

**COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS SPRING 2014 REPORT**

# **CHANGING THE PICTURE OF EDUCATION IN PHILADELPHIA**





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IN PHILADELPHIA**

“After nearly 40 years of service in youth programs, education and nonprofit leadership, I have seen many changes in how we serve the unmet needs of youth nationally and locally. What will never change, however, is how essential mentorship and one-on-one relationships are to changing the nature of youth development. Communities In Schools of Philadelphia ensures that the best, brightest and most passionate site coordinators are woven into the fabric of our schools and communities. That is the work. They are the reason. This is how we change the picture!”

—**MARTIN NOCK**, PRESIDENT AND CEO, COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS OF PHILADELPHIA



**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 27 years, Communities In Schools of Philadelphia has served more than 150,000 students in the Philadelphia area alone. This year, Communities In Schools of Philadelphia is serving more than 14,600 students in 44 schools and education sites, helping to break the cycle of poverty, school failure and underemployment.

**This report outlines** the accomplishments of Communities In Schools of Philadelphia during the 2012 – 2013 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 PHILADELPHIA

COMMUNITIES  
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“Building a one-on-one relationship with students and actually seeing their potential is the true yardstick of our investment as advocates and mentors. When students recognize that you care, you see the difference it makes in their lives.”

—LEAH A. RUSSELL, PROGRAM MANAGER, COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS OF PHILADELPHIA

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 nonacademic 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 care, mentoring and much more.

Since its inception in 1986, Communities In Schools of Philadelphia has grown to annually serve more than 14,600 students attending kindergarten through 12th grade and post-secondary schools. Communities In Schools of Philadelphia administers after-school, alternative education, service-learning, social services, technology and workforce development programs, all in collaboration with the School District of Philadelphia, local, state and federal government agencies, and a large number of other nonprofit organizations and community-minded businesses. Our staff and partners strive to connect youth and their families with critical community resources, tailored specifically to meet their needs. The Communities In Schools model is one that has proven to both decrease dropout rates and increase on-time graduation rates.



## THE STUDENT

**TOTIANA MYERS**, a junior at Paul Robeson High School for Human Services in Philadelphia, has benefited from her one-on-one relationships with the site coordinators of Communities In Schools of Philadelphia. She was introduced to Communities In Schools when she was 10 years old through its Philadelphia Freedom Schools program. “I came in sheltered and standoffish. I definitely put up a wall,”



she said. “Communities In Schools was able to knock down that wall. I am now more outspoken and open-minded.”

Communities In Schools came into Totiana’s life when she most needed the support. She has overcome immense hardships, including the death of her older brother, who she looked to as a father figure after her father’s passing when she was an infant. Totiana’s mother continues to be her strongest advocate. “My mom always tells me that she is raising a leader. Like my mom says ‘It’s not what you go through that defines you, it’s how you handle it,’” she said.

Today, Totiana has her eyes set on being a judge and attending Yale University. To build her leadership skills, she is the captain of the girls’ varsity basketball team and serves on a number of student-led organizations. “When you are going through difficult times, it’s good to have the support from Communities in Schools. You are in your comfort zone, it feels like family,” said Totiana.



#### **THE EXECUTIVE**

**MARTIN NOCK**, once an at-risk youth himself, credits the help he received during his childhood as directly influencing his decision to lead a nonprofit dedicated to serving thousands of at-risk youth in the Greater Philadelphia Region.

Since his arrival at Communities In Schools of Philadelphia in 1994, Martin has been directly responsible for developing and implementing more than 100 specialized educational and social services programs. Before accepting the position as President of Communities In Schools of Philadelphia, he worked extensively in the social services industry.

As president and CEO, Martin unites his passion for educational equality with his compassion for at-risk youth and struggling communities. Additionally, Martin has demonstrated a commitment to reaching those students who have left the school system as dropouts and youth re-entering society from the juvenile justice system. Through his determination and leadership, Martin has created business and educational partnerships that exemplify the adage that success and achievement are always within reach.

**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 STUDENT AND SITE COODINATOR

None of our students are identical; their needs are distinctive, their talents are special, and their life experiences are richly unique. One such student, **AMEERAH MUHAMMAD**, is a senior at Northeast High School and has excelled in school with the support of Communities In Schools of Philadelphia programs and staff. When Ameerah came to our organization, she was in 10th grade with a 1.7 GPA. “Where was I going with that average?” she asked. Ameerah said that without the support of her site coordinator, **BAHIYA JONES**, she is not sure how high school would have turned out for her, “I didn’t like Bahiya at first. I didn’t understand why she kept pushing me. I didn’t realize it was because she really cared. I never had that before — anyone pushing me to do better and work harder,” Ameerah said.

As a leader directly serving our students, Bahiya is a shining example of what happens when our site coordinators are empowered to care for youth, “We’re always training our replacements, and I know that Ameerah will be part of the next crop of leaders challenging young people to be better,” said Bahiya. When asked how doing this work has changed her, she said, “It’s scary to think about what I would have become if I hadn’t been doing this. I don’t just do this, I live this work — my students are part of my life. I would be an unfulfilled person without Communities In Schools.”

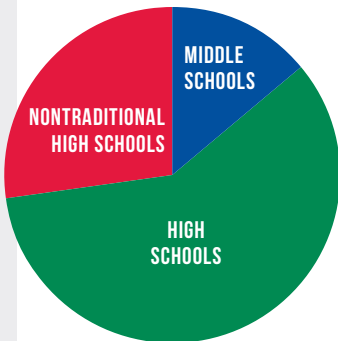
**All of Communities In Schools’ work is guided by the “Five Basics” — a set of essentials that every child needs and deserves:**



- 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

### Communities In Schools of Philadelphia

## 2012 – 2013 School Year Highlights

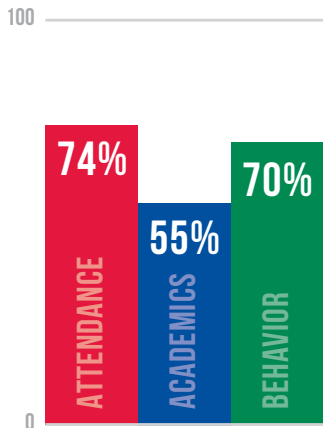


PHILADELPHIA SCHOOLS SERVED BY COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS

- › 6 middle schools, 26 high schools and 12 nontraditional high schools were served.
- › Approximately 14,600 students received integrated student supports from Communities In Schools of Philadelphia; 12,375 students received Level One\* or school-wide prevention services and 2,245 students received Level Two\*\* targeted and sustained interventions.

› **79% of seniors receiving targeted and sustained services (and for whom data were available) graduated.**

› **57% 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.**



› **74%** 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.

› **55%** of the students in grades K – 12 who received targeted and sustained services with an academic performance goal met their goal. These goals, which are tailored to each student, may have included improving class grades, overall GPA, standardized test scores or homework completion.

› **70%** 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.).



“It’s scary to think about what I would have become if I hadn’t been doing this. In fact, I don’t just do this, I live this work—my students are part of my life. I would be an unfulfilled person without Communities In Schools of Philadelphia.”

—BAHIYA JONES, SITE COORDINATOR, COMMUNITIES IN SCHOOLS OF PHILADELPHIA

\*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 services such as one-on-one academic tutoring, mentoring, coordination of medical or dental resources, and counseling.