



PRESS RELEASE
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**N.C. Dept. of Public Instruction awards \$150,000 to
Communities In Schools for second Performance Learning Center®**

CHARLOTTE, N.C. - Communities In Schools of Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Inc. (CIS), in partnership with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, recently received a grant of \$150,000 from the N.C. Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) to open a second Performance Learning Center® (PLC) high school in Charlotte. The PLC is a small, nontraditional high school for students who are not succeeding in the traditional high school format and are at risk for dropping out. The \$150,000 grant will underwrite a portion of the one-time start-up costs associated with opening a new PLC, including online instructional curriculum, instructional technology, and curriculum resource materials.

The PLC model was developed by Communities In Schools of Georgia, Inc., in 2002 and today, there are 29 sites across the state of Georgia, four in North Carolina, one in Virginia, and one in Washington, D.C. Charlotte's existing PLC, the first in North Carolina, opened in August 2006 in the historic Parks Hutchison School building on N. Graham Street. In its first year, the school exceeded expectations and demonstrated that the PLC model is a vital component of Charlotte's public schools. Currently there is a waiting list of more than 60 students wishing to attend a PLC in Charlotte-Mecklenburg.

Sherry Sigmon, a long-time CMS principal at Coulwood Middle School, left Coulwood in 2006 to become principal at Charlotte's first PLC. Sigmon will now move to the new PLC, bringing her valuable experience of opening and operating the first PLC for the past two years.

"The addition of a second Performance Learning Center® in Charlotte will enable us to reach more students who have not been successful in the traditional high school setting," said Sigmon. "I am thrilled to be a part of opening the new site and look forward to learning from and growing with the new school family."

Bill Anderson, Executive Director of Communities In Schools-Charlotte, said the success of the first PLC in Charlotte was instrumental in securing the grant for the second PLC.

"Walk the halls at the current PLC for five minutes and the students will tell you what a difference this school has made in their lives," said Anderson. "For many of them, the staff is like family. It's a testament to Sherry Sigmon and her staff that the students speak so highly of the school and there's a waiting list to get in."

"Communities In Schools is proud to partner with CMS in the PLC initiatives and we look forward to working together to support more students at the new PLC," Anderson added.

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About Communities In Schools of Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Inc.

Communities In Schools of Charlotte-Mecklenburg (CIS) is part of the nation's leading dropout prevention network, helping young people stay in school, successfully learn, and prepare for life by connecting needed community resources with schools. Since 1985, CIS has mobilized locally existing resources and coordinated partnerships with health and human service agencies to help thousands of at-risk students overcome academic, social, and economic barriers. CIS currently provides services to 4,000 students in 33 Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. CIS is funded in part by the United Way of Central Carolinas, Mecklenburg County, and the Charlotte Merchants Foundation, as well as corporations, civic and faith organizations, and individuals. www.cischarlotte.org