Our Mission
Communities In Schools surrounds students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life.

Our Vision
We envision a community where every child and family thrives and is positioned for positive economic mobility.

We Believe
We believe that transformative relationships are key to unlocking a student’s potential. We will succeed by including in our strategies, ingraining in our culture, and reflecting in our behaviors, principles and practices of diversity, equity, and inclusion. As a result, we break down immediate and systemic barriers to create and sustain equitable outcomes.

Communities In Schools® (CIS™) is a national organization operating in more than 2,900 schools nationwide that ensures every student – regardless of race, zip code, or socioeconomic background – has what they need to realize their potential in school and beyond. CIS connects students to caring adults and community resources that help them see, confront, and overcome the barriers that stand between them and a brighter future.

Communities In Schools of Charlotte-Mecklenburg (CIS-Charlotte) is an affiliate of the national organization, working locally inside 50+ Charlotte-Mecklenburg (CMS) schools. Together, with our CIS affiliates across the country, we are creating a powerful change movement made up of peers, students, and alumni committed to building an equitable path to education for future generations.

CIS-Charlotte Impact 2019-20 SCHOOL YEAR
Despite the significant impact of the pandemic during the last three months of the 2019-20 school year, including the immediate priority to support students’ and families’ critical needs, we were able to achieve the following outcomes for 2019-20, which compare very favorably to outcomes of previous years:

- 6,000+ students received targeted case-management services in 54 CMS schools.
- 97% were promoted to the next grade.
- 33,000+ additional students received broad, school-wide services.
- 82% met Average Daily Attendance (ADA).
- 616 CIS seniors graduated.
- 99% of CIS students stayed in school.
- 600+ partner companies, groups, and individuals donated their time or resources.
Dear Friends,

This past year was certainly unparalleled. The challenges spurred by a global pandemic, racial reckoning, and economic uncertainties tested everyone’s optimism and resiliency. The Communities In Schools team and our amazing students faced both hurdles and opportunities brought on by our school district’s swift transition to remote instruction. While many of our students struggled to stay engaged, the CIS team doubled-down to increase our levels of support.

In the midst of these challenges, I had the distinct pleasure of joining CIS. Since my arrival in October, I have been inspired by the team’s tireless drive to provide services and supports to our students and their families. This difficult year has evoked a renewed sense of innovation and determination for our agency. We are more committed than ever to help address learning loss and create equitable learning environments that benefit all students.

Due to the uniqueness of 2020, this year’s annual report will focus on CIS’ response to the pandemic. We will illuminate the ways that we have pivoted and adapted our services to meet the critical needs of our students and families. The report will also highlight the community stakeholders who have embraced our students during these trying times. We are immensely grateful for the generosity of congregations, foundations, businesses, individuals and partners who invested time and treasure to ensure that our team could continue to nourish the talents and dreams of our students.

With numerous vaccine rollouts and schools reopening, I am optimistic about what the future holds. My optimism is tempered, however, by a grave concern about what it will take for our students to recover after being away from in-person learning for nearly a year. At CIS, we are not trying to “save” or “rescue” our students. We stand ready to support our scholars and help break down any barriers they face. Our resilient students have inherent abilities and talents. CIS’ role is to help them uncover those talents, aim high, stay strong and dream big.

Thank you for joining us in this important work. I ask that you continue to support our efforts to empower our kids to stay in school and achieve in life.

Men Tchaas Ari, President and CEO

“At CMS, we understand the value that CIS brings. Meaningful connections with a trusted and caring adult is critical, and this is exactly what CIS continues to do for our kids. CIS gives students a sense of hope – it is something we all need now, more than ever.”

– Earnest J. Winston
Superintendent
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools
On Friday, March 13, 2020, CMS students were sent home with their textbooks and laptops in response to the COVID pandemic. CIS staff were also instructed to head home that day. Our team left with laptops and critical files to ensure that they could stay in contact with students and their families. At that time, no one could have imagined that we would be working remotely for nearly a year. We focused our efforts on reaching out to CIS students and families as quickly as possible to offer support and address their most urgent needs. Our team quickly developed a comprehensive plan. By Tuesday, March 17, CIS deployed an “Emergency Needs Assessment” for every CIS family.

Over the next eight weeks, our site staff completed 6,117 Emergency Needs Assessments. The most immediate, critical needs were around food security, technological support, financial assistance, and personal protection equipment (PPE). Everyone on our team rallied together to make sure these needs were met. We worked to identify students living in transitional housing and partnered with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools (CMS) and the Mecklenburg County Sheriff’s Office to deliver 7,000 meals during the first eight days of the pandemic. By the end of the academic year, a total of 41,000 meals and 1,450 PPE/hygiene kits were delivered.

Virtual Learning and Social-Emotional Support
In addition to meals and supplies, our staff quickly became “tech support” for our students and their families. While CMS did an incredible job in ensuring families possessed the technology equipment that they needed, many students and their caregivers needed individualized support from our team to ensure equipment was properly set up and connected to the internet. CIS staff paid special attention to high school students, especially seniors, as they needed assistance to finalize their post-secondary plans. Our team was essential in helping them with the college admissions and scholarship process. CIS staff became an invaluable “go to” resource for both students and their caregivers in this new virtual environment.

Transitioning so quickly to a remote learning environment was stressful, not only for our students but also for our families. As the pandemic and remote learning wore on, it was clear that students and families were experiencing high levels of stress and isolation. We responded by increasing our social-emotional supports, such as more phone calls and home visits, opportunities for social interaction through family activities and game nights on Zoom, and referrals to mental health services as needed.

Current Situation: Chronic Absenteeism and Learning Loss
Local and national data reveal that chronic absenteeism nearly doubled for many students during the pandemic. This translated to 29% of CIS students being identified as “chronically absent” in December 2020. For context, in 2019 that figure was 16%. Research shows that chronic absenteeism is a key indicator in predicting future outcomes.

The data also suggest that there will be significant learning loss for students. Our agency is laser-focused on reversing these trends. The last thing we want is for the pandemic to worsen disparities that already exist among the students we serve. We are committed to ensuring that educational opportunities and access are equitable for all children.

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM IN CMS - CURRENT YEAR VS. PRIOR YEAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>2019-20</th>
<th>2020-21</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English learners</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CMS Data via Charlotte.Axios.com, 1/28/21. Chronic absenteeism = missing 10% or more of enrolled days.
Innovation Driving Our Work Forward
Whether our students transition back into schools or remain in remote learning, CIS is committed to ensuring they are ready to engage. We are collaborating with principals and district leadership to determine how best to partner to alleviate learning loss and support students. One positive outcome of the pandemic is our sharpened focus on innovation. As we equip our team with trainings to implement new interventions, we are confident these new practices will reduce barriers to student success and contribute towards a more equitable educational landscape. We are excited to share the following new initiatives – all designed to boost student engagement and address issues of inequity:

DESSA Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Assessment Tool – In our efforts to combat stressors associated with virtual earning and isolation, our team has piloted the DESSA (Devereaux Student Strengths Assessment) platform. DESSA allows us to quantify the amount of social-emotional supports our students need, enabling us to provide the appropriate interventions in our quest to serve the whole child.

Ascend Goal-Based Student Engagement Software – This gaming-style platform is designed to increase student engagement and connect students, CIS Site Coordinators, parents and mentors into a virtual village of support. Ascend lets students set SMART goals for academic achievement and facilitates career exploration. We are excited to be the first CIS affiliate in the nation to utilize the software, as it will allow us to quantify student and parent engagement for the first time. We are currently piloting it with 200 CIS high school students and eagerly await the results from this initial phase of implementation.

School Environment Project – In partnership with CMS and UNC-Charlotte, CIS is conducting a first of its kind study on how to measure and improve the school environment. This timely study will evaluate both the in-person and virtual school environments. The goal is to improve the equity of learning conditions and provide our team with the most effective ways to support students.

In Summary
School closures and remote learning will likely have a long and significant impact on many of our students. The pandemic has exacerbated existing inequities and widened the academic achievement gap. We know that our services are needed now more than ever; however, we must reiterate that our mission is not to “save” our kids, as they are talented, strong and resilient. Our commitment is to remove the barriers that hold our children back and to nurture their strengths and dreams. With your support, CIS will build upon our 35+ year history of empowering students and helping them succeed. Together, we will ensure that all students reengage and that learning loss is kept to a minimum.
Financial Summary
Communities In Schools of Charlotte-Mecklenburg, Inc.
July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020*

Financial Support by Source    FY 2020
• Individuals/Family Foundations  2,093,742
• Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools  1,713,300
• Corporations/Organizations     1,477,957
• Mecklenburg County             925,094
• Federal Government             438,822
• Charlotte Merchants Foundation 400,000
• State of North Carolina        313,590
• Private Foundations            278,500
• Religious Organizations/Civic Groups 245,984

Total**                        $7,886,989

Functional Expenses
• Program Services              6,425,496
• Management/General            751,464
• Fundraising                   584,558

Total**                        $7,761,518

*Based on 990 prepared by C. DeWitt Foard and Company.
** Current funding from United Way of Central Carolinas was booked in the previous fiscal year.
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- Mr. Matthew G. Jelnicky
- Mr. Tom Joseph

*Denotes Leadership Level Multi-year Gift

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**Special thanks to the following for their financial support from July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020:**

- Mr. and Mrs. Matthew G. Jelnicky
- Ms. Jenny Hutchison
- Mr. Tom Joseph
All students in CMS have been impacted by the pandemic and the shift to virtual learning, but the students served by CIS have faced increased challenges and additional barriers to a successful learning environment. **CIS has been innovative in its response and pivoted their services to meet the ever-changing needs of students. Their work has been both highly responsive and forward thinking.**

Earnest J. Winston
CMS Superintendent
Financial Donors, continued

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*Denotes Leadership Level Multi-year Gift
With CIS, you don’t have to be afraid of who you are – I know I am with loving and supportive people. CIS has shown me that love can come from anyone, no matter their race or gender. What truly matters is what’s in your heart.”

Ashanti Douglas
CIS student at Myers Park High School
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Communities In Schools is a natural fit for our company and LPL Financial Foundation’s mission to increase access to career pathways for underresourced teens and young adults. While we are proud to support CIS with financial donations, we are equally gratified to know that our employees find volunteering with CIS a truly rewarding experience, whether participating in a financial literacy workshop with students or collecting supplies for families.”

Andy Kalbaugh
Managing Director & Divisional President, LPL Financial
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We love partnering with CIS at Merry Oaks Academy. Our Site Coordinator offers guidance with project ideas and helps us with all the logistics. Our projects have become an important and joyful part of our church life. This partnership is especially rewarding because it helps all of us – the members of our congregation and the families we help – feel more connected to each other, as well as to the larger community.”

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Thanks to our formal partnership with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, we have the opportunity to facilitate relationships between local organizations and students who need their services. The following represent some of the many organizations and groups with whom we collaborated and/or made referrals to provide children and their families with needed resources.

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Mecklenburg County and various departments (e.g. Behavioral Health, Community Support Services, Parks and Recreation, Public Health, Social Services, Community Resource Center)
Mecklenburg County Crisis (CriSyS)
Mecklenburg County Sheriff’s Office
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Mental Health America of Central Carolinas
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Red Ventures
Wells Fargo
October 5th, 2019 was a lovely evening for enjoying our sold-out “All In For Kids” event at The Fillmore. Everyone had a great time and we are grateful to all who attended. Special thanks to our Party Hosts, Event Sponsors, and especially our Event Co-chairs, Lindsay Carter and Rad von Werssowetz, who led the way for a spectacular and successful evening! Who knew this would be the last in-person event we hosted for a long while?!
Dine Out For Kids®

With everything that transpired in 2020, we found it necessary to cancel one of our signature events, Dine Out For Kids®. This was the first time in the event’s 20+ year history that we were unable to host the celebration. Special thanks to Bank of America, our Title Sponsor, who supported our team’s decision to cancel the event. Their decision to remain our Title Sponsor is indicative of their commitment to CIS and our kids.

We are excited for the day when we can come together again for this important cause – supporting local students and our local restaurants! Stay tuned – Dine Out For Kids® will be back!

School Tools

The pandemic was no match for a record-breaking year for the School Tools Campaign! School supplies and financial donations increased substantially to collect over 3,315,000 items for students across the 22-county region. CIS is proud to partner with WSOC-TV and Classroom Central to host School Tools annually. We are especially grateful for the community’s ongoing generosity.

WSOC-TV and the Partners of Channel 9 Family Focus:
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Social Capital Coordinator

Kenyatta Bigger  
Talent Retention Manager

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Daryle Clark  
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Director of Program Operations, Check & Connect

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Senior Accountant

Nedra Draughn  
Special Projects Manager

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Director of Executive Operations and Board Governance

Anna Godwin  
Major Gifts Officer

Romy Graham  
Director of Grants

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Program Assistant, Check & Connect, Intensive Case Manager & Newcomer Services

LeSheika Hayes  
Data Support Coach

Suzanne Hunt  
Director of Program Operations, Youth Development Coordinator - High School

May Johnston  
Director of Public Relations & Marketing

Braxton Koblick  
Executive Communications Assistant

Andrew Ladd  
Vice President, Planning and Agency Partnerships

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Director of Program Operations, Educational & Career Coach

Steffanie Lewis  
Director of Program Operations, Safe Journey/Teen Parenting Services

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Program Assistant, Youth Development Coordinator and Educational Career Coach

Lakia Roseborough  
Program Assistant, Safe Journey

Gillian Small  
Research and Evaluation Analyst

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Office Manager

Karen Sutton  
Social Capital Team Lead

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Volunteer Coordinator – West Charlotte High School

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Yolanda Williamson  
Accounting Manager

Marian Yates  
Vice President, School Relations and Risk Management

Central Office Team

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Yolanda Williamson  
Accounting Manager

Marian Yates  
Vice President, School Relations and Risk Management
# Direct Services Team

**SITE COORDINATORS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annette Abrams</th>
<th>Tyrece Edwards</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brittney Altavilla</td>
<td>Carlos Figueroa-Valentin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abraham Arias</td>
<td>Brooke Frazier</td>
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<td>Carlea Atkinson</td>
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<td>Jasmin Harris</td>
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<td>Willie Hawkins</td>
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<td>Carla Isaac</td>
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<td>Qunesha Davis</td>
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<td>LaJoi Young</td>
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**TRIO TALENT SEARCH COUNSELORS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alexis Bibbs</th>
<th>LaQuetia Hollis</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ronnie Compton</td>
<td>LaKendra Phifer</td>
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**SAFE JOURNEY CASE MANAGERS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lisa Hollis</th>
<th>India Perez</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brandi Thompson</td>
<td>Katie Vinson</td>
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### CIS School Sites

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<tr>
<th>ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS</th>
<th>PK – 8 SCHOOLS</th>
<th>MIDDLE SCHOOLS</th>
<th>HIGH SCHOOLS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albemarle Road</td>
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<td>Berryhill</td>
<td>Cochrane / iMeck (6-12)</td>
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<td>Coulwood</td>
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<td>Governor’s Village</td>
<td>Eastway</td>
<td>Harding</td>
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<td>Cotswold</td>
<td>Marie G. Davis</td>
<td>James Martin</td>
<td>Hopewell*</td>
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<td>Hidden Valley</td>
<td>Thomasboro</td>
<td>Martin Luther King, Jr.</td>
<td>Independence</td>
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<td>Highland Renaissance</td>
<td>Walter G. Byers</td>
<td>McClintock</td>
<td>Mallard Creek*</td>
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<td>Quail Hollow</td>
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<td>Newell</td>
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<td>Ranson</td>
<td>North Mecklenburg*</td>
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<td>Rama Road</td>
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<td>Sedgefield</td>
<td>Olympic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reid Park</td>
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<td>Whitewater</td>
<td>Performance Learning Center®</td>
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<td>Shamrock Gardens</td>
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*Safe Journey (teen parents) program only at these schools.

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### Our Mission

IS TO SURROUND STUDENTS WITH A COMMUNITY OF SUPPORT, EMPOWERING THEM TO STAY IN SCHOOL AND ACHIEVE IN LIFE.