



News Release

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New Study Shows That with Academic Outcomes and Dropout Prevention, It's Not Just What You Do, It's How You Do It

Communities In Schools Releases Results of Seven-State Study That Shows Improvement in Math, Reading and Graduation Rates is Linked to Integrated Service Provision

Alexandria, Va. – Communities In Schools, the nation's largest dropout prevention organization, today released initial results from the midpoint of its five-year longitudinal study. The study, conducted by ICF International, a global consulting and research firm, has produced three major findings. One of the most notable findings is that the Communities In Schools Model of providing *integrated student services* has a stronger impact on school-level outcomes than providing services for students in an uncoordinated fashion.

"We are thrilled to have this external validation of our work," says Daniel J. Cardinali, president, Communities In Schools, Inc. "For more than 30 years, we've been working inside schools and seeing incredible results among some of the country's most underserved students. Now, we have scientific evidence that our particular approach to improving student achievement is really making a difference."

For more than three decades, Communities In Schools has been working in partnership with public schools, integrating the services that students need to stay in school and achieve high academic outcomes. Services such as tutoring, mentoring, after-school programs, career development, financial literacy, community service and life skills development are coordinated through a single point of contact at the school. Resources are then tailored to the school and the student, and also linked to academic outcomes. This coordinated, integrated way of serving the whole child is the hallmark of the Communities In Schools Model, which is now proven to produce better outcomes.

The study is based on a comparative analysis of more than 1,200 schools—half of which implemented the Communities In Schools Model and half of which did not. The states of Texas, Florida, North Carolina, Georgia, Michigan, Washington, and Pennsylvania were selected for the study because they comprise the largest concentration of Communities in Schools affiliates in the nation. The findings in this study exceed the U.S. Department of Education standards for showing a substantial impact. Additional findings include:

- Among similar research-based dropout prevention organizations, the Communities In Schools Model is one of the few proven to actually keep students in school. It is also the only program among this small group of organizations that is proven to increase graduation rates. When measured against the comparison group, of every 1,000 students at a Communities In Schools high-implementing school,* 36 more high school students remain in school and 48 more graduate on time with a regular diploma.

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- When implemented with fidelity, the Communities In Schools Model produces a higher percentage of students reaching proficiency in fourth- and eighth-grade reading and math. At high implementing* Communities In Schools schools, of every 1,000 elementary students, 53 more attain proficiency in math and 20 more attain proficiency in reading. For every 1,000 middle school students, 60 more achieve proficiency in math and 49 more achieve proficiency in reading.
- When the Communities In Schools Model* of integrated student services is effectively implemented, there is a strong correlation with positive school-level outcomes like dropout and graduation rates. This correlation is much stronger than when services are provided in an uncoordinated fashion. The study confirms that when combined, the elements of the CIS Model, including the presence of a school-based site coordinator, enhance the effectiveness of prevention and intervention services.

About Communities In Schools -- Communities In Schools is the nation's largest dropout prevention organization, working in more than 3,200 K-12 public schools. Founded in 1977, Communities In Schools is headquartered in Alexandria, Va. Today, nearly 1.2 million young people every year receive direct services through nearly 200 Communities In Schools local affiliates in 27 states and the District of Columbia. Nearly 80 to 90 percent of our tracked students show improvement in academic achievement, attendance, behavior and promotion to the next grade level.

About ICF International -- The evaluation contractor for this project is ICF International. ICF International brings nearly 40 years of experience in evaluating social, environmental, security, defense, energy and transportation programs, using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. ICF is an established and respected partner of the U.S. Department of Education, and has a portfolio of clients that include state and federal government agencies, and domestic and international for-profit and nonprofit organizations. ICF's is known for their high standards of rigor, comprehensive research designs and outstanding evaluation.

***High-implementing schools**, as defined in this study, refer to Communities In Schools (CIS) schools that implement every aspect of the **CIS Model**. The CIS Model of integrated student services includes the following core elements: (1) the presence of a CIS school-based, on-site coordinator; (2) a comprehensive school- and student-level needs assessment; (3) a community asset assessment and identification of potential partners; (4) annual plans for school-level prevention and individual intervention strategies; (5) the delivery of appropriate combinations of widely accessible prevention services and resources for the entire school population, coupled with coordinated, targeted and sustained intervention services and resources for individual students with significant risk factors; and (6) data collection and evaluation over time, with monitoring and modifications of services offered to individual students and/or the entire school population.

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