

COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS FALL 2013 REPORT
**CHANGING THE PICTURE OF EDUCATION
IN CHARLESTON FOR 25 YEARS**





“Our organization focuses on each student’s particular needs and providing him or her with the services and support that help clear the way to academic and social success. We help them see a future that is open to them and full of opportunity.”

—JANE RILEY GAMBRELL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS OF CHARLESTON



Communities In Schools is a nationwide network of passionate professionals working in public schools to surround students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life. For the last 25 years, Communities In Schools has served tens of thousands of students in the Charleston, S.C., area alone. This year, Communities In Schools of Charleston is serving more than 13,000 students in 30 schools, helping to break the cycle of poverty, school failure and underemployment.

This report outlines the accomplishments of Communities In Schools of Charleston during the 2012-13 school year. It includes data on the percentage of students who were promoted from one grade to another, graduated from high school, or otherwise improved their performance as a result of their involvement with Communities In Schools; and describes how this success was achieved.

“Children in poverty come to school every day with tremendous burdens that hinder their ability to learn. It’s hard to focus on math or reading when you’re hungry or sick or worried about where you’re going to sleep at night. In those conditions, it can seem like the ‘escape valve’ has been welded shut from the outside.”

—DANIEL CARDINALI, PRESIDENT, COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS

ABOUT COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS OF CHARLESTON

Communities In Schools is the only dropout prevention organization proven to both lower dropout rates and increase graduation rates. What sets Communities In Schools apart is the organization's holistic approach to addressing both the academic and non-academic needs of students. Working with school staff, Communities In Schools site coordinators—who are positioned in schools—identify students in danger of dropping out, assess what resources they need, and then provide those resources through the appropriate community partnerships. These resources include food, clothing, transportation, housing, medical and dental care, mental health services, mentoring, and much more.

EST.
1989

Communities In Schools of Charleston was established in 1989, following a study by Johns Hopkins University in Maryland that advised the Charleston County School District to implement dropout prevention programs. Working in partnership, the District and Communities In Schools established the Septima P. Clark Corporate Academy (“Clark”) the following year, making it the County's first nontraditional high school, serving students who previously had not excelled in a traditional school setting.



THE PRINCIPAL

DR. ANDREW HALEVI, PH.D., is the principal of Clark, where 100 percent of the students are at-risk of dropping out. He credits the two Communities In Schools site coordinators with being “the magic that makes Communities In Schools work. They’re able to develop relationships with students in ways that teachers or other adults can’t always do. They can talk with students in a real, honest way that doesn’t have a hidden component involving some sort of assessment or grade. These kids don’t often have relationships like that with adults, where they can talk about anything without feeling judged. I don’t think there’s a student at Clark who hasn’t been touched by Communities In Schools.”

Communities In Schools recognizes that if basic needs are not met, children are unable to learn.

Working with each school's administration, Communities In Schools identifies students who lack basic needs, such as food, clothing and shelter, and utilizes community resources to assist with meeting these needs. Other whole-school offerings include parenting programs, grief and loss counseling, and bullying prevention programs.



THE SITE COORDINATOR

AIMEE LASSOR, M.ED., LPC, is the New Morning Foundation-Communities In Schools Teen Pregnancy Prevention Coordinator at four high schools in Charleston. Like most site coordinators, Lassor gets involved with each aspect of students’ lives, including helping their families find ways to navigate the health care system, pay rent when they’re not able, or work out fights between friends. “We understand all of the components of a child’s life, beyond those that affect them during the school day. The teacher may be with a student all day long, but that teacher may not know the student doesn’t have electricity or running water at home, or that the father just abandoned the family. At Communities In Schools we dig deep to bring barriers out into the light of day, and then address them one at a time.”



THE STUDENT

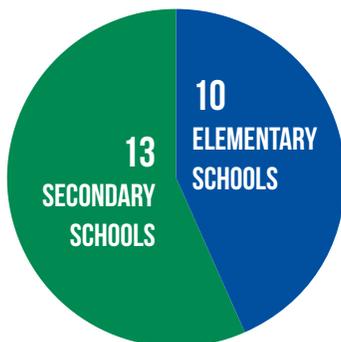
ERICA LAWER was in the 8th grade when she started seeing the site coordinator at Haut Gap Middle School and continued to work with Communities In Schools when she moved on to St. Johns High School. She said that a lot of her friends at the high school were engaging in risky sexual behaviors, but after getting involved with Communities In Schools, she chose to remain abstinent. She attended every after-school and community service activity that Communities In Schools offered, from cleaning up the yard on church grounds to planting flowers to attending mother-daughter dinners. “I could call Ms. Lassor at 10 or 11 at night and say ‘I need help.’ She’s given me so many rides to different events because my mom or aunt couldn’t.” Erica also worked with Communities In Schools on college preparedness and building up her résumé. Now she is a junior at the University of South Carolina Upstate and hopes to become a broadcast journalist.



All of Communities In Schools’ work is guided by the “Five Basics”—a set of essentials that every child needs and deserves:

- A one-on-one relationship with a caring adult
- A safe place to learn and grow
- A healthy start and a healthy future
- A marketable skill to use upon graduation
- A chance to give back to peers and community

CHARLESTON SCHOOLS SERVED BY CIS



Communities In Schools of Charleston

2012-13 School Year Highlights

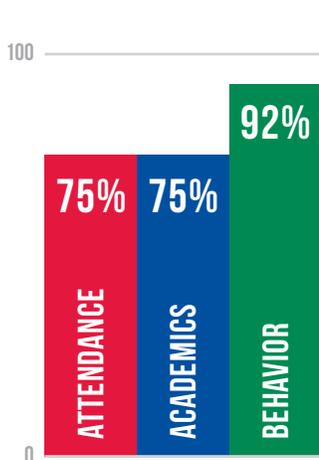
› 10 elementary schools and 13 secondary schools (middle, high and combined) were served.

**2012-13
HIGHLIGHTS**

› 10,491 students received integrated student supports from Communities In Schools of Charleston; 9,049 students received Level One* or school-wide prevention services and 1,442 students received Level Two** targeted and sustained interventions

› **95.5% of seniors who received targeted and sustained services (and for whom data were available) graduated. Of those 69.4% were accepted into college, and 7.5% planned to join the military.**

› **94% of the students in grades K – 11 who received targeted and sustained services (and for whom data were available) were promoted to the next grade.**



› **75%** of the students in grades K – 12 who received targeted and sustained services with an attendance goal met their goal. For some students, the goal was to increase the number of days they attended and for others it was to maintain their attendance levels.

› **75%** of the students in grades K – 12 who received targeted and sustained services improved their performance in math, and 78% improved their reading scores.

› **92%** of the students in grades K – 12 who received targeted and sustained services with a behavioral goal met their goal. This relates to school behavior and can include: improving classroom behavior and reducing disciplinary referrals for fighting, disruptive or disrespectful behavior (bad language, talking back, etc.).



“Communities In Schools site coordinators are working with students on a daily, even moment-to-moment, basis, dealing with family issues, coordinating health issues and much more, fundamentally increasing their likelihood of graduating from high school.”

—**DR. ANDREW HALEVI**, PRINCIPAL, SEPTIMA P. CLARK CORPORATE ACADEMY

*Level One services, also known as whole-school preventative services, are provided to all students, regardless of their risk for developing serious problems. Examples of these services include health fairs, attendance initiatives, anti-bullying campaigns, parent engagement activities/events, and motivational speakers.

**Level Two services are targeted and sustained interventions provided for specific students over an extended period of time. These services are provided based on individual student needs and include one-on-one academic tutoring, mentoring, coordination of medical and dental services, and counseling.