when compared to their peers in schools with lower rates of removal.[2]

And for the general public, the risks of ineffective student discipline are a primary concern. In a recent Gallup poll conducted for Communities In Schools, more than half of adults surveyed thought most teachers were not prepared to handle discipline issues in the classroom and cited the consequences of this perceived lack of preparation as their greatest concern.

In a recent Gallup Poll, the general public was asked what consequences of mishandling disciplinary issues in the classroom concerned them the most.

Consequence of Mishandling Handling of Disciplinary Issues
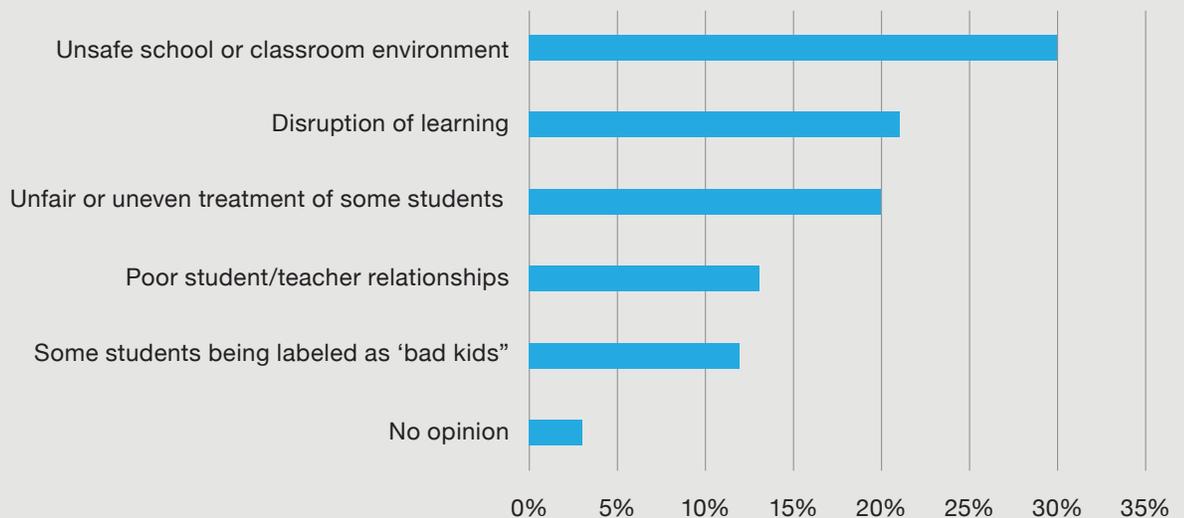
Gallup Poll, 2019

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[1]ChangeLab Solutions (2019). School Discipline Practices: A Public Health Crisis and an Opportunity for Reform.
[2]Steinberg & Lacoe (2017). What Do We Know About School Discipline Reform? Assessing the Alternatives to Suspensions and Expulsions.

Lending a Student's Voice: Middle School "Menace" to Mature Adult

"Menace." That's how R.B. Stall High School graduate Kenton Kelley describes his behavior as a youngster. His father passed away when he was five, and Kenton needed more guidance than his mother alone could provide.

"I was raising chaos everywhere. I spent a lot of time in in-school suspension, I was sent home, got written up for behavior, and sent out of class. Teachers saw me as the "bad" kid." What Kenton needed was someone he could connect with. Someone who understood what he was going through. Someone he could be "real" with.

The seeds for Kenton's turnaround were planted when he was in middle school. That's when he was first introduced to the services provided by Communities In Schools (CIS) of Charleston. In high school, he enrolled in a CIS support group for incoming freshman. With group sessions and field trips, Kenton was surrounded by CIS programs and supports and learned the skills to make wise life choices.

> **"I was raising chaos everywhere. I spent a lot of time in in-school suspension, got written up for behavior, and sent out of class."**
>
> –Kenton Kelley

Kenton the menace became Kenton the mature adult. "This is a student who wanted me to take a picture of his college acceptance letter to show it to the counselors at his old school," said Katrina Bell, his former site coordinator. She remembered how frequently CIS was called to intervene because of the student's behavior. "He's experienced a lot of growth, and a change in mindset."

Kenton is adamant that while the programs were important, it was the relationship he had with his site coordinator and the support that she provided that made a difference. "I have a long list of people to thank who never gave up on me," said Kenton.

Kenton is attending Morris College with plans to get a degree in public policy and aspirations to one day hold public office. He is more than a data point. He is proof that relationships change lives.

Photo: Communities In Schools of Charleston alumnus Kenton Kelley

Research Perspective: Does Positive School Discipline Exist?

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 Leary, Senior Principal of Research and Evaluation for Communities In Schools, explains these new approaches and how CIS contributes to their success.

Q Positive approaches to school discipline? It sounds almost like a contradiction. What does it mean and does it work?

A Positive school discipline is an approach intended to create a supportive learning environment where ALL students can thrive. Suspensions and expulsions are reserved for the most serious offenses, used as a last resort rather than a first response. Firm policies are accompanied by supportive discipline strategies that hold students accountable while keeping them engaged in school. These approaches build the capacity of both adults and students in schools to foster safe and supportive school climates. The focus is on implementing supports and programs geared toward positive discipline, such as building the trusting relationships and social and emotional skills that students (and adults) need to engage in positive interactions with others. This approach changes the narrative from punishing misbehavior to understanding causes of behavior. And it creates a focus on positive behavior and supportive, nurturing relationships.

The overall goal of positive approaches to discipline is often to repair relationships rather than to administer punishment and blame. One common approach is PBIS or Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports. Using a tiered support framework, similar to the CIS model, PBIS focuses on schoolwide strategies to improve climate as well as targeted and individualized supports for students having difficulty coping with trauma, managing and expressing their emotions, or handling stress. Specific interventions include social and emotional learning programming, positive reinforcement and rewards, and restorative practices. For teachers and students, PBIS has been shown to improve a sense of safety, reduce suspensions and discipline referrals, contribute to better classroom management and improve academic performance.

Q What does it take to implement the type of positive approach to discipline that you described?

A We need both positive disciplinary practices and trained professionals to implement them. Schools need mental health providers, counselors, social workers and site coordinators. Teachers need training to prepare for more positive and constructive interactions with students. This can include professional development focused on culturally responsive teaching, social emotional learning, trauma-informed care, and developmental relationships. Research shows that schools with mental health providers and social workers have lower suspension rates and fewer disciplinary incidents than comparable schools without these resources. Unfortunately, there just aren't enough of these professionals in schools, especially in our highest need schools. In addition, we need an "All In" mentality to do this work. This isn't just a program. It's a new approach to school discipline that impacts practice as well as policy.

Dr. Kevin Leary, Senior Principal of Research and Evaluation for Communities In Schools

Q What role does Communities In Schools play in this new positive approach to school discipline?

A CIS can be a critical partner for schools adopting positive school discipline practices. We support a full range of needs –from working with families and elementary school students to establish healthy behaviors, to teaching conflict resolution skills and facilitating peer mediation programs in middle schools, as well as running restorative circles in high school that remediate conflict and repair student/teacher and student/student relationships, to reintegrating a suspended or expelled student back into school. There are many ways CIS plays a major role in the positive disciplinary practices in schools.

We are also being asked more frequently to provide professional development to adults in the school on topics like self-care, trauma-informed schools, and classroom management. A recent study found that middle and high school students case managed by CIS, reported improved relationships with adults, engagement in school, attitudes toward school, and belief in the value of education. Research tells us that all of these are important for academic and life success. To put it simply, when ALL students stay in school, stay engaged, and have access to the supports they need, then ALL students have a better chance to succeed.

Policy Recommendations for a Whole Child Approach

Missing class time has a negative impact on student achievement, regardless of the reason. But when students miss time due to exclusionary discipline practices such as suspension or expulsion, the consequences are more severe. These students are more likely to drop out and more likely to be involved in the criminal justice system.[1] Studies show that students of color and those with disabilities are suspended and expelled at much higher rates than their peers. This disparity must be addressed to ensure all students feel safe and supported at school.[2]

Young people today face a wide range of challenges, including depression, anxiety, and exposure to trauma.

Young people today face a wide range of challenges, including depression, anxiety, and exposure to trauma, all often related to behavioral issues.[3] But when these young people are empowered with the appropriate supports to address these challenges and are provided with the necessary social and emotional skills to self-regulate behavior, the need for disciplinary referrals can be reduced.

State legislators can help by providing a balanced approach–supporting laws that limit the use of exclusionary discipline while also supporting schools' capacity to foster safe and productive learning environments.

Policymakers can contribute by supporting school-based efforts to provide students with trauma-informed care that builds protective factors like social and emotional skills and strong relationships with adults.

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[1] Government Accountability Office (2018). Discipline Disparities for Black Students, Boys, and Students with Disabilities.

[2] Ibid.

[3] SAMHSA and The National Child Traumatic Stress Network (2016). Understanding Child Trauma.

[4] Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, Pub. L. No. 114-95 § 114 Stat. 1177. Retrieved from: https://www2.ed.gov/documents/essa-act-of-1965.pdf

[5] Under ESSA, states must identify schools for Comprehensive Support and Improvement, including the lowest-performing 5 percent of schools, high schools with graduation rates less than 67 percent, and schools in which at least one subgroup is consistently underperforming. Districts will be responsible for developing plans to improve student outcomes in the identified schools, which must then be approved by the state.

[6] Under ESSA, schools will be identified for Targeted Support and Improvement when subgroups of students are significantly and consistently low-performing, as defined by the state. Schools will develop plans improve the outcomes of low-performing students, which must be approved by the district.

Recommendations for State Policy

▰ **Strengthen reporting requirements in the Every Student Succeeds Act by including both regular disaggregation and analysis of student behavior and discipline rate data.**
The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)[4] requires states and districts to produce report cards that include disaggregated data about school disciplinary actions. However, schools and districts may not regularly analyze that data to identify patterns and areas for improvement. Annual reporting of data is not enough. Better analysis will give school leaders the insights to make data-driven decisions that deliver more effective use of disciplinary actions.

▰ **Establish a statewide protocol for implementing integrated student supports.**
Research shows that quality of implementation is critical to long-term student outcomes. State policymakers can ensure high-quality implementation by establishing a protocol that defines essential practices for each component, provides guardrails, and defines outcomes.

▰ **Include trauma recovery resources in crisis response.**
Natural disasters or death of a school community member can be traumatic for young people. Community partners and mental health experts help schools reopen, provide families with access to recovery resources, deliver trauma-informed care and support to adults in schools, and provide the school community with long-term support.

▰ **Include a non-academic needs assessment in Comprehensive Support and Improvement plans.**
ESSA requires school districts to develop and implement plans for Comprehensive Support and Improvement.[5] Plans are based on a school-level needs assessment. This assessment should address both the academic and non-academic needs. A non-academic needs assessment makes school plans more effective. It provides the actionable data school leaders need to target school safety and climate issues that impede student learning.

▰ **Include a non-academic needs assessment for Targeted Support and Improvement plans.**
ESSA does not require that schools identified for Targeted Support and Improvement[6] perform a needs assessment. States and districts should support a needs assessment that examines both academic and non-academic factors. To effectively address non-academic factors, states should issue guidance and provide a template for all schools.

Our Community Footprint

In 2017-18, Communities In Schools operated in 25 states and the District of Columbia. We served 1.6 million students in 2,500 schools and 370 school districts across the country. There are 137 organizations in the CIS Network, including state offices and licensed partners.

In states where discipline or a school-related climate indicator is a focus under ESSA, more than half have a strong partner available to help them successfully address these areas of concern. This includes not only support for students but professional development for teachers and other school personnel to better equip them with positive classroom management and discipline strategies.

Midwest
168,200
students served

Northeast
43,900
students served

West
163,000
students served

Southwest
822,600
students served

Southeast
397,800
students served
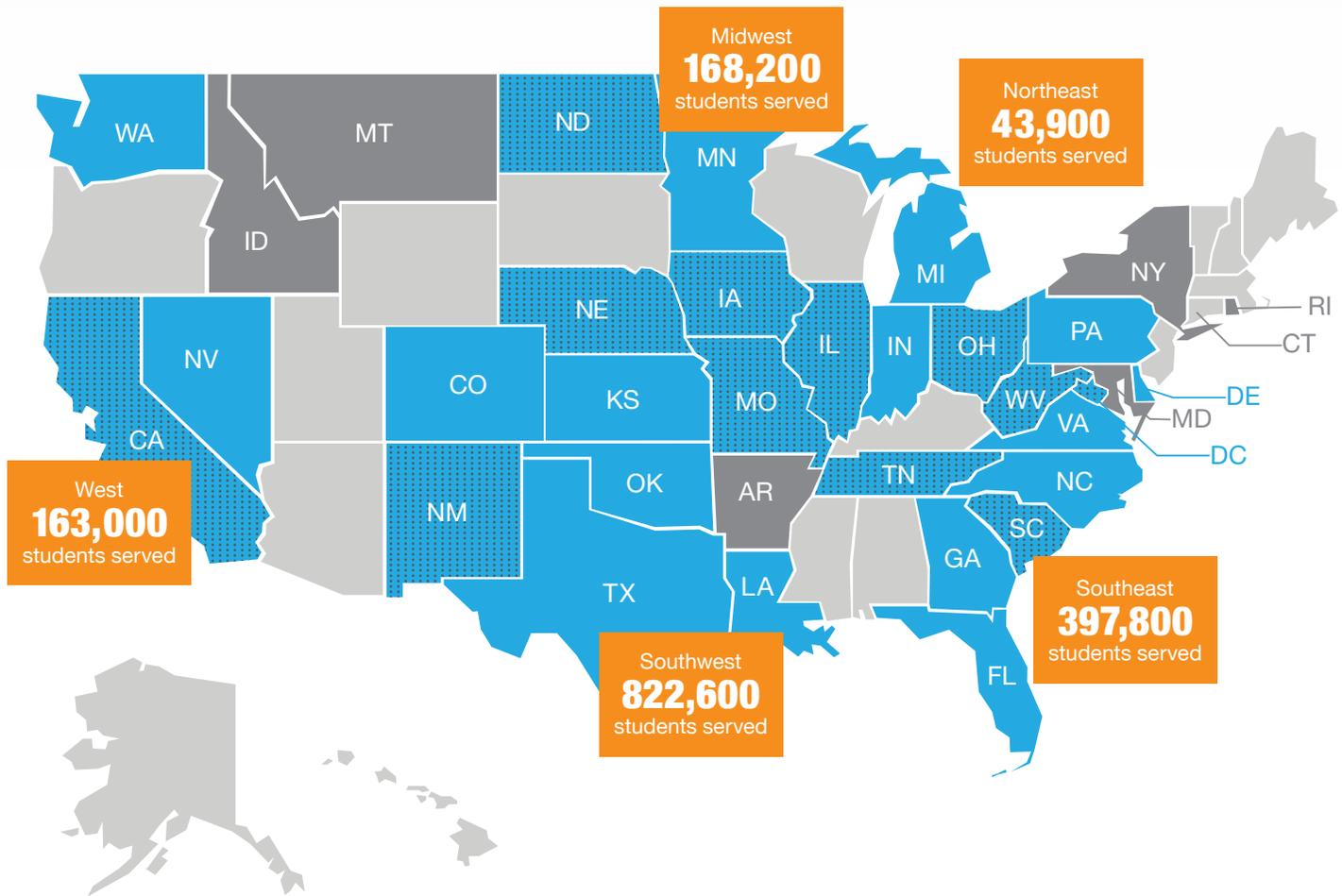
● States with discipline or school climate indicators of success

● States with Communities In Schools presence during the 2017-18 school year

● Both

North Dakota and Minnnesota joined the CIS network after 2017-18.

ALL IN FOR IMPROVING
SCHOOL DISCIPLINE
AND BEHAVIOR

Nearly half of all children nationally have experienced at least one adverse childhood experience (ACE). African American students and those living in poverty are disproportionately impacted.[1]

Children exposed to ACEs and toxic stress are more likely to have behavioral and learning issues.[2] The high number of children coming to class with trauma and toxic stress is putting an undue burden on teachers: they're not just teaching; they're having to act as counselors. Models like that of Communities In Schools help to alleviate that burden. By collaborating with community partners, CIS brings the necessary resources into schools so that teachers can do what they were trained and hired to do: teach.

At Least One Adverse Childhood Experience by Race/Ethnicity[1]
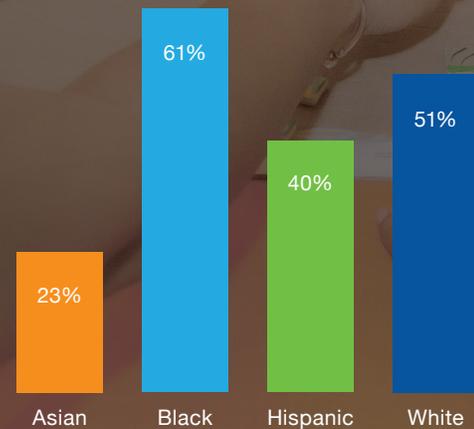
Asian	Black	Hispanic	White
23%	61%	40%	51%

Our Community-Based Approach

How Integrated Student Supports Promote Positive School Discipline and Behavior

As the name suggests, the integrated student supports model is designed to be integrated. Integrated student supports is most effective when it is integrated with a school's current structure, strategies or frameworks including, multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS), positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS), whole child initiatives, and community schools. Communities In Schools site coordinators ensure that integration. They work directly inside K-12 public schools to identify needs of students and connect them with the appropriate supports, when they need them. Whether it's building strong relationships with students, helping build positive responses to trauma, developing social and emotional skills, or connecting them to mental health services, CIS site coordinators are trained to effectively assess and address student needs. We do whatever it takes to ensure our students are successful in school and in life.

CIS AFFILIATES
Hire and train site coordinators, bring the CIS model to schools in need, and mobilize partners to provide resources.

SITE COORDINATORS
Trained professionals who work with school administrators to assess needs, develop a plan and build a team to provide supports to schools and students.

COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS
Schools, businesses and community agencies all work together with site coordinators to deliver supports to students and families.

6

PROVEN SUCCESS

We increase graduation rates, reduce the number of dropouts, and improve attendance at schools in need.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT
Analyze multiple sources of data to identify the key needs of the school and individual students.

1

PLANNING
Site coordinators lead their school support teams to develop a plan to prioritize supports that address academic and non-academic needs.

2

EVALUATION
Continuous assessment of partners and student supports by the CIS affiliate to demonstrate results and improve practice.

5

MONITORING & ADJUSTING
Site coordinator continuously monitors student and school progress and adjusts supports to optimize results.

4

3

INTEGRATED STUDENT SUPPORTS
Site coordinator and partners deliver tiers of support to the school, students and their families.

TIER 3: INDIVIDUALIZED SUPPORT
TIER 2: TARGETED PROGRAMS
TIER 1: SCHOOLWIDE SERVICES

ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE	BASIC NEEDS	BEHAVIORAL INTERVENTIONS	COLLEGE & CAREER PREP	COMMUNITY & SERVICE LEARNING
ENRICHMENT	FAMILY ENGAGEMENT	LIFE SKILLS	MENTAL HEALTH	PHYSICAL HEALTH

Building Partnerships That Serve Students

Using the integrated student supports model to create safe and enriching school environments for all students requires an active and engaged community of school leaders, teachers, counselors, school resource officers, families, and local organizations. At Communities In Schools (CIS), we build the partnerships that connect students to the resources and relationships they need to create their own success in school and in life.

This year we formed two new strategic partnerships that strengthen CIS' ability to collaborate with schools to develop more effective approaches to student discipline and behavior challenges.

CIS and Search Institute:

APPLYING THE SCIENCE OF RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Building healthy relationships between students and caring adults is at the core of CIS. Through these relationships, our site coordinators, volunteers, and partners work directly with students to develop the social and emotional competencies and skills that lead to improved behavior and school engagement. To strengthen our ability to build these critical relationships, we have partnered with Search Institute, the leading research organization for developmental relationships. With this new partnership, CIS has gained unique knowledge and insight into how to build–and help others build–stronger relationships with students.

Through the partnership, we've created a new training program, grounded in the Developmental Relationship Framework, for site coordinators, counselors, teachers, and other adults working with students. The training focuses on the framework's five key elements:

1. Expressing care ("show me that I matter");

2. Challenging growth ("push me to keep getting better");

3. Providing support ("help me complete tasks and achieve goals");

4. Sharing power ("treat me with respect and give me a say");

5. Expanding possibilities ("connect me with people and places that broaden my world").

CIS is currently using the Developmental Relationships Framework in over 50 middle schools to help support approximately 1,250 case managed students with attendance and/or behavior issues or challenges.

The CIS and Search Institute partnership will help schools better apply the science of developing relationships and support student improvements in social competence, empathy, self-regulation, self-compassion, self-worth, motivation, and engagement.

Our Schools and Partners

Schools are our most important partners. They provide Communities In Schools with the opportunity and privilege to serve nearly 1.6 million students in 2,500 schools.

- 41% Elementary schools
- 24% Middle schools
- 24% High schools
- 11% Combined schools
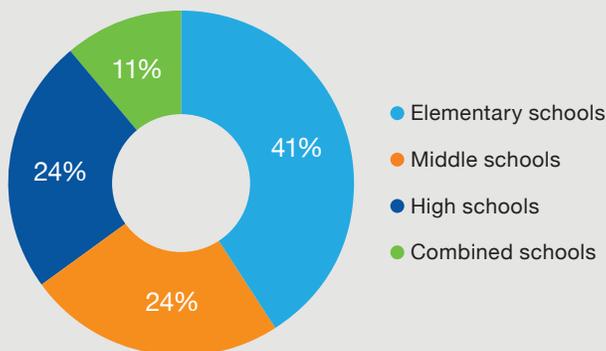
7,900 partners
deliver programs and services
to students in need

36,400 volunteers
donate their time to provide a range
of services in schools each year

Photo: Communities In Schools of Brunswick County students Christian and Giavanni

Communities In Schools and Sanford Harmony:

STARTING EARLY TO SHAPE BEHAVIOR

Research[1] shows that building students' social, emotional, and academic competencies and skills has significant benefits, including reduced incidences of delinquency, reduced rates of depression, anxiety, and risky behaviors, gains in academic achievement, development of employability skills, and improved long-term outcomes in employment, health, and civic engagement.

The goal of delivering those benefits to more students led to our new partnership with the private, nonprofit National University System to integrate the Sanford Harmony social emotional learning program in elementary schools throughout the CIS network. The PreK-6 Sanford Harmony program is designed to support students' academic and personal development success by empowering students to communicate, collaborate, embrace diversity, and resolve conflict, through the integration of evidenced-based strategies and grade-level lessons and activities. The research-based program encourages positive attitudes toward school, increases academic performance and empathy, and reduces stereotyping and aggression.

The partnership launched in school year 2018-19 with 8 local affiliates in more than 30 elementary schools. CIS site coordinators were trained on the curriculum and are implementing the program with approximately 1,000 case managed elementary students. The curriculum is also being used schoolwide to help improve school climate for more than 15,000 students. Providing students in PreK-6 with evidence-based approaches that support their social, emotional, and academic development is an important, early step to help address the discipline disparities that occur as early as preschool.

Research shows that building students' social, emotional, and academic competencies and skills has significant benefits.

[1]Aspen Institute National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development (2017). The Evidence Base for How We Learn: Supporting Students' Social, Emotional, and Academic Development.

Promising Solutions to School Discipline and Behavior

Creative Interventions:

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND DEVELOPING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS

For close to four decades, Communities In Schools (CIS) has been building strong, productive student relationships. Today, we're bringing this unique knowledge and experience to the challenges of school discipline. Whether it is through small groups, one-on-one sessions, or schoolwide activities, CIS is working across a range of activities to address school discipline by fostering social and emotional development. Here are some examples:

Check-Ins/Morning Circles. Several CIS site coordinators use these informal sessions to start the day. They are a chance for students to share what's happening outside school and an opportunity for adults to better understand students' feelings and issues. Students can also set daily goals for themselves. CIS of Chicago, CIS of Memphis, and CIS of North Texas offer Circles as a way for students to kickstart their day.

Social and Emotional Skill-Building. CIS of Central Texas provides assertive communication training to middle school students as part of case management. Students learn to be clearer and more direct in their communication, including "how I feel, what I need, and what I'm willing to do to help others help me." At Mendez middle school, site coordinators also help facilitate the Junior Leadership Program, where students in small groups work on conflict resolution skills and respect for others. The program is offered as an elective to students struggling with behavior issues and/or academics.

CIS of Chicago runs groups that help female students develop healthy relationships, focus on self-identity (i.e., who are you?), and build leadership skills, self-awareness, and self-confidence. In CIS of North Texas, site coordinators conduct leadership groups beginning in elementary school. The program started with girls with disruptive behaviors, including bullying, and is now being implemented in 16 elementary schools and three middle schools. Providing female students with an opportunity to lead in a positive way has helped them thrive. CIS of North Texas also runs a leadership program for male students that connects boys with leaders in their community. The focus is on character development and what it means to be a positive role

model. Students participating in the program have shown improved behavior and increased ability to build positive interactions with their peers.

Restorative Practices:

IMPROVING RELATIONSHIPS AND REPAIRING HARM

Peer Mediation. CIS of the Nation's Capital established a peer mediation program for middle school students. As mediators, students help their peers navigate difficult discussions and scenarios and foster peaceful approaches to resolving conflict. CIS site coordinators provide training in developmental

Photo: Communities In Schools of of Memphis site coordinator Keisha Adams and students

> *At my school, the mindset and practice is not that restorative practices have replaced traditional consequences, they act alongside them. Students still get traditional suspensions, in-class suspensions, etc., but every student also receives a restorative intervention alongside the consequence."*
>
> – Bryan Heidel, Elementary School Site Coordinator, CIS of Chicago.

relationships, conflict resolution, and leadership. Students learn new skills and are provided with the tools to better manage their emotions and behaviors, express their feelings appropriately, and communicate with others. As a result of the program, students now report feeling heard rather than being sent to in-school suspension or receiving a discipline referral. Avoiding referrals and suspensions means students spend more time in school and in the classroom.

Reflection Rooms. CIS of Memphis has established a Reflection Room—a safe place where students can go to reflect on mistakes, misconduct, and negative behaviors. The site coordinator works with students to reflect on their thinking and actions and what they might have done differently. The Reflection Room space and process helps build a trusting relationship between the student and the site coordinator. A middle school principal credits the Reflection Room with helping students grow socially and behaviorally.

In CIS of Central Texas, a similar effort goes by the name, On-Demand Conflict Resolution Room. Students at Mendez middle school can talk through issues in the room with only the site coordinator present. In addition to the relationship building benefit, this also reduces the risk of escalation. Early results are positive with a 54% reduction in in-home suspensions since implementing this and other restorative practices schoolwide.

Restorative Circles. At CIS of Memphis, site coordinators bring students, teachers, administrators, even parents and law enforcement to their Restorative Circles. This inclusive approach can have a significant impact on the student, helping them recognize the number of people who care about and support their success. Restorative circles or conferences are effective as alternatives to disciplinary action. And when assigned as part of a suspension, in- or out-of-school, they help ensure the student's successful re-integration into the school and classroom environments.

> "As we shift towards fully integrating Restorative Practices here at Kirby Middle School our partnership with Communities In Schools of Memphis has been invaluable! Our CIS staff member, Ms. Keisha Adams, has been an irreplaceable value add to our team, and has been instrumental in making our school feel like a family. Our school culture has been positively impacted by her presence and students are more invested in attending school and being responsible citizens within our building more so than ever before! As a school leader, I don't know what I'd do without her and I'm so grateful that we have CIS of Memphis as a partner in this work as we prepare students for success in college, leadership, and life!"
>
> – Marian R. Williams, Kirby Middle School Principal

In a recent Gallup Poll, the general public was asked to provide their opinions on which discipline solutions are effective. Results showed the public consistently rated positive discipline activities as more effective than negative activities. Solutions that focus on the whole child, including more access to mental health services, development of social and emotional skills, creating a positive school environment, and better training for adults in the school on these new practices were all perceived as effective.

Perceived Effectiveness of Potential Solutions to Addressing Discipline Issues in Schools
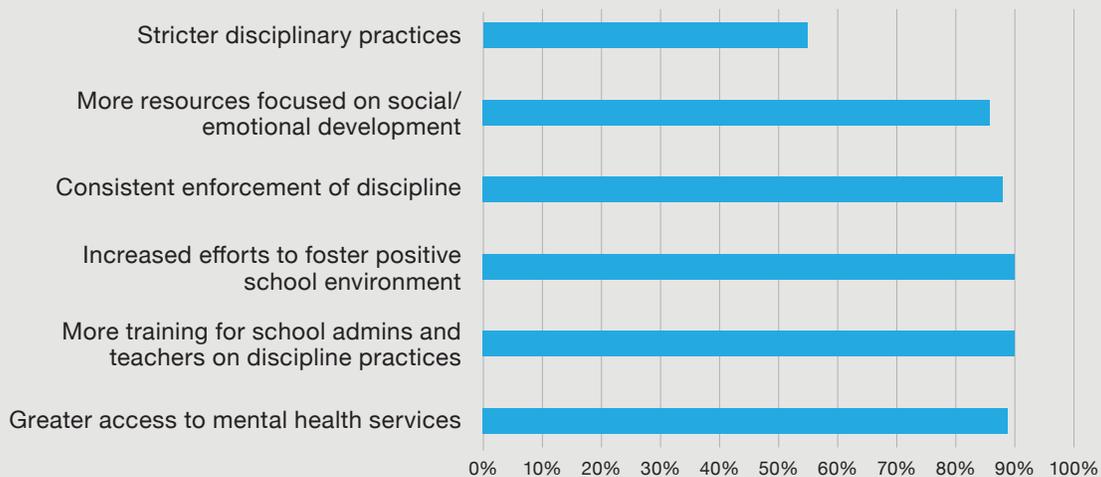
Gallup Poll, 2019

These results mirror those found in the academic research and represent many of the supports and interventions CIS has been providing to schools and students for decades. However, with the record number of students experiencing trauma, depression, and anxiety, keeping up with referrals for support is a critical challenge. Affiliates across the CIS network are continuing to find new ways to provide research-proven solutions to meet the growing needs of students.

OUTCOMES

OUR STUDENTS ARE SHOWING IMPROVEMENT IN

BEHAVIOR
AND MUCH MORE

The most common reason students are referred to Communities In Schools is poor academic performance. While this is most often the "red flag," it is seldom the only challenge the student is facing. Other challenges include problems with emotional regulation, communication, relationships with peers and teachers, as well as behavior problems and chronic absenteeism.

Regardless of the initial reason for referral to CIS, the first step in the CIS model is to determine the underlying causes of the presenting problem each student faces. With a clear and complete understanding of each student's needs, CIS then provides the resources and relationships that empower that student to come to school, stay in school, and ultimately graduate with a plan for their future. Our data consistently demonstrate that we are helping ALL students build their pathway and develop the skills to travel toward success in school and in life.

92% of Communities In Schools case-managed students met their behavior goals.

80% met attendance goals

89% met their academic goals

99% remained in school through the end of the school year

95% of students in grades K-11 were promoted to the next grade level

96% of seniors graduated or received a GED

69% of graduates planned to attend some form of post-secondary education

Source: CIS National End of Year Data; School Year 2017-18.

Our Results for Case-Managed Students by State

In every state, Communities In Schools surrounds students with a community of support and empowers them to stay in school and achieve in life. For some students, this begins with helping them improve their behavior. Last year, 96% of these students showed improvement. And the positive results don't end there. Here is a look at our outcomes across the country:

State	% Improved Behavior	% Improved Academics	% Promoted (K-11)	% Graduated (Including GED)
California	86%	73%	91%	92%
Colorado	93%	85%	97%	89%
Delaware	90%	98%	92%	92%
District of Columbia	86%	78%	97%	100%
Florida	90%	87%	91%	96%
Georgia	74%	79%	92%	97%
Illinois	79%	93%	97%	88%
Indiana	87%	85%	97%	94%
Iowa	70%	71%	99%	N/A
Kansas	84%	79%	96%	96%
Louisiana	81%	78%	81%	54%
Michigan	91%	87%	94%	97%
Missouri	72%	74%	91%	96%
Nebraska	N/A	75%	100%	92%
Nevada	85%	81%	97%	90%
New Mexico	97%	72%	87%	86%
North Carolina	87%	86%	95%	96%
Ohio	85%	81%	94%	92%
Oklahoma	93%	81%	92%	98%
Pennsylvania*	74%	76%	82%	89%
South Carolina	91%	91%	96%	100%
Tennessee	89%	89%	84%	90%
Texas	94%	93%	97%	97%
Virginia	82%	80%	95%	89%
Washington	87%	87%	98%	88%
West Virginia	81%	87%	92%	100%

*Data were received for 3 of 4 affiliates.

The Power of Positive Discipline: A CIS Alum's Story

Photo: Communities In Schools of Charlotte-Mecklenburg alumnus Jamal Tate

> "Communities In Schools didn't scrutinize me for repeatedly getting into trouble. They saw what was in me that I didn't see myself."
>
> –Jamal Tate

He knows the value of a second chance. He knows the difference it makes when adults take time to understand you and learn to handle discipline differently. He knows the value of integrating restorative practices and diversion programming into schools.

As a male student of color who did not look like the other students at his International Baccalaureate high school, Jamal's behavior was often viewed as offensive or disrespectful, not that of a bright, high-energy student trying to engage with others and express himself. Harsh responses to his behavior led him to disengage and look for acceptance and connections elsewhere. Unfortunately, this led to problems for Jamal outside of school that ultimately led to him being "pushed" out of school.

Jamal's story is a striking example of how exclusionary disciplinary policies and practices can fail students. He recalls the irony of being suspended. He was skipping school because he didn't want to be there, didn't feel welcome, and felt teachers didn't understand him. Yet the school's response to Jamal was to suspend him. "To give the students what they want rather than try to understand why they didn't want to be at school in the first place. It just didn't make sense to me," says Jamal. For Jamal, he fell further behind, became more disengaged and more withdrawn.

This pattern continued until he was arrested for the third time and spent 2 months in jail. This is when his journey with Communities In Schools (CIS) began. CIS worked in the jail and partnered with his teachers and his mom to make sure he kept up with his school work. When Jamal was released and returned to a new school, the CIS site coordinator at the school helped him establish relationships with school administrators, school resource officers and, counselors. CIS created a sense of community for him and surrounded him with supports.

His site coordinator showed him his options and helped him see new, expanded possibilities for himself. According to Jamal, "CIS doesn't tell students what they can and can't do. Instead, they present students with opportunities and let them decide for themselves." Jamal's site coordinator did just that; equipped him with the information and tools he needed to make his own decisions. Jamal took control of his future. He completed a college aptitude test, did well, enrolled in a summer bridge program and started community college.

CIS helped change how Jamal saw himself. "Communities In Schools didn't scrutinize me for repeatedly getting into trouble. They saw what was in me that I didn't see myself."

He has since become a life coach for others like him and co-founded a company called Bridging Your Excellence that does re-entry work with his local police department. The detective who questioned him when he was first arrested is now one of his mentors.

The program offers support to first-time, non-violent offenders and focuses on character education, conflict resolution, financial literacy, leadership skills, and more. Jamal is currently pursuing a master's degree in counseling with a focus in substance abuse and play therapy.

Ask Jamal what advice he'd offer to adults working with students and the answer comes from first-hand knowledge. "Show compassion, understanding, and flexibility. Don't rush to judgement. Be somewhat risk-tolerant. Hold kids accountable and set expectations but be willing to listen and give second chances."

Sound advice from someone who didn't let his past define his future.

"Hold kids accountable and set expectations but be willing to listen and give second chances."

–Jamal Tate

Photo: Director of College and Alumni Initiatives for Communities In Schools of South Central Texas Liberty Nicholas and Communities In Schools of Charlotte-Mecklenburg alumnus Jamal Tate

Photo: Communities In Schools of Charlotte student Khamiah, CIS Student Innovation Challenge participant

Looking to Students for Answers

In fall 2018, Communities In Schools launched its first Student Innovation Challenge. Students were challenged to find new, innovative solutions to problems they face in school. For example, one of the questions asked was, "How can we better prevent behavioral problems in schools?" Students learned to use Design Thinking to conceive and develop their ideas. Team Umoja ("unity" in Swahili) from CIS of the Nation's Capital proposed a Mindfulness and Wellness Suite in their high school to improve school climate and culture. Students would be trained in mindfulness techniques and the suite would be a safe space for students to develop the skills to better manage their emotions and behaviors.

Another team from CIS of Hampton Roads proposed several strategies to improve school climate and behavior, including creating a No Judgment Zone in classrooms where students would be free to express themselves without fear of judgment. Another idea was to develop a campaign called "I Am Me" to improve students' self-esteem. The campaign was designed to empower students to embrace who they are and share their "scars" and their stories. The students emphasized how important it is that we all look beneath the surface and understand what others are going through before judging.

Professional Development Solutions for the Adults in Schools

It all starts with getting the adults to think differently. That's the clear and consistent message from our local affiliates that are training adults in schools as part of overall positive school discipline. School administrators recognize the need for a mindset shift among the adults in their schools. For example, before removing students from a classroom, it is important to ask, "what is going on with this student? Is the behavior a reaction to something that is happening outside the classroom?" Looking at student behavior through a trauma-informed and social and emotional lens changes perspectives. Classrooms look different. Hallways look different. And disciplinary practices look different.

Before removing students from a classroom, it is important to ask, what is going on with this student.

Communities In Schools (CIS) of Central Texas has expanded their assertive communications training to teachers. Developing this set of skills has been shown to work well for teachers with combative students. It aids teachers in getting students to open up and helps students recognize that someone cares about them. Students hear the messages, "I'm here for you," "I'm concerned about how you feel," and "let's talk about it." This affiliate also offers training for teachers on self-care, stress management, and trauma-informed classroom management.

In San Antonio, CIS is providing a range of training to teachers and other adults in schools including, trauma-informed care and practices, social emotional awareness, and mental health first-aid. A new pilot program, BASE (Building Awareness of Social Emotional) Wellness is being delivered in high school in partnership with Clarity Child Guidance Center. The program includes an online platform where youth development professionals and educators can access resources to help them identify and respond to the mental health needs of students. CIS provides a BASE coach who works with adults and teach them different ways to create calmer, more peaceful classroom environments.

Photo: Communities In Schools Leadership Town Hall 2017

" *For years, we worked with the children and saw that the work we were doing with those kids would get walked back because the adults in their ecosystem (e.g., teachers, school administrators, parents) didn't have a common language, a common framework, or a common understanding of how trauma impacts a student's behavioral health outcomes. We learned that if we wanted to be successful, we had to align others in the ecosystem behind certain practices and theories of change. We were already doing this with our own staff, so expanding our training to others was a natural fit for us.*"

– Lauren Geraghty, Director of Strategic Impact Initiatives, CIS of San Antonio

What's Next
FOR COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS

Here at CIS, we will continue to work in partnership with schools and communities across the country to incorporate Integrated Student Supports as part of standard school discipline practices and will advocate for policies that make this possible. Specifically, we will study what works, advocate for legislation recognizing the whole child, and bring best practices to schools that focus on strengthening relationships for students and adults, developing supportive and safe school climates, and building social, emotional, and academic competencies for students.

Whether through direct CIS supports to students, brokering of community partners, or training of adults, our overall goal is to help create the necessary conditions for success; which allow ALL students to learn and ALL teachers to teach.

Learn more about our work at CommunitiesInSchools.org.

Photo: Communities In Schools of Austin students Genesis, Sylvia, Stefanie, Lorne, and Yaniecia

WHAT WE ARE MADE OF

What We Are Made Of is a mosaic portrait series created to uplift student voices and explore the multi-layered experiences of youth across America.

Communities In Schools partnered with artist Jason Mecier to use the medium of mosaic art to illustrate the vital role we all play in seeing the story within every student. Each mosaic portrait is assembled with elements from students' lives that represent who they are as individuals as well as the services that helped them succeed.
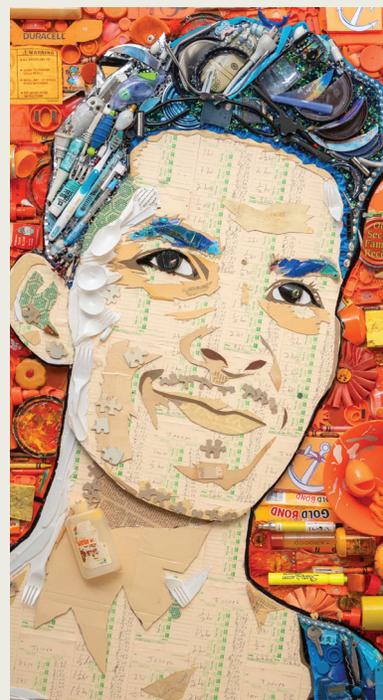
Learn more about our year-long campaign at **WhatWeAreMadeOf.us**
Open your camera phone to scan the QR code and visit the site.

Communities
In Schools