

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
Middle Grades Hearing
April 20, 2010
Panel 4**

MISSION

For over 30 years, Communities In Schools (CIS) in Texas has delivered comprehensive services directly to at-risk students on school campuses to prevent drop outs and increase success in school and in life.

MODEL

Local Communities In Schools organizations are governed by a volunteer board of directors.

With 27 local organizations in 55 counties throughout the State, CIS partners with communities, schools, students, parents, local organizations, government, corporations, agencies, colleges/universities, civic clubs and community organizations to positively change the lives of underachieving students and their families.

Building trusting, strong relationships with all partners is the cornerstone of the rigorous CIS program standards and student tracking that produces consistently extraordinary results.

Implementation of the CIS program model occurs on the school campus all day, every school day throughout the school year and beyond. Professional, well trained staff deliver comprehensive services to at risk students on a one on one, case management basis.

CIS comprehensive services fall under these six components:

- 1. SUPPORTIVE GUIDANCE**
- 2. HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**
- 3. PARENTING & FAMILY INVOLVEMENT**
- 4. COLLEGE/CAREER AWARENESS**
- 5. ENRICHMENT**
- 6. EDUCATIONAL ENHANCEMENT**

CIS SNAPSHOT 2008-09

SCOPE

749 CIS school sites in Texas
38% were middle school and junior high campuses
33% elementary and
30% high school campuses.

RESULTS

CIS provided case management services to over 84,000 students who were at-risk of dropping out of school.

93% were promoted to the next grade

80% improved their academics

69% improved their attendance

87% improved their behavior

98% stayed in school

82% of eligible students, graduated high school

Student enrollment, progress and achievement are documented through specific Texas Education Agency (TEA) performance measures requiring annual validation by the TEA.

COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS EVALUATION

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In 2007, mandated by the Texas State Legislature to conduct an evaluation of CIS in Texas, TEA engaged ICF International, an independent management, technology and policy consulting firm to study CIS and its effectiveness in addressing the issue of school dropout.

ICF STUDY HIGHLIGHTS

- Through both direct and brokered services, CIS provides the necessary services to address risk factors for school dropouts.*
- The amount and type of case-managed services students received positively influence the likelihood of a student staying in school.*
- CIS is helping case-managed students stay on track with their classmates.*
- CIS has been successful in engaging parents, a necessary ingredient to a child's success.*
- And finally, the CIS model is being implemented with fidelity throughout all 27 CIS local organizations in Texas.*

ICF STUDY MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT FINDINGS

“For middle and high school students, CIS was clearly making a difference....as a result students indicated they were fighting less with parents and peers, making better decisions, taking more responsibility for their actions... unanimous response from...many in middle school who stated that they would have dropped out of school if it were not for CIS”.

The study “represented longer term outcomes, and more importantly, possible sustained outcomes during a critical transition period for students (from elementary to middle and from middle to high school”.

Noteworthy is that more middle school students were sampled than any other cohort group (5,270) versus elementary (3767) and high (2989)...so it seems the middle school population is “labeled” as the most tenuous group, reinforced in the conclusion:

“Once transitioned from elementary to middle and middle to high, they experience a decline in academic performance and/or behavior. These transitional periods are known to be challenging and can compound already existing risk factors for students. This suggests that it is very important for CIS to ensure it can provide the needed services to students during these difficult periods.”