



Communities In Schools' Recommendation for Inclusion in the Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

The Problemⁱ:

- Less than three-quarters of the students who enter ninth grade graduate four years later, resulting in 1.2 million dropouts each year. Low-income and minority students make up a disproportionate share of this number.
- Individuals who do not finish high school earn on average \$1 million less over a lifetime than college graduates.
- This year's 1.2 million dropouts will cost the nation \$312 billion in lost wages, taxes and productivity over their lifetimes.

A Solution:

- For more than 30, Communities In Schools has helped students at greatest risk of dropping out stay in school by identifying and addressing the unmet needs of these children and their families. Rather than duplicating services or competing with other youth-serving organizations and agencies, Communities In Schools mobilizes existing community resources and fosters cooperative partnerships for the benefit of students and families. Approximately 16,000 community partners have provided services throughout the network.
- Communities In Schools has 190 local affiliates across the country. About 1.3 million students at nearly 3,000 sites in 25 states and the District of Columbia received services. Approximately 53,000 volunteers contributed more than 2 million hours of their time – nearly a \$46 million value – to Communities In Schools.
- Because of Communities In Schools:
 - 88 percent of students monitored for promotion risk were promoted to the next grade.
 - 82 percent of students met their reduction in high-risk behavior goals.
 - 98 percent of students monitored as potential dropouts stayed in school at the end of the 2009-2010 school year.
 - 87 percent of monitored seniors graduated.
 - A higher percentage of fourth and eighth grade students reached proficiency in reading and math.

Communities In Schools' Request for Inclusion in the Reauthorization of ESEA:

Within the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, we are seeking the inclusion of a specific competitive grant program for schools and nonprofits working together to provide integrated student services.

The grant should:

- Include a requirement that any program funded have significant evidence-based research and rigorous accountability to ensure adequate protection of taxpayer dollars.
- Be allowable for all schools (including rural schools), especially those schools undergoing a major turnaround or transformation.
- Be available only for integrated student services. If a school/nonprofit partnership chooses not to implement integrated student services, then the resources are not available for other uses.
- Be of sufficient repurposed funding or new resources to ensure that it offers a substantial incentive for schools and nonprofits to partner together.

What Makes Communities In Schools Different:

- **College Ready** – 98 percent of students we serve remain in school and 79 percent of our students go on to post-secondary education. Roughly 11 percent enter the workforce and 4 percent go into the military.
- **Locally-controlled Model** – We establish a local 501(c)3 organization and a board populated by local stakeholders to help students utilize local programs and resources. Communities In Schools’ model is adaptable to urban, rural or suburban communities. *We only go to those communities that request our presence.*

Cost-Effective – One-third of Communities In Schools affiliates operate on a budget of \$200,000 or less. During the 2009-2010 school year, the average annual cost per student was \$167. This is an impressive return on investment since dropouts cost the federal government more than \$260,000 over their lifetimes in lost tax revenues and additional social services.^[1]

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- **Rigorous Accountability Standards** – Communities In Schools is a data-driven organization. We measure, monitor and report on the performances of our students, our site coordinators, our local affiliates and state offices. Communities In Schools has implemented the Total Quality System (TQS) standards to ensure uniform quality and improved outcomes for the students we serve. We provide training for staff, and site coordinators must complete a stringent certification processes that includes online and

in-person training. In addition, there are continuing education requirements currently under development to ensure our site coordinators are at the leading edge of best practices.

- **Independently Evaluated By ICF International** – The ICF International study of Communities In Schools was the most comprehensive evaluation of dropout prevention programs in history. Their conclusion: The Communities In Schools model demonstrated the strongest reduction in dropout rates among all existing fully scaled dropout prevention programs in the United States.

Specific findings included:

- Communities In Schools’ positive effect on both dropout rates and graduation rates is unique among dropout prevention programs.
 - The higher the level of fidelity to the Communities In Schools model, the greater the effects; validating the power of the model.
 - Positive effects accrued to schools across states, settings (urban, suburban, rural), grade levels and ethnicities.
 - The Austin randomized controlled trial demonstrated a reduction in student dropout rates that was nearly three times the What Works Clearinghouse threshold for “substantively important” effects.
- **National and Diverse** – Communities In Schools site coordinators are at work in 25 states and the District of Columbia. The range of schools served means that our model is proven across a wide range of educational experiences and a diverse student population. More than 80 percent of students served are ethnic minorities and 87 percent are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. In addition to a strong urban presence, Communities In Schools serves children in military communities across the Southeast, and 30 percent of students served live in rural locations.
 - **Supported By Teachers and Educators** – Independent surveys of teachers in the schools we serve revealed more than two-thirds strongly support the work of Communities In Schools and repeatedly cite the ability of the organization to “free teachers up to teach.” The American Association of School Administrators has endorsed Communities In Schools as a critical part of school turnaround and transformation.

Data excerpted from *2009-2010 Results from the Communities In Schools Network*.

ⁱ Statistics provided by the Alliance for Excellent Education (<http://www.all4ed.org>).

^[i] Ibid

“Communities In Schools Proposal for Inclusion in the Reauthorization Elementary and Secondary Education Act”