

# Teaching with CIS: A Survey of Educators' Experiences in CIS Schools



## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In 2024, the Communities In Schools® (CIS®) National Office launched a survey to understand teachers' experiences in schools with CIS, including their job satisfaction, engagement with teaching, and their perceptions of and experiences with CIS. The study also aimed to identify common challenges faced by teachers, how CIS helps to address those challenges, and how CIS can better support teachers.

## STUDY OVERVIEW

**Survey Development and Administration:** CIS National developed a 28-item survey to assess key aspects of teachers' experiences in schools served by CIS including teacher retention, job satisfaction and engagement, perceptions of CIS, and the role of CIS in addressing challenges in schools. The survey was completed by 1,392 teachers from 174 CIS-affiliated schools across 15 states between March and May 2024.

## KEY FINDINGS

**Teacher Retention:** A majority of teachers at CIS schools expressed a strong commitment to their profession. **About 66% of teachers indicated that they would advise their younger selves to pursue teaching, and 71% reported that they do not plan to leave the profession in the next two years.**

**Teachers' Job Satisfaction and Engagement:** The survey asked teachers to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements that assessed their satisfaction and engagement with their jobs, such as "I enjoy teaching", "I feel fulfilled by teaching", and "I am satisfied with my job". **Overall, teachers reported a high level of satisfaction and engagement with their work with 82% to 99% of teachers at CIS schools agreeing or strongly agreeing with all the statements.** A detailed overview of items can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Teachers' Job Satisfaction and Engagement	Statement Agreement %
I try my hardest to perform well while teaching.	99%
I try to help my students feel excited about learning.	98%
I understand how students' experiences in my class can affect their feelings about learning in general.	98%
I have a clear understanding of what is expected of me as a teacher.	96%
I talk with my students about things other than what we are doing in class.	96%
I enjoy teaching.	96%
I enjoy working with my colleagues at this school.	93%
I am motivated to contribute more than what is expected of me at this school.	90%
I look forward to teaching.	92%
I make myself available to my students outside of class time.	88%
I feel fulfilled by teaching.	88%
I feel like I belong at this school.	87%
People at this school care about me.	89%
I am satisfied with my job.	86%
I feel supported by administrators at this school.	82%
I have the professional development that I need to effectively teach my students.	82%

**Perceptions of CIS:** The majority of the teachers (59%) at CIS schools reported being moderately or extremely familiar with CIS. Only 3% of teachers indicated no familiarity. **Among those who were familiar with CIS, 82% agreed that CIS is an important or very important resource in their schools. Overall, teachers had a positive view of CIS as indicated by a willingness to recommend CIS to other schools, acknowledging that CIS has benefited their school community, and agreeing that CIS is an integral part of their schools.** An overview of findings from items related to teachers' perceptions of CIS is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Teachers' Perceptions of the Benefits of CIS	Statement Agreement %
I would recommend CIS to other schools with similar challenges as mine.	99%
The presence of CIS has benefited my school community.	98%
CIS helps to coordinate needed supports and services at my school.	98%
CIS is an integral part of my school.	96%
CIS helps address the overall challenges and needs at my school.	96%
I know how to refer students to CIS for additional supports and services.	96%
I can focus on educating students with minimal disruption because of supports and services provided by CIS.	93%

**School Challenges and the Role of CIS:** The survey also explored challenges identified by teachers at their school. The majority of the teachers (78%) identified student disengagement with learning, parent involvement with learning (76%), academic performance (76%), student behavior problems (75%), and student support and resources (70%) as major or moderate challenges in their schools, followed by student physical health (68%), mental health (68%), school climate (49%), and student suspensions (37%).

**When asked about the role that CIS plays in helping address school challenges, 83% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that CIS was effective in connecting students and families with needed resources, 77% felt CIS improved school climate, and 73% believed CIS enhanced students' social skills.** Additionally, the analysis found that teachers' job satisfaction was positively correlated with their perception of CIS's impact on improving attendance, reducing behavioral problems, increasing student engagement, and enhancing parent engagement. That is, teachers who felt that CIS improved attendance, behavior problems, and engagement at their school tended to report higher satisfaction with their job.

When teachers were asked to explain why they felt CIS was or was not an important resource in their school, **89% of teachers indicated that CIS was an important resource in their school, emphasizing the role that CIS plays in supporting students, engaging families and community, and positively impacting school staff and culture.** In response to a question asking teachers to explain whether and how CIS supports teachers in schools, **90% reported that they felt supported by CIS** and highlighted **several key areas of support provided by CIS including provision of essential resources, support for student engagement, community and parent engagement, and boosting teacher morale.**



## SUMMARY

Overall, teachers reported positive perceptions of the work of CIS and saw the benefits of having CIS in their schools. Moreover, teachers who perceived CIS to be more impactful in improving student outcomes in their schools tended to report higher levels of job satisfaction, suggesting that the work of CIS may enhance teachers' experiences within a school, which could then result in lower staff turnover, higher teacher retention, and greater teacher engagement and efficacy. Teachers identified key challenges such as student behavior, disengagement, and absenteeism, yet the majority affirmed that CIS plays a crucial role in addressing these issues. **CIS's approach of integrating caring adults into schools to provide resources and coordinate supports holds promise for improving school environments and conditions for teachers.**